

ETHICS AND THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL

by

Mary F. Daniels

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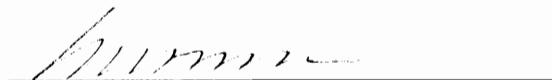
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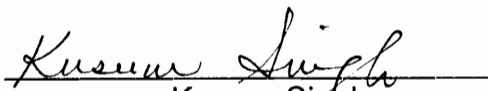
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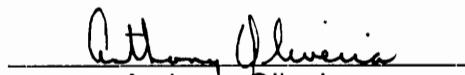
APPROVED:


M. David Alexander, Co-chairman


Wayne M. Worner, Co-chairman


Kusum Singh


Robert Richards


Anthony Oliveira

April, 1993

Blacksburg, Virginia

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Mary F. Daniels

Committee Co-chairmen:

M. David Alexander, Educational Administration

Wayne M. Worner, Educational Administration

(ABSTRACT)

Daily decision-making experiences of the elementary principal are handled differently and test ethical standards. The manner in which these situations are handled affect the efficiency and credibility of the position and may ultimately affect the school program. What are some of the ethical dilemmas facing elementary principals in the course of their duties? What do these administrators perceive to be the decisions of their colleagues in given ethical situations? What do these same administrators perceive to be the most ethical decision? By first discovering and then comparing the responses of various elementary school principals, a general picture of the predispositions of the participants may be formulated. These results may then be used to heighten the awareness of ethical aspects housed in daily situations encountered on the job. This is a descriptive study of the predispositions of elementary principals in Virginia with respect to ethics.

A cadre of ethical dilemmas were written using personal experiences, conversations with professionals in the field, and adaptations of scenarios from

other studies. The scenarios were field tested to determine clarity of the ethical situations, the choice responses, and the survey directions.

A random sample of elementary principals was selected using The Virginia Educational Directory (1992). Using suggestions from Mail and Telephone Surveys by Dillman, a mail survey was used to collect data from three hundred elementary principals. Survey responses were tabulated to compare the differences between what elementary principals perceived to be the most used and the most ethical decision for problem situation.

In analyzing the results (1.) in some cases, there was an inverse relationship between what principals perceived to be the action taken by most principals in problem situations and the action perceived to be the most ethical, (2.) some administrators might have been influenced by factors other than their own ethical beliefs when making decisions, (3.) with two exceptions, there was little agreement on what was deemed to be the one best ethical action in the situations presented, and (4.) when facing a decision with potential personal consequences some administrators made choices on factors other than ethics.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my grandparents, Olena McClees Swain and Herbert Linwood Swain, who were always loving and giving but never critical nor demanding.

In loving memory of my dearest friend, Mrs. Ruth Salmon, who always said I would do something like this. I know that even though she has passed on she is smiling.

This study is dedicated to the two people in the world who have loved me and supported my endeavors, even through the tough times. They have helped shape my values, my ethics, and my character. They have given me my greatest gift, an education. They knew the importance and value of an education and sacrificed much to help my sisters and me realize our dreams and aspirations by helping us through college. I love and honor you both. Thanks for everything, Mary Kate and Ben Daniels, my mother and father.

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A double thanks is extended to Dr. Kusum Singh for all of her assistance. She helped and encouraged me through not only this project but statistics, the class I thought would be the end of it all. She is truly significant at .05 level.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Some see the '90's as a time when issues of social responsibility will become increasingly important. Faith Popcorn's (1991) position is that "the '90's will be our first truly socially responsible decade: the Decency Decade, dedicated to the three critical E's: Environment, Education, and Ethics" (p.86). In his article, "Effective Administrative Behavior," Faily (1980) wrote:

Administrators in educational institutions throughout this nation face a tremendous task. They are faced with crises of purpose such as they never faced in the past. These crises have emerged from technology, inflation, equal rights, the energy crisis, changing values and morality, environment, and urban/suburban crises. In order to deal with these crises, the administrator must be aware of their existence in our society. He or she must have the knowledge and understanding of effective administrative behavior in order to deal with them effectively....In order to provide effective administrative behavior, the administrator needs a clear view of philosophical beliefs and an inherent desire to perform effectively. The administrator needs to develop and acquire knowledge in planning, decision making, communication, and desirable personal qualities (ethical behavior) in order to promote a positive organizational climate (p.30).

Faily's analysis on the importance of ethical behavior is no less true for public school administrators in 1993. This view seems to be borne out by the barrage of reports that signal serious ethical lapses in the conduct of governmental, business and professional responsibilities and the desire to take corrective actions. In this light, the preamble to the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) Code of Ethics deserves to be reexamined by educators:

Public schools prosper to the extent they merit the confidence of the people. In judging its schools, society is influenced to a considerable degree by the character and quality of their administration. Society demands that any group that claims the rights, privileges, and status of a profession prove itself worthy through establishment and maintenance of

ethical policies governing the activities of its members. A professional society must demonstrate the capacity and willingness to regulate itself and to set appropriate guides for the ethical conduct of its members (Knezevich in Immegart & Burroughs, 1970, p.17).

The scope of professional ethics is broad and encompasses an extensive segment of the lives of professionals. Professional ethics is concerned with public acts by persons in their professional roles that raise ethical issues (Rich, 1984, p. 17). Administrators who demonstrate little or no concern for the well-being and educational opportunities of their students may be identified as unethical. Such administrators do more harm in the long run since many remain in authority until retirement. As Kathleen McCormick cautions, "the decisions you make every day - regardless of whether you view them as important ethical questions - could be the basis of what might be perceived as a pattern of wrongdoing" (Whitmer, 1989, p.47). Because educators deal with what the public considers its most precious commodity - its children - those in education come under the closest scrutiny and are expected to maintain the highest ethical standards.

This study was pursued in order to answer a number of needs, among which was a growing concern in all areas in the public sector regarding questions of ethics. While ethical concern is not new, society has begun to take a renewed interest in morality in general, and in ethical practices of professionals in particular. From the public's point of view, a lapse in ethics is deplored in a businessman, politician, or lawyer, but in an educator it is intolerable (Whitmer, 1989). Since educational administrators are in positions of public leadership, their ethical standards and practices must be beyond reproach. "A profession with little or no concern for the ethics of its practitioners

is a profession without a soul, if it deserves to be called a profession at all" (Carlin, 1966, p.17).

Statement of the Problem

School administration is a political vocation, and as Max Weber noted, the politician must have an "ethic of responsibility" (Hostetler, 1986, p.33). Ashbaugh (1991) spoke to elementary principals about decisions that they make and was struck by the fact that most principals had not developed habits of reflection. In fact they described themselves as being "disinclined to reexamine made decisions" (p. xiii).

In the words of Kimbrough (1985), "The sole purpose of ethical behavior is not merely a nicety that educational administrators ought to observe just to be good but it has economic consequences as well. Unethical behavior has a serious economic impact. Children who are deprived of educational opportunities because adults fail to assume their obligations for leadership pay for it the rest of their lives" (p.3-4). The gravity inherent in Kimbrough's statement is the impetus for investigating the ethical behavior of elementary school principals, for each administrator must meet the demands of external pressures, decide appropriate ways of implementing mandates, cope with increasing numbers of at-risk, handicapped and bilingual students, manage delinquency, drugs, and crime among students, and deal with diverse cultural groups. However, many school leaders handle ethical dilemmas in divergent ways. How do elementary principals respond to ethical dilemmas? What do they perceive most principals do in a given situation? What do they perceive as

being the most ethical decision? The problem of this paper is to describe and compare the ethical predisposition of elementary administrators in Virginia by having them respond to school-based ethical scenarios. Results from this study will be used to train future administrators and assist present administrators by increasing their awareness of the ethical aspects faced daily in situations and decisions.

Purpose of the Study

Ethical dilemmas can arise in any setting. The basic question of ethics, namely, What is the right thing to do? occurs in a number of different ways (Schnieder, 1988). It is hoped that an increased awareness of the ethical issues embedded in daily situations can be realized by practicing elementary principals in Virginia.

The purpose of the study was to

1. Describe the ethical predispositions of elementary principals by having them respond to the school-based ethical dilemmas.
2. Compare the differences among elementary principals in Virginia with respect to what is perceived to be the most frequent as opposed to the most ethical decision for problem situations.

Significance of the Study

According to Hodgkins' analysis of the logic of administration, two types of competence distinguish an administrative profession: (1) an understanding of organizations and organizational theory, and (2) a knowledge of the theory and practice of decision-making. The latter divides into two special competences: a capacity for logical analysis and a capacity for value analysis (Evers, 1989, p.32). In other words, administrators must make satisfactory decisions in terms of organizational goals, and these decisions must be "right" or ethically appropriate.

An understanding of professional ethics provides a basis for planning, decision making, and communication. Immegart and Burroughs (1970) observed that administrators have duties and obligations to societal and professional ethics. The ethical standards of honesty, fairness, compassion, concern, and human understanding apply to everyone. The higher up in the organization one goes, the more critically important high ethical character becomes. When the top decision makers become unethical, they soon limit the effectiveness of the entire organization.

Strike (1988) identifies ethical reasoning as a skill whose acquisition takes practice. He states that "ethical decisions are not just matters of personal preference. It is possible to make ethical decisions based on good reasons that others can accept even if such decisions go against their preferences. Ethical situations often require that hard choices be made under compelling and ambiguous circumstances" (p. 6).

Decisions confronted daily by elementary principals test their ethical standards. The manner in which these situations are handled affect the efficiency and credibility of the position and may ultimately affect the school program. One way to raise the consciousness of principals with regard to ethical issues, is to ascertain how principals respond to ethical dilemmas. By first describing and then comparing responses of elementary school principals, a general picture of the participants predispositions can be formulated. These results can then be used to heighten administrators' awareness of the ethical issues faced in daily situations. It is hoped that information obtained in this study can also be used in training future elementary administrators.

Definition of Terms

Ethics - Refers to the study of values concerning how we ought to live and is often used interchangeably with moral philosophy (Kimbrough, 1985). Webster's Seventh Collegiate Dictionary defines ethics as the discipline that deals with what is good and bad and with moral duty and obligation (Freitas, 1991).

Ethical behavior - Conscious action taken because it is viewed as being correct; it is what a person ought to do voluntarily (Pheniz, 1964, p.215; Berkson, 1968, p.237; Oliveira, 1990, p.9).

Elementary principal - one who is the appointed professional educational leader of a designated school building or section of a building containing specified grade levels and is designated as such in the 1992 Virginia Educational Directory.

Elementary school - an educational organization which includes a combination of grades K-8 or their equivalent and is designated as such in the Virginia Educational Directory.

Summary/Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study. It identifies the background, problem, purpose, objectives, justification, and need for the study. It also outlines the research questions and definitions of the the study. Chapter two is a review of the literature relevant to the study. Chapter three describes the methodology with respect to population, sample selection, data-collection instruments, data collection procedures, and methods of analysis. Chapter four presents the results of the study and pertinent tables. The final chapter contains the summary, conclusions, and implications of the study. A list of references are added to identify sources of information contained in the study. Appendices contain the initial questionnaire, the field tested scenarios, the questionnaire, the endorsement letter from the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP), and the three surveys used in the study.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Man is a creature of his societal organization: without it, he could not have survived as a species nor dominated the world for the benefit of humankind. The ethics of any group is the cement which holds it together. It is the continuing tradition of accepted behavior which concerns the sanctioned and supported practices, which preserves and makes the society effective. For the individuals in society, ethics is among the most important of all modes of learning because it addresses itself to the most frequent and the most exigent of his problems; the problem of what he would choose to do in a given situation (Lewis, 1969, p.53).

Historically an awareness of the ethical aspects in daily situations was noted and discussed by the early Greeks. Even in Aristotle's day ethics already had the meaning of moral virtue or moral character. The Greeks thought ethics to be a branch of practical philosophy, acting or doing with respect to good actions. In Aristotelian terms, the good leader should have "ethos," "pathos," and "logos." Ethos was moral character, the ability to persuade. Pathos was emotionality, the ability to touch feelings. Logos was intellectuality, the ability to offer solid reasons for an action.

Ethics may well claim to be the oldest branch of learning. Plato used ethical situations to teach right and wrong as is evidenced by the following excerpt by Frankena (1973);

Suppose that all your life you have been trying to be a good person, doing your duty as you see it and seeking to do what is for the good of your fellowmen. Suppose, also, that many of your fellowmen dislike you and what you are doing and even regard you as a danger to society, although they cannot really show this to be true. Suppose, further, that you are indicted, tried, and condemned to death by a jury of your peers, all in a manner which you correctly consider to be quite unjust. Suppose, finally, that while you are in prison awaiting execution, your friends arrange an opportunity for you to escape and go into exile

with your family. They argue that they can afford the necessary bribes and will not be endangered by your escaping; that if you escape, you will enjoy a longer life; that your wife and children will be better off; that your friends will still be able to see you; and that people generally will think that you should escape. Should you take the opportunity (p.15)?

Using this example, Plato explained that the only issue in question was whether the proposed action was right or wrong. It was of no consequence what would happen to the individual making the decision, what people thought of that person, or what the individual felt about what was to happen as a result of the action. Philosophers from Aristotle to Phenis, Barnard, and Maslow have all indicated that the real source of ethical behavior exists within the individual and not in any code of ethics. A major writer in the field of educational administration, Campbell (1964) states "equally as important as the possession of desirable character attributes for the educational administrator is the possession of a valuable framework upon which these attributes are based" (p.301).

Any study of ethics concerns the study of philosophical theories. While there are many theories, there is general agreement that the three major ones are idealism, realism, and pragmatism. In an extensive literature review , Witmer (1989) identified these three major theories as also having impact on training school administrators in ethical decision making. However, idealism was found to be the one most useful for the following reasons:

1. Pragmatism is too involved in technique. Everything to the pragmatist is based on experience and truth is viewed as temporal.
2. Realism views the world as real and believes that all truth can be discovered through the senses. The problem is that often what is taken to be real turns out to be illusion.
3. Idealism is the belief that the best education is one which exercises the mind, striving to grasp the perfect ideal. Kant's

modern idealism shows the primacy of reason as a basis for the ideal, thus emphasizing truth as being in the mind of man. The idealist assumes that ultimate truth exists, that there are universal truths and that absolute knowledge is possible. These philosophical tenets of idealism are most closely associated with the works of those who advocate training for ethical decision making. Thus, it is idealism which has had the strongest influence on proponents for ethical training (p. 236).

