

Principal Evaluation Policies and Procedures  
in the Commonwealth of Virginia:  
The Principals' Perspective

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education  
in  
Educational Administration

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December, 1989

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(ABSTRACT)

The intent of this study was to determine the evaluation policies and procedures for principals of public schools in Virginia. Specifically, the purposes of the study were to: (1) Describe the policies and procedures currently in place for the evaluation of principals in Virginia's public schools, (2) Determine if Virginia's public school principals believe that the policies and procedures by which they are evaluated affect their job performance, (3) Examine and describe one school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures, and (4) Compare and discuss school system descriptions of policies and procedures related to evaluation of principals with responses of principals describing those same policies and procedures.

A descriptive survey method was used in this study. Data were collected from a random sampling of all public school principals in the state. A thirty-one item questionnaire was sent to each of the 337 participating principals.

A response rate of 80.4% was attained. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were employed to report the findings.

The results of this study revealed that:

1. Principal evaluation policies and procedures are firmly established in the school divisions across Virginia.

2. Public school principals in Virginia indicated that their school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures have a positive impact on their job performance.

3. The principals and superintendent of one school system agree on most questions about their policies and procedures for principal evaluation. Areas of disagreement included: a procedure for reviewing principal evaluation policies and procedures, current need to revise policies and procedures, and the purpose of (on-the-job) observation as a component of principal evaluation.

4. When system-level responses were compared to principals' responses measuring knowledge of principal evaluation policies and procedures there was considerable agreement between groups. However, ten areas of disagreement were discovered. These areas included: a procedure to regularly review and revise evaluation policies and procedures, the establishment of mutually-developed goals for principal evaluation, who has input into principal evaluation, if on-the-job observation is a component of the evaluation process, and whether a dissenting statement is permitted.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is not possible to express in a few words the depth of my appreciation to everyone who has helped me complete this dissertation. There are some individuals without whose contribution my success would not have been possible.

To my committee chairman, Dr. Wayne M. Worner, I extend my sincere appreciation. He served ably as my advisor, colleague, and friend. It was my good fortune to have been his student. With his patience, guidance, and wisdom I endured and succeeded.

Special recognition is extended to the remaining members of my graduate committee: Dr. David Alexander, Dr. Marilyn Lichtman, Dr. Harold Dodge, and Dr. Robert Richards. I extend my thanks for their time, scholarly assistance, and friendship during this study. Much gratitude goes to Dr. Richards, who guided me through the coursework phase of my program.

My appreciation is extended to the personnel of the Prince George County School System. Special thanks to

Assistant Superintendent, for his confidence and understanding during the completion of the program.

Finally, sincere appreciation is extended to all the public school principals in Virginia who participated in this

research. Without their unselfish cooperation, there would have been no study.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family who made possible the success which I have achieved. Special appreciation is extended to my parents, and who taught me "life" and instilled in me the determination to succeed. To my children, and I extend thanks for the love and patience they demonstrated throughout my graduate studies.

Finally, but foremost, I dedicate this dissertation to my wife, Throughout it, she stood fast in her friendship and love and she provided the inspiration to succeed.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Background for the Study

The 1980's have experienced continuous and expanding efforts to improve schools. The movement has been solidly grounded in research on "effective schools." From research, distinguishing characteristics of effective schools have emerged. One such characteristic is leadership. School leadership is the responsibility of the individual in charge--the principal. The principal is the pivotal person in ensuring that schools are successful (Hager, 1983, p. 38). Unikel stated that if the principal was providing strong leadership the school was likely to be effective (1986, p. 37). The principal is actually the cornerstone of an effective school.

The arrival of the "effective schools" movement of the 1980's was a natural extension of a series of events which previously impacted on public education nationwide. Following the "Sputnik" scare, in the 1960's, our nation poured tremendous amounts of tax dollars into programs to improve the public schools. The National Defense Education Act (1957) and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (1965)

were vehicles through which the infusion of money made its way into school programs. In the 1970's, as the nation experienced "Watergate" and the "oil crisis," an increasing demand for accountability emerged. Americans became more vocal about limited resources available to the government and concerned about the performance of public officials. In addition, Americans realized that the "baby boom" years were ending, and declining enrollments were an issue which schools needed to address. These three factors converged to signal a very clear message--schools were to be accountable!

With accountability as the byword of the '70's, educational research focused on the act of teaching. A school's success was linked to the performance of the classroom teacher. Greater emphasis on teacher performance was evident from increased numbers of teacher/classroom observations, required detailed written lesson plans, and intricately developed systems of formal teacher evaluation. Although also considered important during this time, the performance of the principal drew far less attention than the performance of the classroom teacher.

In the late '70's and early '80's, more change occurred. The "effective teaching" movement appeared and gained increasing support. This research based movement identified successful teachers, analyzed their success, and offered the profession a menu of proven strategies for the act of teaching. It was the "effective teaching movement" which gave

birth to the "effective schools" wave of the 1980's. Through research, successful schools were identified and reasons for success collected and offered to the profession.