Many authors have suggested ways in which school administrators should demonstrate ethical decision-making skills. Burnett (1984) believes for ethical decision-making to occur, four things must operate jointly. His belief is that:

1. the act is one deliberately chosen from a set of genuine options.
2. the agent is capable of acting sanely and maturely.
3. the agent can be expected to have knowledge of the situation and the likely outcome of acting on various options.
4. the choice significantly affects the future welfare of others (Burnett in Sola, p. 229).

Dufour (1987) believes that any educational administrator's decision making should be in line with his profession's code of ethics.

An educational administrator's professional behavior must conform to an ethical code. The code must be idealistic and at the same time practical, so that it can apply reasonably to all educational administrators. The administrator acknowledges that the schools belong to the public they serve for the purpose of providing educational opportunities to all. However, the administrator assumes responsibility for providing professional leadership in the school and community. This responsibility requires the administrator to maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct. It must be recognized that the administrator's actions will be viewed and appraised by the community, professional associates, and students (p.83).

Greenfield (1990) pointed out that all actions and decisions by school principals should hold the well-being of the students and the school as their primary focus. He cites five standards which, if pursued, will ensure that the

well-being of students is at the center of the administrator's actions and decisions. Principals should 1.) have a point of view regarding what constitutes good educational practice, 2.) invite others to consider their point of view by sharing it and eliciting responses, 3.) become informed about good educational practices, 4.) develop the habit of being reflective by deliberately seeking information about what is happening around oneself, and 5.) put the students at the center of decisions (p. 47).

In 1966 the American Association of School Administrators adopted a Code of Ethics. The Code was revised in 1973 and again in 1976. Highlighted in the Code were obligations for making the student's well-being the basis for all decisions, fulfilling responsibilities with honesty and integrity, protecting human and civil rights, obeying laws, and implementing board policies and administrative rules and regulations (Egan, 1990).

Since 1966 there have been several studies concerning the ethics of professionals. Carlin (1966) investigated the ethics of lawyers. He found that there was a material discrepancy between the ethical standards that lawyers acknowledge as binding on them and the standards of conduct that many in fact observe. This was true not only of the rules of deportment that were peculiar to the canons of legal ethics, but also of the rules of ordinary honesty.

Dexheimer (1969) conducted a study investigating possible discrepancies existing between the ethical standards that chief school administrators publicly acknowledge as binding upon them and the standards of conduct that many in fact observe. Using a survey with ethical scenarios to which chief school administrators were to choose a response, Dexheimer discovered there was a discrepancy between the ethical standards that chief

school administrators publicly acknowledge as binding upon them, and the standards of conduct that are in fact observed. In addition ethical behavior, as measured by the American Association of School Administrators, was more likely to occur among chief school administrators in larger school districts and among those who are more highly paid.

Another study determined the degree to which principals, teachers, and superintendents perceived the ethical behavior of elementary school principals to be. Mohr (1989) drew his sample from the 1985-86 Arizona Educational Directory. Each participant was sent a survey containing fourteen ethical situations. The survey prompted responses such as, "this is the way I should decide," and, "this is the way I do decide." Findings indicated that the elementary school principal was more likely to follow nomothetic behaviors, those demanding strict adherence to rules and expectations in keeping with organizational goals, more than idiographic behavior consisting of phenomena inherent in individuals, each with a unique set of personality traits and needs.

Witmer (1989), in a qualitative dissertation for Temple University, attempted to answer the question, "Can ethics be taught" and if so what method of instruction should be utilized. Through an extensive literature review, she found many contemporary researchers who supported the notion that ethics could be taught and several who disagreed with it. Although there was disagreement about the ability to teach ethics, all agreed that individuals could be trained to take an ethical approach to thinking.

Several methods, of instruction were examined, most of which did not show positive results. The findings may be summarized as follows:

1. Establishing codes of ethics did not have much effect on a person's making ethical choices.
2. "Patterning" or "imitation" as a way of learning ethical behavior has not been validated.
3. Principal academies and assessment centers do not emphasize ethics training, but rather give it only passing notice.
4. Experimental learning by itself has not been effective.
5. As value-learning is a lifetime endeavor, basing training in making ethical decisions on teaching values is not practical.
6. A study of the humanities, liberal arts programs or the Great Books approach can be helpful, if used in combination with discussions of moral dilemmas.
7. Maslow's "Third Force" psychology was thought to be promising but too elitist as those who support Maslowian ideas believe themselves already to be ethical and have no need for training (p. 238-239).

The most effective method and the one supported by most researchers was to involve individuals in discussions of ethical dilemmas. More than fifty studies in 1985 revealed that "direct discussion of moral dilemmas produced modest gains in moral reasoning skills; measuring moral reasoning skills was the only reliable and valid testing used with any of the methods of training" (Witmer, p. 239).

Oliveira (1990) concentrated on secondary school administrators. Personal interviews were used to discuss school based ethical scenarios. From these responses of the sample participants, materials were developed and used to train other administrators in an awareness of ethical situations in daily administrative situations..

The principalship is characterized by a great deal of conflict and ambiguity. The correct answers to daily questions is often unclear, and frequently represent difficult choices. Administrators, as leaders and decision makers, must determine whether their decisions are made fairly and equitably. Administrators seen as opposite to the descriptors above may buy themselves a

great deal of trouble in their jobs. "Administrators are just as likely to fail because they are seen as unjust as they are to fail because they are seen as inefficient" (Strike, 1988, p. 12). Ethics is part of the job. Indeed, it is an essential part of the job.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in this study. Included is an identification of the population and sample surveyed, a description of the methods utilized to conduct the survey, a discussion of the instrument used to validate the study and to collect the data, and a description of the distribution and collection procedures for the survey instrument. In addition, the methods of analyzing and reporting the data are described and a summary is provided.

Design

The purpose of this study was to describe the ethical predispositions of elementary school principals in Virginia. Employing techniques suggested by Dillman, a self-administered mail questionnaire survey was used to gather information. The questionnaire form was selected because, according to Babbie (1979),

Survey research is probably the best method available to the social scientist interested in collecting original data for the purposes of describing a population too large to observe directly (p.316).

To develop the survey, it was necessary to generate a cadre of ethical scenarios and accumulate an exhaustive list of response choices for each

scenario. The scenarios and response choices were used to solicit the predispositions of elementary principals with respect to ethical situations and to compare the differences in what was perceived to be the most frequent as opposed to the most ethical decision made for each of the given situations.

Scenarios with ethical aspects were drawn from personal experiences and conversations with elementary administrators. In addition many of the scenarios were adapted, with permission, from studies conducted by Oliveira (1990), Witmer (1989), and Dexheimer (1969).

To determine the validity of the situations, twenty-one scenarios were typed and distributed to approximately fifteen elementary principals attending a dissertation seminar at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg in July, 1992 (Appendix A). Each participant was asked to respond to whether the scenarios represented actual situations encountered by principals in the performance of their duties. Subjects were also asked to write possible solutions for each situation in an attempt to develop a variety of responses . Based on their comments and suggestions, the cadre of scenarios was reduced to sixteen and responses added (Appendix B).

The sixteen scenarios were randomly divided and three sample surveys containing six different situations were developed. Fifty educators from eastern Virginia, who were enrolled in classes from Virginia Tech and George Washington University, were asked to evaluate the instruments with regards to the clarity of the directions, the scenarios, and the response choices; to rank order the six scenarios to determine the top four most representative of ethical situations faced on the job; to comment on the length of the survey and the

appropriateness of the scenarios. Their comments and suggestions identified the final twelve scenarios used in the study.

Population and Sample

All elementary principals in the state of Virginia comprised the population for this study. Using the 1992 Virginia Educational Directory, twenty-five percent of the elementary principals were randomly selected from a total population of approximately 1130 elementary school principals. "State public school directories are more satisfactory for selection of subjects because they list all persons involved in public education in the state and are usually up to date" (Borg & Gall, 1983, p.417; Lewis, 1992, p.39).

Systematic sampling was the method of sample selection used in this study. In selecting the sample size, attention was given to the recommendations offered by Ary, Jacobs, and Razavieh (1990). They suggest that sample size depends upon certain variables. Descriptive research often requires the use of larger samples, particularly when the population is heterogeneous. "The best answer to the question of size is to use as large a sample as possible. Other things being equal, a larger sample is much more likely to be representative of the population" (pp. 178-179).

A randomly chosen sample of the population was derived by first assigning each member of the total population a number. By counting every fourth one, the sample population of 282 elementary principals was determined. Since three survey instruments were developed using different scenarios, the sample was rounded to 300 to allow one hundred principals to respond to each

of the three surveys. Each participant received a questionnaire requesting responses to four scenarios. The determination as to which scenarios each participant received was determined randomly as well. The surveys were number coded for ease of participant identification. This helped to determine to whom follow up letters were sent .

Data Needs

In order to complete this study, certain data were required. It was necessary 1.) to generate ethical scenarios concerning situations faced by elementary administrators, 2.) to accumulate a range of responses for each of the ethical situations, 3.) to determine the validity of the scenarios and response choices developed, 4.) to develop a questionnaire with clearly defined directions, scenarios and response choices, and 5.) to procure a list of all of the practicing elementary principals in Virginia for the 1992-1993 school year.

A survey package was sent to 300 individuals on November 1, 1992. The package consisted of the survey instrument, a stamped self-addressed envelope in which to return the survey, two letters, and a "reward" for participation. One letter was of a personal nature from the researcher and the committee co-chairman, stating the purpose and importance of the study and requesting quick and full cooperation. A second letter, printed as the first page of the survey instrument and signed by Donald Lacey, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP), also encouraged the recipients to respond to the survey instrument. A small token of

appreciation from the researcher was included in the package in an attempt to maximize the rate of responses, and as a "thank you" to all respondents.

As per Dillman's suggestion (p. 183), a follow-up postcard thanking participants for a quick response was sent to all members of the sample who had not yet responded by November 14, 1992. On December 1, 1992, another letter was sent to those who had not responded, enclosing a second package with a reminder of its importance and a request for response. Copies of the survey, each of the letters, and the post card are in appendix C, D, E, and F.

Instrumentation

Development

The primary instrument - a survey questionnaire - was composed of scenarios with solutions as response choices. Many of the ethical situations used in the questionnaire were adapted from studies conducted by Oliveira (1990), Witmer (1989), and Dexheimer (1969). Others came from personal experiences and conversations with administrators in the field of education. For each scenario, participants were asked two questions: "What do you feel most principals would do in this situation?" and "What do you feel is the most ethical thing to do in this situation?" The questions were framed in such a manner because of the Prospect theory. It posits that individuals make different decisions depending on how choices and questions are framed (Tversky and Kahneman 1981). When interviewed about his discussions with secondary administrators for his ethical study, Oliveira stated that when asked "What do you feel most principals would do in this situation?" principals actually describe

what they would do. By phrasing the question in the former manner, administrators feel less threatened and offer responses that are more nearly honest.

Validation

Validation of the scenarios and their responses came from previous studies (Oliveira, 1990; Witmer, 1989; and Dexheimer, 1969) and from field testing using educators in the field. The scenarios were first distributed to fifteen administrators attending a seminar at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg to determine if the situations were representative of problems faced by elementary principals. Each of the participants was working on a doctoral dissertation in the field of educational administration. These elementary administrators were asked to offer solutions to the problems presented and to respond to the clarity and applicability of the situations. Based on their responses, selected scenarios were modified, eliminated, or added. The choice responses offered by the administrators at Virginia Tech along with those printed in former studies comprised the field-tested survey. This survey was then piloted on four separate occasions (August 4, September 1, September 14, and September 22). On each occasion, approximately fifteen elementary educators from southern Virginia were used. Each participant was either working toward an administrative degree or was a practicing administrator with a range of experience from five to fifteen years. Each received a survey consisting of scenarios with forced-choice responses. However, an opportunity was given to all respondents to offer other solutions if necessary. In addition, respondents were provided an opportunity to add personal thoughts on ethics. These

administrators a.) responded to the survey, b.) rank-ordered the top four scenarios from their set of scenarios, and c.) completed an evaluation on the format of the survey, clarity of the scenarios and directions, and validity of the ethical situations. Based upon their responses, minor modifications were made each time.

Data Analysis

Results are reported using numerical count and percentages.

Percentages are employed to show how many of the responding participants chose each given response for the scenarios. These percentages vary for each scenario depending upon missing data and non-responses. Non-responses are identified as those surveys returned unanswered, surveys having no choice selected for the scenario, or surveys having more than one response for the scenario. Tables show comparisons between what is perceived to be the "most used" as opposed to the "most ethical" solution to each dilemma.

In analyzing the results, two standards are used. First, an "ethical response" is determined when 75% or more of the respondents select a response as ethical. Second, in order to compare perceived practice with ethical practice similar responses are combined and differences are compared.

Chapter IV FINDINGS

Three hundred principals of public elementary schools in Virginia were systematically selected to participate in this research study. Each participant was sent a survey containing four scenarios also selected randomly from a collection of twelve scenarios. The survey was entitled "A Study of Ethics and the Elementary Principal in Virginia."

The Survey

The final surveys submitted to the participants evolved over a six month period. In the beginning a group of twenty-one ethical scenarios (Appendix A) were developed using examples obtained from other studies and personal experiences. Administrators attending a doctoral seminar at Virginia Tech were asked to evaluate the appropriateness of each situation to determine if the situation was representative of what an elementary principal might encounter. These same individuals were asked to generate a list of possible solutions for each of the situations. From this procedure, eighteen scenarios emerged, were refined, and possible solutions added (Appendix B).

Three separate surveys, each containing six of the eighteen scenarios were field tested. For each scenario, two responses were needed: What was felt most administrators would do in the situation and what was felt to be the most ethical thing to do for that situation. Administrators and graduate students attending George Washington University and Virginia Tech were asked to read the scenarios and mark their responses. In addition, the participants rank

ordered the six scenarios to determine the top four most representative of ethical situations faced on the job. The field testing yielded the twelve refined scenarios used in the research project. The twelve scenarios were divided to create three surveys with four scenarios each. Each survey was sent to one hundred elementary principals in Virginia.

On November 1, 1992, three hundred surveys were mailed. During the first two weeks of the mailing, one hundred sixty (53%) of the surveys were returned. A follow-up postcard was mailed on November 14, 1992, as a friendly reminder to respond and return the survey. By November 27, 1992, two hundred (66%) of the surveys had been returned. A second mailing of one hundred surveys was mailed to non-respondents on December 1, 1992. An additional fifty were returned resulting in a final response rate of 83%. Of the one hundred participants receiving survey 1, eighty-one percent responded in a timely manner. Eighty-six percent of those receiving survey 2 responded and eighty-three percent of the principals returned survey 3.

The Results

In the twelve tables (1-12) depicting the information collected, each scenario is numbered. Responses provided by the participating principals for that scenario are listed and charted according to what principals viewed as being the action most principals would take and the action believed to be the most ethical. Responses are reported by numerical count and percentages. Any response selected by 75% or more of the principals was identified as being the most ethical decision for that dilemma.

The number of participants responding to the scenario is shown at the top of each table for that scenario. Non-responses (NR) are reported for each scenario below the appropriate table. Non-responses were identified as surveys which were returned unanswered, surveys having no choice selected for the dilemma, or surveys having more than one choice selected for the situation described.

Although the survey employed a forced choice format, subjects were given an opportunity to identify other solutions if they wished. These solutions are reported below the appropriate table. At the conclusion of each survey, participants were asked to add any thoughts relative to ethics and the elementary principalship. Those comments are listed in Table 13 following the discussion of the final scenario.

Scenario I

Mrs. Smith, principal, has a problem concerning the performance of Mrs. Culver, one of her third grade teachers. Mrs. Culver is 57 years old, has twenty seven years in the Virginia Retirement System, and is three years from retirement. She is late for work; her lessons are ill prepared; her classroom management is poor; and there are constant complaints from parents and numerous requests to have children removed from her class. Mrs. Smith has employed many remediation efforts in an attempt to help. Peer mentors and office personnel have been asked to work with Mrs. Culver as has central office instructional personnel; professional leave has been granted for visitations to master teacher classrooms; and personal "help" conferences between herself and Mrs. Culver have been conducted. All efforts to assist Mrs. Culver have been unsuccessful.

TABLE 1

Scenario 1

Number Responding = 81

RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Meet with the teacher again and discuss the severity of the situation and set goals for improvement.	25(31%)	14 (17%)
B. Begin dismissal proceedings immediately. The children are suffering.	15 (19%)	32 (40%)
C. Encourage the teacher to take early retirement.	20 (26%)	18 (22%)
D. Have the teacher work in a team teaching arrangement with a competent teacher. The competent teacher handles all the large group directed instruction while the "declining" teacher helps monitor guided practice, supervise recess, and grade papers.	9 (12%)	6 (7%)
E. Find her a non-teaching job in the system for the next three years.	1 (1%)	5 (6%)
F. Do nothing and let the teacher ride it out.	8(10%)	0
G. None of the above, but rather:	1 (1%)	6 (7%)

NR=2 (2%)

NR=0

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Choices C then D should be accomplished.
- b. In conjunction with appropriate supervisors, meet with teacher and give her a last opportunity to retire early. If she does not respond in agreement, inform her that her dismissal proceeding will begin immediately. This is assuming that the principal has all evaluations in order, a log of efforts to help her improve, and sufficient documentation of tardiness.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Write a mutual plan of action for improvement. If improvement is not evident in a reasonable period of time, dismissal proceedings should be initiated.
- b. Choices C then D should be accomplished
- c. Responses C then D should be used until retirement can be facilitated.
- d. Choices C,E, then B - the most ethical response includes several alternatives being offered to get the end results - the person away from the kids.
- e. Choices A, B, and C are parts of the corrective action process in our system.
- f. Do choice C. If that fails, go to choice B.

Additional comments:

- a. Ideally, the best response would be B. However if a plan for improvement has not been done previously, I have no option but to do A.
- b. There are levels in ethical decisions. I believe most principals would first try choice C then go to B as the most ethical. It was difficult to pick one as there are stepping stones in ethical behaviors.

Discussion: Scenario I

In the first situation the responding principals were divided in their opinion as to what most principals would do in the situation presented. Thirty-five principals (45%) believed most principals would try to remove the teacher from the classroom by encouraging early retirement or by beginning dismissal proceedings. Forty-three principals (54%) believed most principals would develop an improvement plan, place her in a non-teaching or team teaching situation, or do nothing and let her "ride it out" until retirement. A couple of the respondents qualified choices by stating that "there are stepping stones in ethical behavior and therefore corrective actions must be taken before dismissal proceedings begin." No one choice was identified as being the most ethical response. However, 79% of the principals felt that ethically they wanted to see the teacher improve (17%) or leave the profession altogether (62%). Another way of viewing the findings is to note that 68% of the principals felt that ethically the teacher should be removed from direct contact with the children (choices b, c, and e). Thirty-six principals (58%) believed this to be the practice of most principals.

Scenario 2

Mr. Hoover, principal, has received conflicting accounts of an incident regarding one of the fourth grade students at his school. Mrs Brown, the teacher, has indicated that Bobby Johnson became verbally abusive when she refused to allow him to sharpen his pencil. Upon contacting the parents about the situation, Mr. Hoover was informed that Mrs. Brown repeatedly provoked Bobby causing him to become abusive at which time she vowed to have him suspended for the remainder of the school year.

TABLE 2

<u>Scenario 2</u>	Number Responding =86	
RESPONSES	Most principles would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Agree with the parents that the teacher is in the wrong and indicate that censure will be applied in some form.	0	0
B. Have the boy transferred into another classroom with a teacher whose techniques and methods are well known to you, knowing this action will placate these parents.	1 (1%)	0
C. Call the teacher in and ask for some corroboration of the incidents; then proceed with action.	32 (37%)	9 (10%)
D. Indicate to the parents that you will take the matter up with the teacher, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.	39 (45%)	57 (66%)
E. Investigate. If allegations by the parents are true, place the teacher on a structured improvement plan.	6 (7%)	11 (13%)
F. Talk with the teacher and support her actions one hundred percent.	1 (1%)	0
G. None of the above, but rather:	2 (2%)	2 (2%)
	NR=5 (6%)	NR=7 (8%)

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Mrs. Brown should have told Mr. Hoover immediately. If she did, Mr. Hoover should have then dealt with student and other students in the class. If student was wrong, he should have taken disciplinary action. If teacher wrong, he should have taken corrective action.
- b. Conference with the parent and teacher separate and together.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Talk not only to the teacher about Bobby's behavior, but include an opportunity to discuss the matter with Bobby. Then proceed with action.
- b. Mrs. Brown should have told Mr. Hoover immediately. If she did, Mr. Hoover should have then dealt with student and other students in the class. If student was wrong, he should have taken disciplinary action. If teacher wrong, he should have taken corrective action.

Additional comments:

- a. I'm not sure what most principals would do, but I used choice E once and in hindsight, felt I should have done D.
- b. I question a structured plan - I would work with the teacher relative to communication skills and expect some of these strategies to be used when dealing with students and adults.
- c. After doing choice E also discipline the student for abusive language, if confirmed.
- d. Also, subtly ask other students in the classroom as to things they might have been hearing and seeing throughout the year without specifically naming a problem with this student or teacher.

Discussion: Scenario 2

The majority of the principals (89%) responding to this scenario felt that most principals would investigate the situation prior to making a final decision. Only one principal believed that principals would accept the teacher's word and support it without question. Although no one choice emerged as the most ethical response, seventy-seven of the principals (88%) felt that the most ethical action would be to talk to the teacher first before making a decision. One principal volunteered that she would work with the teacher on communication skills and expect some of the skills to be used when dealing with students and adults. Other principals felt that it was also necessary at some point to meet with the student and discuss his behavior in the matter.

Scenario 3

Ever since beginning an advanced degree program, Mrs. Edmonds, principal, has found free time to be at a premium. Evenings and weekends seem to be consumed by studying and meeting course requirements. However, with a slight schedule revision for the office staff, she realizes she can free up some time for one of the secretaries to type research papers and other writing assignments on a regular basis.

TABLE 3

<u>Scenario 3</u>		Number Responding = 83	
RESPONSES		Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A.	Have the secretary prepare coursework papers as time permits.	23 (28%)	1 (1%)
B.	Do not ask the secretary to perform work of a personal nature.	29 (35%)	44 (53%)
C.	Employ the secretary outside of regular working hours and compensate her for the work done (not from school funds).	30 (36%)	30 (36%)
D.	Request the secretary to work some additional hours after school or on the weekend.	0	0
E.	None of the above, but rather:	0	5 (6%)
		NR=1 (1%)	NR=3 (4%)

Most ethical response is: None of the above but rather:

- a. Principal should do her own work. If clerical assistance is needed, get someone unrelated to the current job.
- b. Reduce degree program work load or employ a private individual.
- c. Do own work.
- d. Hire someone she is not supervising.

Additional comments:

I think that if the secretary is asked and expresses an interest in doing the typing at home for pay it would be fine.

Discussion: Scenario 3

Twenty-three of the responding eighty-one principals (28%) felt that most principals would ask their secretaries to type course papers during working hours. The remaining fifty-nine principals (71%) believed that most principals would not follow that practice. One principal believed that requesting the secretary to type course papers during working hours was an ethical practice. Seventy-four principals (89%) believed that if the secretary should not type course papers during working hours. However, if she were requested to type course papers it should be done after working hours and compensated for by the principal.

Scenario 4

When approached by one of his sixth grade teachers for a recommendation as a math, science, and social studies teacher in a middle school, Mr. Parks, principal, examines his options from two perspectives. Not only does he view the teacher's job performance and attitude toward students as marginal, but he is a professional acquaintance of the principal of the middle school for whom the recommendation will be written.

TABLE 4

Scenario 4

Number Responding =83

RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Agree to provide a recommendation that would be "lukewarm" in nature.	9 (11%)	1 (1%)
B. Write a letter of recommendation that highlights the teacher's positive characteristics but does not misrepresent the teacher's performance.	27 (33%)	13 (16%)
C. Provide an accurate recommendation that details the overall performance of the teacher and let the teacher decide whether or not to use the reference.	10 (12%)	45 (54%)
D. Inform the teacher that you would not be able to provide a good recommendation.	3 (4%)	20 (24%)
E. Provide a generic recommendation but call the other principal to discuss further details of the teacher's ability.	32 (39%)	3 (4%)
F. None of the above, but rather:	0	0

NR=2 (2%)

NR=1 (1%)

Additional comments:

Using descriptive language to develop a picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the teacher would be appropriate.

Discussion: Scenario 4

Sixty-five principals (78%) felt that honesty with the teacher and honesty in the recommendation would be the ethical response. There was less consensus on what most principals would do when placed in the situation. Fifty-nine principals (72%) felt that most principals would write a letter highlighting the positive characteristics without misrepresenting the performance of the individual or write a generic recommendation and call the prospective principal with more explicit details. Only thirteen principals (16%) believed honesty with the teacher and the recommendation was the actual practice of most principals.

Scenario 5

Linda Hopkins, principal, is in her office one afternoon following the first grading period when Charlie Wilkins, president of the PTA, comes to visit. He requests that his daughter be reassigned to another classroom citing poor teaching and classroom management as reasons. Linda realizes that Mr. Wilkins' concerns are justified for she has received many parental complaints. However, Linda has a policy that students are not moved once they are assigned to a classroom for the year.

TABLE 5

Scenario 5		Number Responding =81	
RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...	
A. Hold a conference with the principal, parent, and teacher but keep the student where she is.	35 (43%)	20(25%)	
B. Request that the parent meet with the teacher to inform her of his dissatisfaction. If nothing is accomplished as a result of the meeting, have the parent make a formal request in writing citing reasons for moving the child. Move the child.	28 (35%)	24 (30%)	
C. Change the policy and move the child.	5 (6%)	0	
D. Observe the teacher and devise a correction plan of action.	6 (8%)	25 (30%)	
E. None of the above, but rather:	5 (6%)	11 (14%)	
	NR=2 (2%)	NR=1 (1%)	

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Three respondents felt that choices A and D should be used simultaneously.
- b. Move the child. It is best not to change the policy, just make an exception.
- c. Mrs. Hopkins should have done a better job of placement for this student. Secondly, she has locked herself in with a policy she has put in place herself, you should not lock yourself into "never" situations. She should review her policy and do what's best for children not just making policy. Mrs. Hopkins has a lot to learn about policy and politics.
- d. The principal should be aware of "justified concerns" not so much because of parental complaints, but because of regular principal observations. Meet with the teacher and make her aware of the problem and assist the teacher devising a correction plan. Notify parent of changes to be made in instruction and classroom management.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Three respondents felt that choices A and D should be used simultaneously.
- b. Hold a conference with the principal, parent, and teacher. Discuss what can be done about the situation. Make plans. Monitor and if the situation does not improve during a period of time, move the child.
- c. If she knew there was a problem corrective plans should already be underway. Conference should be held with three parties.
- d. Hold conference with parent, teacher, and principal. State the concerns. Provide time for improvement. If concern continues, meet again with the parties concerned. Move the child if the problem cannot be resolved.
- e. Do B then D.
- f. Choices A and D are steps to be taken in our system.
- g. Do a combination of A and D.
- h. Mrs. Hopkins should have done a better job of placement for this student. Secondly, she has locked herself in with a policy she has put in place herself, you should not lock yourself into "never" situations. She should review her policy and do what's best for children not just making policy. Mrs. Hopkins has a lot to learn about policy and politics.
- i. Combination of B and D. I would never have as a policy one that won't move a child if it is in the best interest of the child.
- j. The principal should be aware of "justified concerns" not so much because of parental complaints, but because of regular principal observations. Meet with the teacher and make her aware of the problem and assist the teacher devising a correction plan. Notify parent of changes to be made in instruction and classroom management.