From the research on "effective schools," the 1980's has been described as the "decade of the principalship." The principal has been recognized as being most responsible--for better or worse--for the quality of education provided in each school (Pellicer, Anderson, Keefe, & McCleary, 1988, p. 52). Former Secretary of Education Bennett (1987) acknowledged that the principalship is the single most powerful force for improving school effectiveness (p. iii). In the current decade the performance of principals has indeed become a focus for improving the quality of schools.

Virginia's efforts to improve schools parallels that of the nation. In 1972, as a result of a state constitutional revision, the General Assembly directed the State Board of Education to promulgate and monitor the "Standards of Quality." The resulting standards directed local school divisions to provide for the evaluation of teachers, principals, central office personnel, as well as other employees (Manual for Implementing Standards of Quality and Objectives for Public Schools in Virginia, 1972-74, p. 74). That same year, the State Department of Education formed two committees to review the issue of personnel evaluation in public schools. One committee examined teacher evaluation, while the other dealt with administrative evaluation. This effort resulted

in the issuance of the Tentative Report: Evaluation of Personnel (1972). Two years thereafter, local school divisions were provided assistance in the form of the Evaluation Procedures Handbook (Tentative Model) (1974). More recently, the 1986 edition of the "Standards of Quality" mandates that school divisions include a cooperatively developed procedure for personnel evaluation appropriate to tasks performed by those being evaluated.

According to an official of the Virginia Department of Education, two products were expected as a result of the "Standards of Quality" (1986) recommendations. A prototype for teacher evaluation was one product the State Department was to develop. The other feature of the Department's objective was a statewide model for principal evaluation. The teacher evaluation model has been completed and distributed. There is however, at this time, uncertainty regarding the future of the proposed model for principal evaluation (Interview, Wildy, March 20, 1989).

More recently, in 1987, an advisory panel examined the report of the Governor's Commission, Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future (1986) and recommended that school systems evaluate principals' performance and assist in developing and offering professional opportunities, certification renewal, with continuing employment based on satisfactory performance (Whittemore Report, 1987).

## Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were to:

1. Describe the policies and procedures currently in place for the evaluation of principals in Virginia's public schools.
2. Determine if Virginia's public school principals believe that the policies and procedures by which they are evaluated affect their job performance.
3. Examine and describe one school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures.
4. Compare and discuss school system descriptions of policies and procedures related to evaluation of principals with responses of principals describing those same policies and procedures.

## Significance of the Study

Evaluation of personnel is an important and necessary function of organizations. Public schools are no exception. Evaluation is one vehicle by which change occurs within the organization. Prior to any effort to alter the evaluation of principals, there exists a need to examine and review existing policies and procedures for the evaluation of public school principals.

Perhaps the most obvious need is associated with the current public school principals of Virginia. In the midst of the "effective schools" movement, with an emphasis on strong instructional leadership, Virginia's principals face an increasing challenge to create and maintain effective schools. Identification of strengths and weaknesses of the principals' job performance is essential to establishing effective schools. Ernest reiterates this point, "Evaluation is necessary and functional; its purpose is to improve performance and productivity." Principals agree that there is a need for evaluation. It helps to plan for change and to prevent and correct mistakes (1985, p. 290).

Local school boards have a responsibility to provide the best possible education for its constituents. Therefore school boards need the best and most capable individuals as school principals. Personnel evaluations are necessary to ensure quality control of the administrative staff. According to Bolton, "evaluation, when effectively performed, is of critical importance to the operation and success of the schools" (1980, p. XIV).

In an interview with Vernon L. Wildy, Associate Director of Secondary Education for the Virginia Department of Education, he stated that the 1974 Standards of Quality mandate for school divisions to establish evaluation programs for administrative personnel has not been complied with by all school systems (Interview, Wildy, March 20, 1989). He fur-

ther stated that a state prototype for teacher and administrator evaluation had been only one-half completed. Its manual for teacher evaluation has been finished, but the effort to develop a model for administrative evaluations is currently on hold. Wildy acknowledged that a compilation of existing principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia would certainly provide a useful beginning point for a renewed effort to develop a state model for principal evaluation (Interview, Wildy, March 20, 1989).

The Virginia Department of Education, before it proceeds with the development of a principal evaluation system, should be informed as to principal evaluation procedures which exist throughout the state. It was, therefore, important to conduct an accurate assessment of existing statewide principal evaluation policies and procedures.

Two professional associations, i.e., the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP), represent the interest of principals in numerous ways. The executive directors of these associations, in personal interviews, acknowledged the importance of establishing an accurate description of principal evaluation policies and procedures throughout the state. These associations actively support efforts to improve the status of principals. Issues related to evaluations which directly interest and affect these organizations include merit pay, retention or dis-

missal, recognition and rewards, among others. Both executive directors readily agreed to endorse this study (see Appendix D).