Discussion: Scenario 5

The majority of respondents felt that most principals would choose a course of action involving either a three-way conference (parent, teacher, principal) or a two-way conference (parent, teacher) to discuss concerns in an attempt to iron out differences. Twenty-eight of the principals (35%) felt that if the meeting failed to solve the issue, most principals would then move the child. Only five principals (6%) believed that most principals would change the policy and move the child. No one choice emerged as being the most ethical. However, two general options were available to principals in this situation. Move the child or keep the child where she is. Forty-five principals (51%) believed most principals would keep the child where she is and fifty-two (58%) believed that to be the ethical thing to do. Thirty-five principals (41%) believed that most principals would move the child and twenty-nine (33%) believed it was the most ethical thing to do.

In addition, seventy-four principals (86%) believed most principals would involve the teacher in the decision-making process. This was also felt by eighty-one principals (86%) to be an ethical practice as well.

Scenario 6

After signing for the case of oranges and a package of assorted cheese, John Darling, principal, watched the UPS truck pull away. As he read the attached card, he recalled a discussion with the yearbook company representative that took place last summer and remembered being asked whether his family enjoyed oranges and cheese during the Christmas holidays. At the time, the question seemed to be nothing more than the salesman's effort at casual conversation. Now it was evident there was a specific purpose.

TABLE 6

Scenario 6

Number Responding =83

RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Accept the oranges and cheese but say nothing about it.	5 (6%)	0
B. Recognize this as a common business practice and accept the items as a simple courtesy extended by the sales representative.	22 (27%)	8 (10%)
C. Accept the items, but share them with the faculty and staff.	37 (45%)	18 (22%)
D. Call the vendor and ask him to come and pick up the gift items. Report the incident to the central office.	14 (17%)	51 (61%)
E. Let the oranges and cheese sit and rot.	1 (1%)	0
F. None of the above, but rather:	2 (2%)	4 (5%)
	NR=2 (2%)	NR=2 (2%)

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

- a. I don't know, I've never received anything and others don't talk if they do.
- b. Call the vendor to pick up the items.

Most ethical response is: None of the above:

- a. Call the vendor. Inform him you can't accept the gift.
- b. Sell the items and put the money in the instructional account of the office.
- c. Accept the items and share them with the students and staff.
- d. Call the vendor to pick up the items.

Additional comments:

I feel the matter could be handled between the principal and company without a call to the central office.

Discussion: Scenario 6

There was much diversity with respect to the responses to this situation. Twenty-two principals (27%) felt most principals would accept the gift as a business practice yet only eight (10%) saw it as an ethical practice. On the other hand, fourteen principals (17%) felt that their colleagues would return the items while fifty-one (61%) felt that it was the most ethical thing to do. A total of sixty-four principals (78%) proposed that most principals would keep the gift and use it in some manner to benefit the staff, the students, or both. Fifty-three principals (61%) believed that ethically the items should be returned to the vendor. However, if the items were kept, they should be shared with the faculty and staff and not kept personally.

Scenario 7

Bob Hopkins, principal, listened intently as Clay Boyer, a P. E. teacher described the bruises he saw on one of his fifth grade students during class. Bob explained that when he took the student into his office after class, the student broke down and revealed that her mother would frequently become enraged and beat her. As principal, Bob knew the family; it hardly seemed possible the situation being described could be true. The mother was active in community affairs, and the father held a district manager's position with an insurance firm. As he considered the information, Bob recalled a recent TV special on child abuse which reported that in 75% of the cases studied there was no proof of abuse. Furthermore, the stigma of being reported and having an investigation made by Social Services severely damaged many innocent families.

TABLE 7

Scenario 7

Number Responding =81

RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Report the situation immediately to the Department of Social Services for their investigation.	44 (54%)	59 (73%)
B. Contact the parents to explain the allegation, and determine if there is a need for further investigation.	0	1 (1%)
C. Speak with the student; then contact her parents to arrange a conference before contacting Social Services.	8 (10%)	1 (1%)
D. Conduct a discreet investigation in the school and report the matter to Social Services, if the facts warrant such action.	25 (31%)	18 (22%)
E. Do nothing.	1 (1%)	0
F. None of the above, but rather:	0	0
	NR=3 (4%)	NR=2 (3%)

Discussion: Scenario 7

Virginia state law requires that administrators contact the Department of Social Services immediately whenever a case of child abuse is suspected. With this in mind it was not surprising to note that all respondents except one believed most principals would contact the Department of Social Services. However, it was surprising that respondents differed in their thoughts as to how quickly Social Services would be involved. Forty-four principals (54%) felt most principals would contact Social Services immediately, twenty-five (31%) felt that principals would conduct their own discreet investigation first and report it only if they felt it was warranted, and eight (10%) believed that most principals would speak to the child before involving Social Services. No one response received the 75% necessary to identify it as being the most ethical decision. However, by grouping the responses, seventy-seven principals (95%) would contact Social Services. The only difference was some principals would contact Social Services immediately (73%), as per the law, and some would conduct a quick and discreet investigation first (22%) and report it only if they felt it was warranted.

Scenario 8

As a result of the past two administrative staff meetings, Louise Marshall, principal, had become aware of the superintendent's concern over the lack of minorities in administrative positions. All principals had been strongly encouraged to hire minorities as assistant principals for their school programs. In her last meeting with Personnel, she was informed that due to increasing enrollment she would qualify for an additional assistant principal and was handed a list of qualified persons with the minority candidates' names starred from which to select her candidate. Louise recognized one of the names on the list as belonging to a dynamic, people-oriented, white male with previous administrative experience in another system and knew that he would add a new dimension to her school program.

TABLE 8

Scenario 8		Number Responding =86	
RESPONSES		Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A.	Follow the superintendent's recommendation and recommend a minority.	38 (44%)	1 (1%)
B.	Recommend the desired candidate and refuse to change the decision.	1 (1%)	0
C.	Recommend the desired candidate and wait for Personnel to change the decision.	5 (5%)	0
D.	Refuse to make a recommendation under the requirements outlined and have Personnel choose the candidate.	0	0
E.	Use a structured interview process, rate each applicant, and recommend the best candidate regardless of school policy.	28 (33%)	58 (67%)
F.	Investigate the qualifications of all those listed before making a recommendation.	11 (13%)	16 (19%)
G.	None of the above, but rather:	1 (1%)	6 (7%)
		NR=2 (2%)	NR=5 (6%)

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

I would interview many candidates; Caucasian and minorities. I would read their files. I would rate them. If one was considerably better for my school, I would recommend hiring that person.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Use a structured interview process. Rate each applicant within the minority grouping; rate each applicant within the majority grouping. Compare the scores of the top minority and top majority applicants. Discuss with personnel. Select the minority unless the majority far outweighs minority.
- b. Release no information regarding a policy - as such. However, after implementing a structured interview process, the principal could list the top two or three choices and discuss them with the Personnel Department, which finalizes the choice and makes the ultimate decision since they are responsible for the hiring procedures.
- c. In my situation I would recommend not hire. I would check out references of all candidates and interview accordingly. I would recommend the white male if I felt he was the best and let the Superintendent and Board change it if they were not in agreement. I'm responsible for my school and what's best for it.
- d. Combine E and F.
- e. I would interview many candidates; Caucasian and minorities. I would read their files. I would rate them. If one was considerably better for my school, I would recommend hiring that person.
- f. Investigate all candidates. If the choice remains the original choice because of quality then recommend that candidate. If minority candidates are equally strong, choose a minority for the position.

Additional comments

I consider a male to be a minority - especially in elementary school.

Discussion: Scenario 8

In a situation with racial overtones, thirty-eight of the principals (44%) believed that most principals would follow the superintendent's recommendation and recommend a minority. Interestingly, only one principal saw it as the most ethical thing to do. Fifty-eight principals (67%) saw using some form of a structured interview process as being the most ethical. If the choices were consolidated, they would fall into two groups. Should principals follow the superintendent's request or not follow the request. Eighty principals (93%) believed that ethically principals should not follow the superintendent's request but should conduct some form of structured interview process and recommend the most qualified candidate.

A number of principals wrote detailed descriptions of what they would do and saw that procedure as being the most ethical regardless of the superintendent's "strong encouragement to hire minorities." Consider two such responses:

- a. Use a structured interview process. Rate each applicant within the minority grouping; rate each applicant within the majority grouping. Compare the scores of the top minority and top majority applicants. Discuss with personnel. Select the minority unless the majority far outweighs minority.
- b. Release no information regarding a policy - as such. However, after implementing a structured interview process, the principal could list the top two or three choices and discuss them with the Personnel Department, which finalizes the choice and makes the ultimate decision since they are responsible for the hiring procedures.

In the examples both would do the preliminary work, but one principal would select a candidate to recommend and the other would leave the ultimate decision to the Personnel Department.

Scenario 9

Although the accreditation standards require that principals spend a minimum of 40% of their time in the supervision of instruction and curriculum development, Mary Lester, principal, realizes her personal schedule falls short of the requirement. The state accreditation report which each school submits annually must be signed by the district superintendent and requires the principal to cite as deficiencies any standards that are not being met.

TABLE 9

Scenario 9	Number Responding =86	
RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Inform the superintendent that the standard is not being met and request additional assistance to meet job responsibilities.	14 (16%)	48 (56%)
B. Work with state department personnel to establish flexible percentage figures which take into account particular circumstances in each school.	4 (5%)	21 (24%)
C. Report that the standard is being met.	61 (71%)	2 (2%)
D. None of the above, but rather:	4 (5%)	10 (12%)
	NR=3 (3%)	NR=5 (6%)

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Rearrange the schedule to meet the standards
- b. Report that the standard is being met, than proceed to ensure that it is.
- c. It is up to the principal to fix their schedule to meet the requirements. The principal may have to delegate other work to other people.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Report that the standard is being met, than proceed to ensure that it is.
- b. Request that the superintendent work with the state department to establish flexible percentage figures.
- c. This is a no win situation. Superintendent would consider you incompetent and the State Department has had the 40% rule in force for many years and will not change readily. I would mark C as most ethical and work behind the scenes with the Superintendent's office and his support staff to become more "effective" with the 40% rule. Hopefully this would lead Central Office influencing State Department of Education.
- d. Rearrange schedule to meet the standards.
- e. I would ask for a definition from the state as to the interpretation of the standard to make sure that I do not meet it. It could be the state definition is a liberal one and a number of activities could be considered. If I could not reach it, I would ask for advice from central office in terms of completing the form and ask for assistance in time management.
- f. Develop strategies to meet the standards by taking individual initiative.
- g. Make needed adjustments in her personal schedule to ethically meet the standards.
- h. There should have been status reports made to the Administrative Office to ensure all standards were being met. If his principal was not meeting the 40% standard, she should have been seeking help from other principals or upper Administration. This should be addressed early on.

Discussion: Scenario 9

In this situation dealing with accreditation standards, the majority of respondents perceived the actions of most principals differing from what could be considered as most ethical. Sixty-one principals (71%) believed that most principals would report that the standard was being met while two principals (2%) saw this as an ethical practice. Sixty-nine principals (80%) felt that the ethical thing to do was to be honest and report that the standard was not being met or needed adjustment. Only eighteen principals (21%) believed this to be the actual practice of most principals. One respondent had the following to add.

This is a no-win situation. Superintendent would consider you incompetent and the State Department has had the 40% rule in force for many years and will not change readily. I would mark C as most ethical and work behind the scenes with the Superintendent's office and his support staff to become more "effective" with the 40% rule. Hopefully this would lead Central Office influencing State Department of Education.

Scenario 10

Walking through the second floor corridor on his way to the office, Chuck Osborne, principal, paused by Gladys Newman's homeroom and heard her reading the "thought for the day." For the past three years, Chuck has been aware that Gladys, wife of an influential minister in the community, includes in her daily homeroom period the reading of a devotional and a moment of silent prayer.

TABLE 10

Scenario 10

Number Responding =86

RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Conduct a private conference with the teacher and direct her to discontinue the practice of having devotionals or moments of silent prayer during the school day.	33 (38%)	40 (47%)
B. Talk with the teacher to determine the nature of the material being used.	22 (26%)	21 (24%)
C. Ignore the situation until someone complains or a problem develops	13 (15%)	1 (1%)
D. Direct the teacher to examine her practice so she does not have a problem, if someone questions the homeroom activities.	9 (10%)	9 (10%)
E. Inform the teacher she could have the moment of silent prayer but would not be permitted to read the devotional aloud.	2 (2%)	4 (5%)
F. None of the above, but rather:	3 (3%)	4 (5%)
	NR=4 (5%)	NR=7 (8%)

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

Inform teacher she can have a moment of silence. Discuss the nature of the thought for the day," then together decide the proper course of action.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Inform teacher she can have a moment of silence. Discuss the nature of the thought for the day; then together decide the proper course of action.
- b. Only a "minute" of silence is allowed in Virginia.
- c. At an opportune time, all teachers need to be made aware of school's role in regard to prayer, pledge of allegiance, and/or any other religious activities that might be involved in school. Thereafter, any questionable practices that principal has knowledge, should be discussed privately with Mrs. Newman in an effort to avoid a problem before it develops.

Additional comments:

If the nature of the material is religious or secular in any way, then the teacher must be directed to discontinue the reading of the material.

Discussion: Scenario 10

In 1963 the Supreme Court of the United States ruled it unconstitutional to have devotionals or silent prayer in school. Even so, only thirty-three principals (38%) indicated most principals would direct the teacher to discontinue the practice of devotionals or silent prayer during the school day. Fifteen percent thought principals would ignore the situation. No one choice was identified as the most ethical response. Seventy-four principals (86%) favored taking some action as being the ethical thing to do. Only one respondent felt that ignoring the situation until someone complained was ethical. Four principals (5%) believed that ethically it was permissible to have a moment of silent prayer but not a devotional. One respondent added that "at an opportune time, all teachers need to be made aware of the school's role in regard to prayer, pledge of allegiance, and/or any other religious activities that might be involved in school." In this comment, the pledge of allegiance seemed to be included as a religious practice.

Scenario 11

Stacey Vickers has maintained an "A" average throughout her elementary school career. However, a grade of "C" for the final grading period in mathematics resulting in a final course grade of "B" has brought complaints from Stacey's parents. They contend that the teacher was unfair and most of the pupils received final grades that were at least one letter grade below the average maintained for the year. In presenting their case to the principal, the Vickers indicate that unless some immediate action is taken to raise Stacey's grade, they will take the issue before the school superintendent.

TABLE 11

<u>Scenario 11</u>	Number Responding =81	
RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...
A. Thoroughly investigate the situation by securing information from all of the parents and students concerned and from the teacher; arrange a meeting among all of them in order to make an informed, reasoned decision at the building level.	5 (6%)	13 (16%)
B. Investigate the matter, and after arriving at a decision, inform the parents and teacher.	23 (28%)	15 (19%)
C. Maintain a position of support for the teacher, and inform the parents the situation would be examined and a decision rendered.	39 (48%)	35 (43%)
D. Hold a meeting with the parents, the student in question, and the teacher to arrive at a decision.	10 (12%)	14 (17%)
E. Allow the parents to go to the superintendent. Talk with the teacher about grades and the importance of maintaining accuracy of records. Support the teacher but monitor progress.	1 (1%)	2 (2%)
F. Change the grade.	0	0
G. None of the above, but rather:	1 (1%)	1 (1%)
	NR=2 (2%)	NR=1 (1%)

Most principals would: None of the above, but rather:

Ask the parents to meet with the teacher to get the facts; involve the principal if parents and teacher still see things differently.

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Ask the parents to meet with the teacher to get the facts; involve the principal if parents and teacher still see things differently.
- b. Choices B and E are steps in our system.

Discussion: Scenario 11

For many parents student grades are of paramount importance. In this situation parents of an "A" student were displeased with a final grade of "B," blamed the teacher for the grade, and wanted it changed. None of the respondents saw most principals as changing the grade nor identified it as being the most ethical response. Thirty-nine principals (48%) saw principals as supporting the teacher. Thirty-five principals (43%) identified this decision as being the most ethical. A total of three principals allowed parents going to the superintendent as being a viable solution. Although no one response was identified as being the most ethical choice, there was agreement among seventy-seven principals (95%) to investigate the situation as opposed to blindly supporting the teacher or the student.

Scenario 12

Since becoming principal, Tom Prentice is convinced he needs a reliable source of information in order to understand the issues dividing the staff from the administration and arrive at some potential solutions. Two months of listening, observing and conferencing have brought little in the way of useful information. Aware that a group of five teachers usually meet daily in a small teacher conference room during a common planning period, Tom considers using the intercom system in his office to listen to their conversation.

TABLE 12

Scenario 12		Number Responding =83	
RESPONSES	Most principals would...	Most ethical response is...	
A. Avoid using the intercom system to listen to teacher conversations.	27 (33%)	17 (20%)	
B. Call the staff together in a meeting and openly discuss the perceived problems.	29 (35%)	41 (49%)	
C. Meet with the five teachers individually or as a group to seek their assistance.	25 (30%)	21 (25%)	
D. Use the intercom. No one would ever know.	0	0	
E. None of the above, but rather:	0	2 (2%)	
	NR=2 (2%)	NR=2 (2%)	

Most ethical response is: None of the above, but rather:

- a. Do A and B.
- b. Use school improvement process to identify issues and reach consensus on solutions.

Additional comments:

Another options would be to address the perceived problem with advisory or grade level committees.

Discussion: Scenario 12

The ethical issue in this situation was whether or not to use the intercom to eavesdrop on a group of teachers. No respondent identified using the intercom for eavesdropping to help solve problems as an actual practice or an ethical practice of principals. Fifty-four respondents (65%) believed that most principals would confront the issue by either meeting with the entire staff (35%) or meeting with just the teachers in question (30%). Twenty-seven principals believed that most principals would simply avoid using the intercome. Sixty-two principals responding (74%) felt ethically some form of meeting was necessary to confront the problem. Forty-one (49%) believed calling the entire staff together was the ethical choice while twenty-one (25%) felt meeting with the five individuals was the ethical decision.

TABLE 13
Principals' Reflections on Ethics and the Principalsip

- a. I have found that it's always best to personally meet with those involved in the incident to allow for better communication of their concern.
- b. When I first became a principal, I did what I thought was ethically correct. Now, my decisions are somewhat shaped to keep parents from going to the school board office. It seems that only complaining parents are heard.
- c. Ethics is a timely subject since so much of our work is conducted in shades of grey while the policies we implement are in black and white.
- d. At times pragmatism becomes more important than absolute ethics. Ethics can become compromised when the "boss," or political consideration bring heavy pressure to bear.
- e. Many decisions are made that go against both the teacher and parent because as principal, I attempt to do what is best for the child. My reasoning and motives may be questioned but my concern for the child is never compromised. Most decisions are difficult because there is never an absolute black and white choice; there is mainly a gray area.
- f. I often find that 1 + 1 does not add up to "2" in school business. Two principals I know who are "black or white" and not "gray" in their decisions have poor staff morale and large turn over.
- g. I think that principals who have studied current perspectives on shared management, instructional leadership, and ethical behavior behave differently from old scholars who rule, spy, and dominate.
- h. I do not think all principals make all the right decisions. Sometimes things happen so fast, a person may react or over-react. Some don't react at all.
- i. Many times situations warrant actions that I find to be most prudent as well as ethical.

At the conclusion of each survey was a place for participants to add additional comments with regards to ethics or the ethical predispositions of elementary principals. The comments offered were enlightening. It seems evident by those offering comments that the child and what is best for the child take precedent over the teacher and/or administrative policies. Some felt that it was difficult to determine ethical decisions since many situations confronted have various perspectives and it is necessary to examine all of the angles before making decisions. One respondent offered that many of the decisions made are made to keep parents from going to the superintendent or school board while another respondent stated, "Sometimes things happen so fast, a person may react or over-react. Some don't react at all."

CHAPTER V

Summary, Analysis, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter first presents a summary of the study. The summary is followed by an analysis of the major findings representing the data collected. Finally, the conclusions and recommendations are presented.

Summary

This study was undertaken for the purposes of describing and comparing the ethical predispositions of elementary principals. Randomly selected elementary principals in Virginia responded to four of twelve school-based ethical dilemmas. Six dilemmas concerned administrative issues and six contained personnel issues. Two of the twelve situations had legal implications. The participant's responses were compared to determine whether differences existed between (1) what the elementary principals perceived to be the most likely response of principals to the scenarios versus (2) what they believed to be the most ethical response. A total of 250 out of 300 elementary principals returned the mail survey questionnaire resulting in a response rate of 83%.

In analyzing the results, two standards were used. First, an "ethical response" was determined when 75% or more of the respondents selected a response as ethical. Second, in order to compare perceived practice with ethical practice similar responses were combined and differences were compared. Administrators were not always in agreement as to the one best

ethical response to the problem situations. In fact, at times they often believed that most principals would react in a manner other than what they perceived to be the ethical choice. Responses to the scenarios seemed to depend on the situation, the time, and the conditions placed upon the individuals.

Analysis

There were four scenarios that had poorly defined ethical situations or failed to produce variation in responses (likely or ethical). Those scenarios were 2, 5, 11, 12. Responding principals did identify differences between actual practice and ethical practice in scenarios 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Elementary administrators were not always in agreement as to what was the ethical response to problem situations. This was especially true in the situations involving legal issues. In the case of possible child abuse and reporting to the Department of Social Services (scenario 7), there was little specific agreement among principals. This was of particular interest since Virginia state law requires that administrators contact the Department of Social Services immediately whenever a case of child abuse is suspected. Although seventy-seven principals (95%) felt that most principals would report the suspected child abuse, they differed in their belief as to how quickly Social Services would be involved. Only forty-four principals (54%) believed that most principals would report the incident immediately while twenty-five principals (31%) believed that most principals would conduct their own investigation first and report the incident to Social Services only if they felt it was necessary.

Eighteen principals (22%) responded that conducting their own investigation first was the ethical action.

Another legal issue addressed in the scenarios concerned a principal who discovered a teacher reading a "thought for the day" to her class and knew that this practice included a devotional and a moment of silent prayer (scenario 10). In 1963, the United States Supreme Court ruled devotionals or silent prayer in school unconstitutional. Therefore, the ethical response should be "direct the teacher to discontinue the practice of having devotionals or moments of silent prayer during the school day." Only thirty-three principals (38%) believed that to be the actual practice among principals; only forty (47%) identified it as the ethical choice. Some respondents felt that most principals would still allow silent prayer but not devotionals (2%) and four principals (4%) felt that to be ethical.

Principals, when faced with censure from superintendents or superiors, may choose actions different from those they feel to be the most ethical. Scenario 9 contained a situation concerning accreditation standards. Should a principal report a standard being met when in fact it was not being met? Sixty-one (71%) of the principals believed that most principals would report the standard as having been met even though 80% felt the ethical response is to report the standard had not been met. Similar results were found in scenario 8 regarding a superintendent's strong suggestion to hire minorities. Thirty-eight principals (44%) believed that most principals would follow the superintendent's suggestion without question; only one principal felt that doing so was ethical. Most respondents favored some type of structured interview process to identify the best candidate for the job regardless of race as the ethical choice.

When facing a decision with potential personal consequences, an administrator may choose the more beneficial over the more ethical action. Three scenarios addressed this issue. Scenario 6 dealt with whether or not to accept a gift from a vendor. Sixty-five (78%) of the principals responding believed that most principals would accept the gift while only twenty-eight (34%) principals saw this as an ethical practice. Fifty-three (64%) of the principals believed that the ethical choice was to return (or fail to accept) the gift. Should principals ask their secretaries to type course papers on school time? This issue was addressed in scenario 3. Although 71% of the principals believed that most principals did not follow the practice, twenty-three principals (28%) believed that most principals would do so. In scenario 4, sixty-eight principals (83%) believed that most principals would write a lukewarm/generic recommendation of some kind for a marginal teacher requesting a transfer to another school. However sixty-five respondents (78%) felt that the ethical choice was to be honest with the teacher and refuse to write the recommendation or write a recommendation "that is accurate and details the overall performance of the teacher and let the teacher decide whether or not to use it."

There were two situations which had inadequately defined ethical dilemmas, if in fact they represented ethical problems at all. One concerned a teacher provoking a student to anger and then threatening to have the child suspended (scenario 2). A second situation involved a parental request to have a student removed from the teacher's classroom due to incompetent teaching practices even if that reassignment went against pre-established policy adopted by the principal (scenario 5). The ethical question, if present, in each scenario

would need to be addressed following an investigation. In each of the situations cited, the respondents were given "opt out" choices. These choices involved the opportunity to investigate prior to making a final decision. Although investigation is important in making an informed and ethical decision, it was not intended to represent an ethical option for either of the situations. In scenario 2, provoking a child to anger and then threatening suspension, the choices failed to identify an ethical issue or provide ethical options. Choices c, d, and e identified equivalent choices; discuss the matter with the teacher, ask for corroboration from the teacher, investigate allegation and then make a decision. Respondents (89%) indicated that most principals would choose one of these methods in dealing with the problem and 80% felt that those were the ethical choices. Scenario 5, moving a child because of incompetent teaching practices, seemed to offer a perplexing set of responses as was evidenced by the number of additional comments offered by the participants. The respondents were unclear as to the ethical dilemma; adhere to a self-imposed policy or do what is best for the child and move her to another teacher's classroom. As written, this scenario may be a political or an administrative problem but not an ethical problem. It was evidently a "no-win" situation to most of the respondents.

Two scenarios produced little discrimination in choices and, therefore, may be considered poor scenarios. Scenario 11 involved changing a student's grade. Every respondent (100%) felt that most principals acted ethically by not changing the grade. The diversity of responses came in how the principals should handle the parents politically. Scenario 12, the principal's use of the intercom to gain information about problems in the school, also failed to

produce a range of responses. In this scenario every respondent (100%) agreed that to use the intercom was both unethical and not a practice used by elementary principals in Virginia. The diversity of responses occurred in how to address the problem with the faculty at the school.

Conclusions

"At times pragmatism becomes more important than absolute ethics. Ethics can become compromised when the boss, or political considerations bring heavy pressure to bear." This statement by one of the participants seems to imply that reactions to problem situations depend on the individuals involved, the situation, the time, and the regulations placed upon the individuals. Principals seem to bring to each situation their experiences, both past and present, and their beliefs. They seem to respond to ethical dilemmas based on a broad spectrum of variables such as experiences, expectations, and legal restrictions. Another participant had this to add. "When I first became a principal, I did what I thought was ethically correct. Now, my decisions are somewhat shaped to keep parents from going to the school board office."

Based upon the data and information collected from the elementary principals it may be concluded that

1. In many cases (6 of 12), there is an inverse relationship between what principals perceive to be the action taken by most principals in problem situations and the action perceived to be the most ethical. In other words, principals in this study perceive that most elementary principals act in a manner different than what they believed to be ethical behavior.
2. Some administrators may be influenced by factors other than their own ethical beliefs when making decisions. These factors may include district guidelines, state regulations, federal law, personal/career needs, and loyalty to professionals.

3. With two exceptions, there was little agreement on what was deemed to be the one best ethical action in the situations presented in the study.
4. When facing a decision with potential personal consequences some administrators will make choices on factors other than ethics.
5. Principals may not be clear on school law issues such as prayer in school and reporting suspected child abuse cases. If they know the law, some seem reluctant to follow the law to the letter.
6. Ethics is a nebulous concept at best. There are few definitive answers when dealing with problem situations. In the words of one participant, "It is difficult to make black and white decisions when living in a gray world. In fact, those principals who do make black and white decisions often find themselves facing low staff morale."

Recommendations

"Ethics is a timely subject since so much of our work is conducted in shades of grey while the policies we implement are in black and white."

Comments such as this from one of the principals have confirmed a belief that ethics should be an essential component in educational administration training programs. Despite the fact that uniformity in ethical behavior cannot be expected, there is still a need to prepare principals for the type of ethical dilemmas they may face. It is also important for principals to understand that whatever action they take, they may be called upon to supply reasonable and plausible explanations for their actions. Therefore, the following recommendations are offered to colleagues, professional organizations, and administrator preparation programs to help raise the level of administrator's awareness related to ethical issues faced in every day situations.

1. Provide in-service programs on current legal decisions and review old legal decisions.
2. Conduct and/or attend seminars on ethics.
3. Adopt and publicize statements concerning ethics by professional organizations.
4. Infuse the topic of ethics into the required course work for programs in educational administration.
5. Create a course in ethics for programs in educational administration.

This study is simply a beginning in discussing the importance of ethics as a viable topic in administrative training. However problems faced in this study

may be worthy of note for future researchers wishing to study the concept of ethics in educational administration.

1. In retrospect it was obvious that some of the scenarios were not written in enough detail. More investigation on the part of the principal needed to be detailed in some of the scenarios. This would eliminate the "opt out" choice of investigation and force a decision by respondents.
2. It was necessary to group responses for the purpose of comparing practice with ethical choices. The researcher had to make post hoc decisions as to which responses were similar. Future researchers in this area should offer a better list of responses that clearly discriminate choices for each scenario.
3. Some of the choices did not seem to present ethical dilemmas for the respondents as was evident when 100% agreed on an ethical choice. More thought and attention to detail should be given to selecting and wording ethical dilemmas and choice responses. This should cause future participants to think and reflect on the problems and force them to make difficult decisions.

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APPENDIX A

HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP! HELP!

Below are listed possible ethical problems faced by elementary principals in the performance of their duties. Please read each of the scenarios and mark (Yes) if you think that it is a valid problem faced by elementary principals. Mark (No) if you do not. Also, please take the time to jot down some possible solutions for each of the dilemmas.

1. With only three years until retirement, Mrs. Culver's performance as a third grade teacher has declined dramatically. She is late for work; her lessons are ill prepared; her classroom management has suffered; and there are constant complaints from parents and numerous requests to have children removed from her class. Many remediation efforts have been attempted by Mrs. Smith, the school principal. Peer mentors have been asked to work with Mrs. Culver as has central office instructional personnel in an attempt to correct the problems. Mrs. Smith has granted professional leave to Mrs. Culver to enable her to visit classrooms of exemplary teachers. She has also conducted numerous conferences with Mrs. Culver. All efforts to assist Mrs. Culver have been unsuccessful.
(YES) (NO)
2. Mr. Hover, principal of Hopkins Elementary School, has received conflicting accounts of an incident in which a student had become verbally abusive because the teacher had refused to allow him to sharpen his pencil. The principal also received reports that the teacher repeatedly provoked the student and had vowed to have her suspended for the remainder of the school year. This was not the first incident in which the teacher over-reacted to a minor incident.
(YES) (NO)
3. Ever since beginning an advanced degree program, Mrs. Edmonds, principal of Happy Achers Elementary School, has found free time to be at a premium. Evenings and weekends seem to be consumed by studying and meeting course requirements. However, with a slight schedule revision for the office staff, she realizes she can free up some time for one of the secretaries to type course research papers and other writing assignments on a regular basis. **(YES) (NO)**
4. When approached by one of his sixth grade teachers for a recommendation as a content teacher (Math, Science, Social Studies) in a middle school, Mr. Parks, elementary principal, examines his options from two perspectives. Not only does he view the teacher's job performance and attitude toward students as marginal, but he is a

professional acquaintance of the principal of the middle school for whom the recommendation will be written. **(YES) (NO)**

5. One of the items Mary Elder, school principal, had on her desk requiring immediate attention was the awarding of the contract to the photography company to take student pictures. Traditionally the sale of the student pictures was an important fund raising effort for the school. In each of the past two years, profits realized by the school amounted to 50% of the total sales. However with the steady rise in the price of student pictures, Mary wondered if she should eliminate or reduce the school's profit margin to bring down student cost or maintain the same contractual arrangement that was in effect. **(YES) (NO)**
6. As administrator of her school, Judy Ervin, is expected to be present during eligibility and/or placement meetings of students being considered for special education programs and services. With the increasing demands on her time and the unpredictable nature of her schedule, Judy met with her assistant principal to devise a procedure to be used when she is unable to attend one of the meetings. **(YES) (NO)**
7. Linda Hopkins, principal of Lincoln Elementary School was in her office one afternoon following the first grading period. Charlie Wilkins, president of the PTA and a very vocal as well as involved member of the community, comes to visit. He requests that his daughter be reassigned from Mrs. Bowling's class to Miss Winter's class for academic and disciplinary differences. Linda realizes that Mr. Wilkins concerns are justified because of many parental complaints over the years. She has also conducted numerous conferences with Mrs. Bowling in an attempt to correct classroom management and academic difficulties. However, Linda has a long standing policy that students are not moved once they are assigned to a classroom for the year. **(YES) (NO)**
8. After signing for the case of oranges and package of assorted cheese, John Darling, principal watched the UPS truck pull away. As he read the attached card, he recalled a discussion with the yearbook company representative that took place last summer, and remembered being asked whether his family enjoyed oranges and cheese during the Christmas holidays. At the time, the question seemed to be nothing more than the salesman's effort at casual conversation. Now it was evident there was a specific purpose. **(YES) (NO)**
9. Bob Hopkins, elementary administrator, listened intently as Clay Boyer, a P. E. teacher described the bruises he saw on one of his fifth grade students during class. Bob explained that when he took the student into his office after class, the student broke down and revealed that her

mother would frequently become enraged and beat her. As principal, Bob knew the family; it hardly seemed possible the situation being described could be true. The mother was active in community affairs, and the father held a district manager's position with an insurance firm. As he considered the information, Bob recalled a recent TV special on child abuse which reported that in 75% of the cases studied there was no proof of abuse. Furthermore, the stigma of being reported and having an investigation made by Social Services severely damaged many innocent families. **(YES) (NO)**

10. As a result of the past two administrative staff meetings, Louise Marshall, principal of Alexander Elementary School, has become aware of the superintendent's concern over the lack of minorities in administrative positions. All principals have been strongly encouraged to hire minorities as assistant principals for their school programs. In her last meeting with personnel, she was informed that due to increasing enrollment she would qualify for an additional assistant principal and was handed a list of qualified persons with minority names starred. Linda recognized one of the names as belonging to a dynamic, people oriented, white male with previous administrative experience in another system and knows that he would add a new dimension to her school program. Being principal in a site-based school system, Linda realizes that she has a decision to make.**(YES) (NO)**
11. Although the accreditation standards require that principals spend a minimum of 40% of their time in the supervision of instruction and curriculum development, Mary Lester realizes her personal schedule falls short of the requirement. The state accreditation report which each school submits annually must be signed by the district superintendent and requires the principal to cite as deficiencies any standards that are not being met. **(YES) (NO)**
12. Rob Dillion began to feel a little more relaxed; the interview seemed to be going well. On matters of curriculum development, teacher evaluation and community involvement there appeared to be a good mesh between the superintendent's position and his practicing philosophy. District goals for the coming year were progressive and realistic and Rob felt the situation at the elementary school was ideal for his type of leadership. Then in a tone of voice that seemed more personal and confidential, the superintendent described a situation regarding an elementary staff member that would require immediate attention. As principal, would he direct his initial efforts toward the dismissal of this individual?
(YES) (NO)
13. Pulling out of the parking lot, Ralph Johnson glanced at the car clock - a few minutes after seven. In his mind flashed the countless re-runs of similar late afternoon/early evenings at school in addition to many early

morning arrivals. From parental complaints, teacher difficulties, and site-based committee meetings, something seemed to be scheduled two or three nights or and/or mornings a week. With only a few weeks of school remaining, Ralph began to look forward to the annual Principal's Conference to be held in Florida. Expenses were paid by the school district, and it was always a relaxing event with plenty of time to socialize and catch up on any "news". At previous conferences, Ralph found the sessions to be of limited value. Since then his usual pattern has been to pre-register for a presentation in each time block but only attend two or three of the general sessions that featured more noted speakers.

(YES) (NO)

14. Walking through the second floor corridor on his way to the office, Chuck Osborne paused by Gladys Newman's homeroom and heard her reading the "thought for the day." Appointed elementary school principal three years ago, Chuck has been aware that Gladys, wife of an influential minister in the community, includes in her daily homeroom period the reading of a devotional and a moment of silent prayer. **(YES) (NO)**
15. Stacey Vickers has maintained an "A" average throughout her elementary school career. However, a grade of "C" for the final grading period in Mathematics resulting in a final course grade of "B" has brought complaints from Stacey's parents. They contend that the teacher was unfair and most of the pupils received final grades that were at least one letter grade below the average maintained for the year. In presenting their case to the principal the Vickers' indicate that unless some immediate action is taken to raise Stacey's grade, they will bring the issue before the school superintendent. **(YES) (NO)**
16. Linda Paulson, principal of Brighton Elementary School, has always had the reputation of being a "go-getter." From the beginning of her teaching career, Linda has always sought ways to make additional income through part-time enterprises. Now as an authorized Mary Kay consultant, she wonders if she can tap into this potential clientele of school staff and school organizations. **(YES) (NO)**
17. Since becoming principal at Newtown Elementary, Tom Prentice is convinced he needs a reliable source of information in order to understand the issues dividing the Staff from the administration and arrive at some potential solutions. Two month of listening, observing and conferencing have brought little in the way of useful information. Aware that a group of five teachers usually meet daily in a small teacher conference room during a common planning period, To considers using the intercom system in his office to listen to their conversation. **(YES) (NO)**

18. Dave Radison hung up to phone. He was stunned by the call from his longtime friend and former colleague, Ellis Hudson. What seemed to be a promising career move for Ellis as principal of a new elementary school in a rapidly growing school district across the state had suddenly been shattered. Married and the father of two teenage daughters, Ellis had been involved in a affair with one of his teachers. When called to the school board office and confronted with the situation by the Superintendent and Board Chairman, Ellis acknowledged his indiscretion and was given the opportunity to resign or face dismissal proceedings. As Ellis had explained, the choice to resign seemed to be the only way to salvage some part of his career. With his resignation effective in a matter of days, Ellis was calling to confidentially explain his position and seek some assistance. Would Dave go to bat for him if he applied for the assistant principal's position that was coming open in Dave's school? **(YES) (NO)**
19. It's late July and Judi Wilkerson, the best sixth grade teacher at Williams Elementary, has just been promoted to supervisor for mathematics. Bob Bryant, principal, knows of a young teacher under contract in a neighboring school district who would be an excellent replacement for Judi. Occasional contacts with the young teacher makes Bob aware of the young mans desire to teach in his school. **(YES) (NO)**
20. Spring had arrived and Lonnie Johnson, elementary principal, realized that it was time for the new set of golf clubs she had been promising herself for some time. Steve Loring, a professional colleague, had just purchased a lovely set of irons for himself. Lonnie suspects he bought them through the district's contractor for athletic supplies at a cost price. She also knows that if she were to ask Steve, he would help her do the same. **(YES) (NO)**
21. The Board has lately taken to adopting a number of "protective" policies for the district. Examples include: a policy requiring male teachers to wear ties and jackets. No teacher may have beards and/or mustaches, and the hair must be neatly trimmed. The mailboxes are off-limits for Teacher Association literature. A statement is adopted discouraging the active role of teachers in local politics...and so forth. You are not exactly ecstatic about some of these policies, and now it has come to your attention that a young history teacher is going to campaign as a candidate for the town council. **(YES) (NO)**

Do you know of any other ethical situations that colleagues have faced in their careers? Please comment on the language, clarity, and specificity of the scenarios.

APPENDIX B

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SCENARIOS

1. Mrs. Smith, principal, has a problem concerning the performance of Mrs. Culver, one of her third grade teachers who is near retirement. She is late for work; her lessons are ill prepared; her classroom management is poor; and there are constant complaints from parents and numerous requests to have children removed from her class. Mrs. Smith has employed many remediation efforts in an attempt to help. Peer mentors have been asked to work with Mrs. Culver as has central office instructional personnel; professional leave has been granted for visitations to master teacher classrooms; and personal "help" conferences between herself and Mrs. Culver have been conducted. All efforts to assist Mrs. Culver have been unsuccessful.
 - A. Meet with the teacher again and discuss the severity of the situation and set goals for improvement.
 - B. Begin dismissal proceedings immediately. The children are suffering.
 - C. Encourage the teacher to take early retirement.
 - D. Have the teacher work in a team teaching arrangement with a competent teacher. The competent teacher handles all the large group directed instruction which the "declining" teacher helps monitor guided practice, supervise recess, and grade papers.
 - E. Find her a non-teaching job in the system for the next three years.
 - F. Do nothing and let the teacher ride it out.
 - G. None of the above, but rather:

2. Mr. Hoover, principal, has received conflicting accounts of an incident regarding one of the fourth grade students at his school. Mrs Brown, the teacher, has indicated that Bobby Johnson became verbally abusive when she refused to allow him to sharpen his pencil. Upon contacting the parents about the situation, Mr. Hoover was informed that Mrs. Brown repeatedly provoked Bobby and vowed to have him suspended for the remainder of the school year.

- A. Agree with the parents that the teacher is in the wrong and indicate that censure will be applied in some form.
 - B. Have the boy transferred into another classroom with a teacher whose techniques and methods are well known to you, knowing this action will placate these parents.
 - C. Call the teacher in and ask for some corroboration of the incidents; then proceed with action.
 - D. Indicate to the parents that you will take the matter up with the teacher, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.
 - E. Investigate. If allegations by the parents are true, place the teacher on a structured improvement plan.
 - F. Talk with the teacher and support her actions one hundred percent.
 - F. None of the above, but rather:
3. Ever since beginning an advanced degree program, Mrs. Edmonds, principal, has found free time to be at a premium. Evenings and weekends seem to be consumed by studying and meeting course requirements. However, with a slight schedule revision for the office staff, she realizes she can free up some time for one of the secretaries to type course research papers and other writing assignments on a regular basis..
- A. Have the secretary prepare coursework papers as time permits.
 - B. Do not ask the secretary to perform work of a personal nature.
 - C. Employ the secretary outside of regular working hours and compensate her for the work done (not from school funds).
 - D. Request the secretary to work some additional hours after school or on the weekend.
 - E. None of the above, but rather:

4. When approached by one of his sixth grade teachers for a recommendation as a content teacher (math, science, social studies) in a middle school, Mr. Parks, principal, examines his options from two perspectives. Not only does he view the teacher's job performance and attitude toward students as marginal, but he is a professional acquaintance of the principal of the middle school for whom the recommendation will be written.
- A. Agree to provide a recommendation that would be "lukewarm" in nature.
 - B. Write a letter of recommendation that highlights the teacher's positive characteristics but does not misrepresent the teacher's performance.
 - C. Provide an accurate recommendation that details the overall performance of the teacher and let her decide whether or not to use the reference.
 - D. Inform the teacher that you would not be able to provide a good recommendation.
 - E. Provide a generic recommendation but call the other principal to discuss further details of the teacher's ability.
 - F. None of the above, but rather:
5. Linda Hopkins, principal, is in her office one afternoon following the first grading period. Charlie Wilkins, president of the PTA and a very vocal member of the community, comes to visit. He requests that his daughter be reassigned to another classroom citing poor teaching and classroom management as reasons. Linda realizes that Mr. Wilkins' concerns are justified for she has received many parental complaints. However, Linda has a policy that students are not moved once they are assigned to a classroom for the year.
- A. Hold a conference with the principal, parent, and teacher but keep the student where he is.
 - B. Request that the parent meet with the teacher to inform her of his dissatisfaction. If nothing is accomplished as a result of the

meeting, have the parent make a formal request in writing. Move the child.

- C. Change the policy and move the child.
- D. Observe the teacher and devise a correction plan of action.
- E. None of the above, but rather:

6. After signing for the case of oranges and a package of assorted cheese, John Darling, principal, watched the UPS truck pull away. As he read the attached card, he recalled a discussion with the yearbook company representative that took place last summer and remembered being asked whether his family enjoyed oranges and cheese during the Christmas holidays. At the time, the question seemed to be nothing more than the salesman's effort at casual conversation. Now it was evident there was a specific purpose.

- A. Accept the oranges and cheese but say nothing about it.
- B. Recognize this as a common business practice and accept the items as a simple courtesy extended by the sales representative.
- C. Accept the items, but share them with the faculty and staff.
- D. Call the vendor and ask him to come and pick up the gift items. Report the incident to the central office.
- E. Let the oranges and cheese sit and rot.
- F. None of the above, but rather:

7. Bob Hopkins, principal, listened intently as Clay Boyer, a P. E. teacher described the bruises he saw on one of his fifth grade students during class. Bob explained that when he took the student into his office after class, the student broke down and revealed that her mother would frequently become enraged and beat her. As principal, Bob knew the family; it hardly seemed possible the situation being described could be true. The mother was active in community affairs, and the father held a district manager's position with an insurance firm. As he considered the information, Bob recalled a recent TV special on child abuse which reported that in 75% of the cases studied there was no proof of abuse.

Furthermore, the stigma of being reported and having an investigation made by Social Services severely damaged many innocent families.

- A. Report the situation immediately to the Department of Social Services for their investigation.
 - B. Contact the parents to explain the allegation, and determine if there is a need for further investigation.
 - C. Speak with the student; then contact her parents to arrange a conference before contacting Social Services.
 - D. Conduct a discreet investigation in the school and report the matter to Social Services, if the facts warrant such action.
 - E. Do nothing.
 - F. None of the above, but rather:
8. As a result of the past two administrative staff meetings, Louise Marshall, principal, had become aware of the superintendent's concern over the lack of minorities in administrative positions. All principals had been strongly encouraged to hire minorities as assistant principals for their school programs. In her last meeting with Personnel, she was informed that due to increasing enrollment she would qualify for an additional assistant principal and was handed a list of qualified persons with the minority candidates' names starred from which to select her candidate. Linda recognized one of the names on the list as belonging to a dynamic, people-oriented, white male with previous administrative experience in another system and knew that he would add a new dimension to her school program.
- A. Follow the superintendent's directive and hire a minority.
 - B. Select the desired candidate and refuse to change the decision.
 - C. Select the desired candidate and wait for Personnel to change the decision.
 - D. Refuse to make a decision under the requirements outlined and have Personnel choose the candidate.
 - E. Use a structured interview process, rate each applicant, and hire the best candidate regardless of school policy.

- F. Investigate the qualifications of all those listed before deciding.
 - G. None of the above, but rather:
9. Although the accreditation standards require that principals spend a minimum of 40% of their time in the supervision of instruction and curriculum development, Mary Lester, principal, realizes her personal schedule falls short of the requirement. The state accreditation report which each school submits annually must be signed by the district superintendent and requires the principal to cite as deficiencies any standards that are not being met.
- A. Inform the superintendent that the standards are not being met and request additional assistance to meet job responsibilities.
 - B. Work with state department personnel to establish flexible percentage figures which take into account particular circumstances in each school.
 - C. Report they were meeting the standards.
 - D. None of the above, but rather:
10. Rob Dillion began to feel a little more relaxed; the interview seemed to be going well. On matters of curriculum development, teacher evaluation and community involvement there appeared to be a good mesh between the superintendent's position and his practicing philosophy. District goals for the coming year were progressive and realistic and Rob felt the situation at the elementary school was ideal for his type of leadership. Then in a tone of voice that seemed more personal and confidential, the superintendent described a situation regarding an elementary staff member that would require immediate attention. As principal, would he direct his initial efforts toward the dismissal of this individual? Bob realizes that his promotion may depend on this answer alone.
- A. Inform the superintendent that once on the job you would have to investigate the situation prior to committing to a specific course of action.
 - B. Base the answer on the degree to which the position is wanted.

- C. Agree to initiate the dismissal proceedings.
 - D. Enter into a discussion with the superintendent to determine if there was sufficient documentation upon which to build a case for dismissal.
 - E. None of the above, but rather:
11. Pulling out of the parking lot, Ralph Johnson glanced at the car clock - a few minutes after seven. In his mind flashed the countless re-runs of similar late afternoon/early evenings at school in addition to many early morning arrivals. From parental complaints, teacher difficulties, and site-based committee meetings, something seemed to be scheduled two or three nights or and/or mornings a week. With only a few weeks of school remaining, Ralph began to look forward to the annual Principal's Conference to be held in Florida. Expenses were paid by the school district, and it was always a relaxing event with plenty of time to socialize and catch up on any "news." At previous conferences, Ralph found the sessions to be of limited value. Since then his usual pattern has been to pre-register for a presentation in each time block but only attend two or three of the general sessions that featured more noted speakers.
- A. Attend all of the sessions; bring back materials for other administrators, and make a report to the superintendent.
 - B. Refuse to attend the conference as a means of having some time for socializing and relaxing, and use earned vacation time for that purpose.
 - C. Use the time to relax, socialize and make connections rather than attempt to attend many of the sessions.
 - D. Attend the conference and participate in the sessions for which they have pre-registered as well as other presentations that may be beneficial to them and their school.
 - E. Find and attend a conference that holds more interest.
 - F. Do not attend the conference.
 - G.. None of the above, but rather:

12. Walking through the second floor corridor on his way to the office, Chuck Osborne, principal, paused by Gladys Newman's homeroom and heard her reading the "thought for the day." For the past three years, Chuck has been aware that Gladys, wife of an influential minister in the community, includes in her daily homeroom period the reading of a devotional and a moment of silent prayer.
- A. Conduct a private conference with the teacher and direct her to discontinue the practice of having devotionals or moments of silent prayer during the school day.
 - B. Talk with the teacher to determine the nature of the material being used.
 - C. Ignore the situation until someone complains or a problem develops
 - D. Direct the teacher to examine her practice so she does not have a problem, if someone questions the homeroom activities.
 - E. Inform the teacher she could have the moment of silent prayer but would not be permitted to read the devotional aloud.
 - F. None of the above, but rather:
13. Stacey Vickers has maintained an "A" average throughout her elementary school career. However, a grade of "C" for the final grading period in mathematics resulting in a final course grade of "B" has brought complaints from Stacey's parents. They contend that the teacher was unfair and most of the pupils received final grades that were at least one letter grade below the average maintained for the year. In presenting their case to the principal, the Vickers indicate that unless some immediate action is taken to raise Stacey's grade, they will take the issue before the school superintendent.
- A. Thoroughly investigate the situation by securing information from all of the parents and students concerned and from the teacher; arrange a meeting among all of them in order to make an informed, reasoned decision at the building level.
 - B. Investigate the matter, and after arriving at a decision, inform the parents and teacher.

- C. Maintain a position of support for the teacher, and inform the parents the situation would be examined and a decision rendered.
 - D. Hold a meeting with the parents, the student in question, and the teacher to arrive at a decision.
 - E. Allow the parents to go to the superintendent. Talk with the teacher about grades and the importance of maintaining accuracy of records. Support the teacher but monitor progress.
 - F. Change the grade.
 - G. None of the above, but rather:
14. Linda Paulson, principal, has always had the reputation of being a "go-getter." From the beginning of her teaching career, Linda has always sought ways to make additional income through part-time enterprises. Now as an authorized Mary Kay consultant, she wonders if she can tap into this potential clientele of school staff and school organizations.
- A. Keep this type of business venture separate from the school. Avoid this type of practice.
 - B. Hold a grade level meeting. Request that the grade level chairman ask their people if any are interested in attending a Mary Kay "party."
 - C. Place a notice on the bulletin board in the teacher's lounge advertising the availability of the product.
 - D. None of the above, but rather:
15. Since becoming principal, Tom Prentice is convinced he needs a reliable source of information in order to understand the issues dividing the staff from the administration and arrive at some potential solutions. Two months of listening, observing and conferencing have brought little in the way of useful information. Aware that a group of five teachers usually meet daily in a small teacher conference room during a common planning period, Tom considers using the intercom system in his office to listen to their conversation.

- A. Avoid using the intercom system to listen to teacher conversations.
 - B. Call the staff together in a meeting and openly discuss the perceived problems.
 - C. Meet with the five teachers individually or as a group to seek their assistance.
 - D. Use the intercom. No one would ever know.
 - E. None of the above, but rather:
16. Dave Radison hung up the phone. He was stunned by the call from his longtime friend and former colleague, Ellis Hudson. What seemed to be a promising career move for Ellis as principal of a new elementary school in a rapidly growing school district across the state had suddenly been shattered. Married and the father of two teenage daughters, Ellis had been involved in an affair with one of his teachers. When called to the school board office and confronted with the situation by the Superintendent and Board Chairman, Ellis acknowledged his indiscretion and was given the opportunity to resign or face dismissal proceedings. As Ellis had explained, the choice to resign seemed to be the only way to salvage some part of his career. With his resignation effective in a matter of days, Ellis was calling to confidentially explain his position and seek some assistance. Would Dave go to bat for him if he applied for the assistant principal's position that was coming open in Dave's school?
- A. Do all that is possible to help him obtain the position.
 - B. Inform Ellis that it will not be possible to assist him in obtaining the position.
 - C. Try to discourage Ellis from applying without directly indicating a position.
 - D. None of the above, but rather:
17. Spring had arrived and Lonnie Johnson, elementary principal, realized that it was time for the new set of golf clubs she had been promising herself for some time. Steve Lorrington, a professional colleague, had just

purchased a lovely set of irons for himself. Lonnie suspects he bought them through the district's contractor for athletic supplies at cost. She also knows that if she asked, Steve would help her do the same.

- A. Call the supplier, strictly as an unidentified buyer, and price the clubs.
- B. Stay away entirely from the school supplier, preferring to make your own deal elsewhere.
- C. Ask the colleague to negotiate the new clubs at a good price, especially since he knows the district contractor personally and has done business with him previously.
- D. Call the contractor, identifying yourself and your position, and ask him what he can do.
- E. None of the above, but rather:

APPENDIX C

November 15, 1992

Dear Colleague,

The role of the elementary school principal is one of the most important in education. Each year, parents place the well being of their children into the hands of educators, trusting that the decisions made on their behalf will be ethical and will benefit their educational growth.

Daily decision-making experiences of the elementary principal test their ethical standards. The manner in which these situations are handled affects the efficiency and credibility of the position and may ultimately affect the school program. In order to raise the consciousness of principals with regard to ethical issues, it is necessary to ascertain how principals respond to ethical dilemmas. Your help is requested in responding to the enclosed research instrument. Your honest and thoughtful response is appreciated, as are any comments or recommendations you would like to make.

Please understand, your responses will be kept confidential. While each survey instrument is coded, this is only to provide information to the researcher on response rates. At no time will responses be matched to individual principal respondents, nor reported as individual responses.

The results of this study will furnish valuable insights to Virginia legislators, universities, school divisions, and professional organizations. Your participation in this study truly is essential. Thank you for spending a few thoughtful minutes in completing and returning the survey.

Yours sincerely,

Mary F. Daniels
Doctoral Candidate
Virginia Tech

David Alexander
Professor, Virginia Tech

Wayne Worner
Professor, Virginia Tech

Dear Colleague,

Last week a questionnaire was sent to you about the ethical predispositions of elementary principals in Virginia. Your name had been selected from a random sample of elementary principals serving Virginia schools in 1992.

If you have already completed and returned it, thank you. If not, please do so today. Your contribution to this state-wide survey is extremely important in determining the ethical predispositions among Virginia elementary principals.

If for some reason you did not receive the questionnaire, or it was misplaced, please call me immediately, collect, at 804-427-0180, and I will send you another copy.

Yours sincerely,

Mary F. Daniels

December, 1992

Dear Colleague:

Some time ago you were sent a questionnaire about the ethical predisposition of elementary principals. To date, your response has not yet been received.

This is a state-wide study of the ethical predispositions of elementary principals in Virginia. It is believed that the results will be of value to legislators, principal-training institutions, school division central offices and individual school principals. Many of your peers -- current principals and school administrators in rural, urban, and suburban school districts -- have already responded. Their information and thoughtfully worded comments have been useful and illuminating. Now your own response is needed.

It is important that all selected participants be represented in the final analysis of data. Please take a few minutes to add your insights by completing and returning the questionnaire as soon as possible. A second copy has been included for your convenience. As always, individual responses will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Mary F. Daniels



Unified With The National
Association of Elementary
School Principals



"Serving Elementary and
Middle School Principals"

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

August 17, 1993

Dear Colleague:

I encourage you to assist Mary F. Daniels in a research project for her dissertation, "The Ethical Predispositions of Elementary School Principals in Virginia". She is a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The results of this study may be used in future administrative training programs. Therefore, your helpfulness in responding to her request for information in a timely manner will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Donald Lacey
Executive Director

"Together, We Do Make A Difference!"

3212 Cutshaw Avenue • Suite 208 • Richmond, Virginia 23230 • (804) 355-6794

APPENDIX D

A
STUDY
OF
ETHICS
and the
ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPAL
in
VIRGINIA

Endorsed by the:
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Elementary School Principals



Unified With the National
Association of Elementary
School Principals



"Serving Elementary and
Middle School Principals"

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF
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Sincerely,

Donald Lacey
Executive Director

"Together, We Do Make A Difference!"

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Read each scenario. Circle the letter beside the ONE response that BEST describes what you believe most elementary principals would do in the given situation. Then circle the letter beside the ONE response that indicates the MOST ethical response to the same situation.

1.1.1 Mrs. Smith, principal, has a problem concerning the performance of Mrs. Culver, one of her third grade teachers. Mrs. Culver is 57 years old, has twenty-seven years in the Virginia Retirement System, and has indicated that she will retire in three years. She is late for work; her lessons are ill prepared; her classroom management is poor; and there are constant complaints from parents and numerous requests to have children removed from her class. Mrs. Smith has employed many remediation efforts in an attempt to help. Peer mentors and office personnel have been asked to work with Mrs. Culver as has central office instructional personnel; professional leave has been granted for visitations to master teacher classrooms; and personal "help" conferences between herself and Mrs. Culver have been conducted. All efforts to assist Mrs. Culver have been unsuccessful.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Meet with the teacher again and discuss the severity of the situation and set goals for improvement.	A
B	Begin dismissal proceedings immediately. The children are suffering.	B
C	Encourage the teacher to take early retirement.	C
D	Have the teacher work in a team teaching arrangement with a competent teacher. The competent teacher handles all the large group directed instruction while the "declining" teacher helps monitor guided practice, supervise recess, and grade papers.	D
E	Find her a non-teaching job in the system for the next three years.	E
F	Do nothing and let the teacher ride it out.	F
G	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	G

2.1.5 Linda Hopkins, principal, is in her office one afternoon following the first grading period when Charlie Wilkins, president of the PTA, comes to visit. He requests that his daughter be reassigned to another classroom citing poor teaching and classroom management as reasons. Linda realizes that Mr. Wilkins' concerns are justified for she has received many parental complaints. However, Linda has a policy that students are not moved once they are assigned to a classroom for the year.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Hold a conference with the principal, parent, and teacher but keep the student where she is.	A
B	Request that the parent meet with the teacher to inform her of his dissatisfaction. If nothing is accomplished as a result of the meeting, have the parent make a formal request in writing citing reasons for having the child moved. Move the child.	B
C	Change the policy and move the child.	C
D	Observe the teacher and devise a correction plan of action.	D
E	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	E

3.1.7 Bob Hopkins, principal, listened intently as Clay Boyer, a P. E. teacher described the bruises he saw on one of his fifth grade students during class. Bob explained that when he took the student into his office after class, the student broke down and revealed that her mother would frequently become enraged and beat her. As principal, Bob knew the family; it hardly seemed possible the situation being described could be true. The mother was active in community affairs, and the father held a district manager's position with an insurance firm. As he considered the information, Bob recalled a recent TV special on child abuse which reported that in 75% of the cases studied there was no proof of abuse. Furthermore, the stigma of being reported and having an investigation made by Social Services severely damaged many innocent families.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Report the situation immediately to the Department of Social Services for their investigation.	A
B	Contact the parents to explain the allegation, and determine if there is a need for further investigation.	B
C	Speak with the student; then contact her parents to arrange a conference before contacting Social Services.	C
D	Conduct a discreet investigation in the school and report the matter to Social Services, if the facts warrant such action.	D
E	Do nothing.	E
F	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	F

4.1.13 Stacey Vickers has maintained an "A" average throughout her elementary school career. However, a grade of "C" for the final grading period in mathematics resulting in a final course grade of "B" has brought complaints from Stacey's parents. They contend that the teacher was unfair and most of the pupils received final grades that were at least one letter grade below the average maintained for the year. In presenting their case to the principal, the Vickers indicate that unless some immediate action is taken to raise Stacey's grade, they will take the issue before the school superintendent.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Thoroughly investigate the situation by securing information from all of the parents and students concerned and from the teacher; arrange a meeting among all of them in order to make an informed, reasoned decision at the building level.	A
B	Investigate the matter, and after arriving at a decision, inform the parents and teacher.	B
C	Maintain a position of support for the teacher, and inform the parents the situation would be examined and a decision rendered.	C
D	Hold a meeting with the parents, the student in question, and the teacher to arrive at a decision.	D
E	Allow the parents to go to the superintendent. Talk with the teacher about grades and the importance of maintaining accuracy of records. Support the teacher but monitor progress.	E
F	Change the grade.	F
G	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	G

IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER COMMENTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE IN REGARDS TO ETHICS OR THE ETHICAL PREDISPOSITIONS OF ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS, PLEASE MAKE THEM BELOW.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND ATTENTION. IF YOU WOULD LIKE A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THIS SURVEY, PLEASE PRINT YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS ON THE BACK OF THE ENCLOSED RETURN ENVELOPE, NOT ON THIS SURVEY.

PLEASE RETURN TO: MARY FRANCES DANIELS
2300 WATERPUMP CIRCLE
VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA 23456

A
STUDY
OF
ETHICS
and the
ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPAL
in
VIRGINIA

Mary F. Daniels
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Code _____

APPENDIX E

A
STUDY
OF
ETHICS
and the
ELEMENTARY
PRINCIPAL
in
VIRGINIA

Endorsed by the:
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Elementary School Principals



Unified With The National
Association of Elementary
School Principals



"Serving Elementary and
Middle School Principals"

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

August 17, 1993

Dear Colleague:

I encourage you to assist Mary F. Daniels in a research project for her dissertation, "The Ethical Predispositions of Elementary School Principals in Virginia". She is a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

The results of this study may be used in future administrative training programs. Therefore, your helpfulness in responding to her request for information in a timely manner will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Don
Donald Lacey
Executive Director

"Together, We Do Make A Difference!"

3212 Cutshaw Avenue • Suite 208 • Richmond, Virginia 23230 • (804) 355-6794

Read each scenario. Circle the letter beside the ONE response that BEST describes what you believe most elementary principals would do in the given situation. Then circle the letter beside the ONE response that indicates the MOST ethical response to the same situation.

1.2.2 Mr. Hoover, principal, has received conflicting accounts of an incident regarding one of the fourth grade students at his school. Mrs Brown, the teacher, has indicated that Bobby Johnson became verbally abusive when she refused to allow him to sharpen his pencil. Upon contacting the parents about the situation, Mr. Hoover was informed that Mrs. Brown repeatedly provoked Bobby causing him to become abusive at which time vowed to have him suspended for the remainder of the school year.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Agree with the parents that the teacher is in the wrong and indicate that censure will be applied in some form.	A
B	Have the boy transferred into another classroom with a teacher whose techniques and methods are well known to you, knowing this action will placate these parents.	B
C	Call the teacher in and ask for some corroboration of the incidents; then proceed with action.	C
D	Indicate to the parents that you will take the matter up with the teacher, but that no direct action will be taken until both sides of the controversy have been aired.	D
E	Investigate. If allegations by the parents are true, place the teacher on a structured improvement plan.	E
F	Talk with the teacher and support her actions one hundred percent	F
G	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	G

2.2.8 As a result of the past two administrative staff meetings, Louise Marshall, principal, had become aware of the superintendent's concern over the lack of minorities in administrative positions. All principals had been strongly encouraged to hire minorities as assistant principals for their school programs. In her last meeting with Personnel, she was informed that due to increasing enrollment she would qualify for an additional assistant principal and was handed a list of qualified persons with the minority candidates' names starred from which to select her candidate. Linda recognized one of the names on the list as belonging to a dynamic, people-oriented, white male with previous administrative experience in another system and knew that he would add a new dimension to her school program.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Follow the superintendent's recommendation and recommend a minority.	A
B	Recommend the desired candidate and refuse to change the decision.	B
C	Recommend the desired candidate and wait for Personnel to change the decision.	C
D	Refuse to make a recommendation under the requirements outlined and have Personnel choose the candidate.	D
E	Use a structured interview process, rate each applicant, and recommend the best candidate regardless of school policy.	E
F	Investigate the qualifications of all those listed before recommending a candidate	F
G	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	G

2.2.9 Although the accreditation standards require that principals spend a minimum of 40% of their time in the supervision of instruction and curriculum development, Mary Lester, principal, realizes her personal schedule falls short of the requirement. The state accreditation report which each school submits annually must be signed by the district superintendent and requires the principal to cite as deficiencies any standards that are not being met.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Inform the superintendent that the standards are not being met and request additional assistance to meet job responsibilities.	A
B	Work with state department personnel to establish flexible percentage figures which take into account particular circumstances in each school.	B
C	Report they the standard is being met.	C
D	None of the above, but rather: Pease write responses below.	D

4.2.12 Walking through the second floor corridor on his way to the office, Chuck Osborne, principal, paused by Gladys Newman's homeroom and heard her reading the "thought for the day." For the past three years, Chuck has been aware that Gladys, wife of an influential minister in the community, includes in her daily homeroom period the reading of a devotional and a moment of silent prayer.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Conduct a private conference with the teacher and direct her to discontinue the practice of having devotionals or moments of silent prayer during the school day.	A
B	Talk with the teacher to determine the nature of the material being used.	B
C	Ignore the situation until someone complains or a problem develops.	C
D	Direct the teacher to examine her practice so she does not have a problem, if someone questions the homeroom activities.	D
E	Inform the teacher she could have the moment of silent prayer but would not be permitted to read the devotional aloud.	E
F	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	F

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APPENDIX F

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Read each scenario. Circle the letter beside the ONE response that BEST describes what you believe most elementary principals would do in the given situation. Then circle the letter beside the ONE response that indicates the MOST ethical response to the same situation.

1.3.3 Ever since beginning an advanced degree program, Mrs. Edmonds, principal, has found free time to be at a premium. Evenings and weekends seem to be consumed by studying and meeting course requirements. However, with a slight schedule revision for the office staff, she realizes she can free up some time for one of the secretaries to type research papers and other writing assignments on a regular basis..

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Have the secretary prepare coursework papers as time permits.	A
B	Do not ask the secretary to perform work of a personal nature.	B
C	Employ the secretary outside of regular working hours and compensate her for the work done (not from school funds).	C
D	Request the secretary to work some additional hours after school or on the weekend.	D
E	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	E

2.3.4 When approached by one of his sixth grade teachers for a recommendation as a math, science, and social studies teacher in a middle school, Mr. Parks, principal, examines his options from two perspectives. Not only does he view the teacher's job performance and attitude toward students as marginal, but he is a professional acquaintance of the principal of the middle school for whom the recommendation will be written.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Agree to provide a recommendation that would be "lukewarm" in nature.	A
B	Write a letter of recommendation that highlights the teacher's positive characteristics but does not misrepresent the teacher's performance.	B
C	Provide an accurate recommendation that details the overall performance of the teacher and let the teacher decide whether or not to use the reference.	C
D	Inform the teacher that you would not be able to provide a good recommendation.	D
E	Provide a generic recommendation but call the other principal to discuss further details of the teacher's ability.	E
F	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	F

3.3.6 After signing for the case of oranges and a package of assorted cheese, John Darling, principal, watched the UPS truck pull away. As he read the attached card, he recalled a discussion with the yearbook company representative that took place last summer and remembered being asked whether his family enjoyed oranges and cheese during the Christmas holidays. At the time, the question seemed to be nothing more than the salesman's effort at casual conversation. Now it was evident there was a specific purpose.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Accept the oranges and cheese but say nothing about it.	A
B	Recognize this as a common business practice and accept the items as a simple courtesy extended by the sales representative.	B
C	Accept the items, but share them with the faculty and staff.	C
D	Call the vendor and ask him to come and pick up the gift items. Report the incident to the central office.	D
E	Let the oranges and cheese sit and rot.	E
F	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	F

4.3.15 Since becoming principal, Tom Prentice is convinced he needs a reliable source of information in order to understand the issues dividing the staff from the administration and arrive at some potential solutions. Two months of listening, observing and conferencing have brought little in the way of useful information. Aware that a group of five teachers usually meet daily in a small teacher conference room during a common planning period, Tom considers using the intercom system in his office to listen to their conversation.

Most principals would...	RESPONSES	Most ethical response is...
A	Avoid using the intercom system to listen to teacher conversations.	A
B	Call the staff together in a meeting and openly discuss the perceived problems.	B
C	Meet with the five teachers individually or as a group to seek their assistance.	C
D	Use the intercom. No one would ever know.	D
E	None of the above, but rather: Please write responses below.	E

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VITA

Mary Frances Daniels is a graduate of the public schools of Virginia although she actually graduated from Forrest Sherman High School in Naples, Italy. She received her undergraduate degree and her Master's Degree from Old Dominion University. In addition she holds an Educational Specialist degree from The George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and a certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Her career in education began and continues in Virginia Beach, Virginia. She taught grade five in both self-contained and departmentalized classes prior to spending six years as an Instructional Specialist/Supervisor in elementary mathematics. During her tenure as an instructional specialist she presented in-service programs for local educators as well as sessions at state and local conferences. During her final year as a math specialist she began the course work toward an Ed.D. She is now a grade six coordinator at Landstown Middle School in Virginia Beach, Virginia.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary F. Daniels". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned in the lower right quadrant of the page.