Efforts to learn more about the role and importance of the school principal need to continue. As such, this study should increase the knowledge base regarding the principalship. A recent study (Born, 1988) described principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia by analyzing data collected from the designated personnel officers. There is a need to confirm Born's findings. Born, in fact, recommended a validation study of principal evaluation policies and procedures be conducted using data collected from the principals (Born, 1988, pp. 130-131).

The benefits of this study extend to yet another group--the children of Virginia's public schools. It was hoped that this study will assist local school boards in their efforts to hire and keep the best available principals. It was hoped that this study will aid the Virginia Department of Education's effort to provide the best assistance and direction for its public schools. It was hoped that this study will provide professional associations with specific information about existing evaluation policies and procedures for principal evaluation, thereby providing better services to and representation for its members. It was hoped that this study will increase the existing knowledge base regarding public school principals. These results should improve the

quality of Virginia's schools by directly improving the principals and the principalship. Better principals mean better schools. The children in today's schools represent the most precious resource of the future, and they deserve nothing less than the best efforts of all concerned to improve the quality of education available to them.

### Research Questions

This study examined the following questions:

1. What policies and procedures for the evaluation of principals are presently in place in the school divisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia?

2. Do the public school principals in Virginia believe their school division's current evaluation policies and procedures affect their job performance?

In addition to the research questions, two additional activities were carried out:

1. An examination and description of one school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures.

2. A discussion and comparison of school system descriptions of principal evaluation policies and procedures with principal descriptions of those same policies and procedures.

### Limitations of the Study

The research for this study was limited to the evaluation documents, evaluation instruments, and returned questionnaires received from the selected public school principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia during the school year 1988-89.

### Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter One contains a discussion of the background of the problem, purposes of the study, significance of the study, research questions, and the limitations of the study. Chapter Two presents a review of relevant related research and literature. Chapter Three describes the methodology used in the collection of data and the procedure used to interpret the data. Chapter Four presents an analysis and interpretation of the data. Chapter Five provides a summary of the research findings, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for practice and additional research.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature chapter is divided into five sections. The first section examines literature on the various meanings of principal evaluation. Section two is a discussion of the purposes for principal evaluation. Section three is a look at the factors affecting policies of evaluation. Section four is a review of who the evaluators of principals are and the relationship between evaluator and principal perceptions. The fifth section is a compilation of the factors which have influenced and shaped the principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia.

#### Introduction

Former Education Secretary William Bennett professed that "Principals compose the vanguard which will lead our country into the twenty-first century. (1987, p. iii). More attention has been focused on the principalship in the 1980's than any previous time in our nation's history. Yet, we seem to know and understand little about principals. Keefe stated, "The principalship emerges in much of the research of the last decade as the pivotal role in schools, but the

job is still ill-defined and much misunderstood" (1987, p. 54).

It is said that a school cannot be successful without an effective principal. Hager and Scarr stated "The principal is the pivotal person in ensuring that schools are successful" (1983, p. 38). Traditionally, successful principal performance is collected and assessed in some form of evaluation program. Yet, principal evaluation has been an area which has received minimal attention. Reuben L. Ingram addressed this problem, "Principal evaluation is more primitive than teacher evaluation, . . . many principals are neither supervised nor evaluated on a regular basis . . ." (1986, p. 9). Lewis cited the same concern in different words, "If it is true that teacher evaluation is still in the dark ages of development, then principal evaluation is in the stone age" (1982, p. 73).

### Definition of Evaluation

Ralph Tyler is credited with one of the earliest definitions of evaluation. In 1942, he proposed that evaluation was the process for determining the degree of congruence between performance and objectives (Berk, 1981, p. 4). A similar definition was offered by Bolton. He stated "(Evaluation) has to do with making judgements regarding the set of events, behaviors, and/or results of behavior in light

of predetermined and well understood objectives" (1980, p. 8). Holt's definition of evaluation places emphasis on decision-making. He explained that evaluation was "a way of passing judgement on an action . . . we muster and assess the evidence and make a judgement which evaluates the case" (1981, p. 13). Berk indicated that the idea of collecting information to make decisions is central to all definitions of evaluation. He states "evaluation is the process of providing information for decision-making" (1981, p. 4).

### Purposes of Evaluation

There exists considerable controversy over the basic purpose of evaluation. At one extreme are those who claim that evaluation is to "get rid of the incompetents." At the other end of the spectrum are those who view evaluation as a means to "help (principals) to become better." Some claim that evaluation has both purposes (Thomas, 1979, p. 20). Zakrajsek expressed a similar perspective as to the purpose of evaluation, "In the past, hiring, firing, or retaining were the primary functions of evaluation. Today, the improvement of the performance of the evaluatee and the feedback concerning the results of that performance have been the aim" (1979, p. 101). Vanderwey (1983) stated that the primary purpose for principal evaluation was to improve the performance of the principal.

In Chapter I the concept of accountability was mentioned as a factor which contributed to recognition in the 1980's of the importance of the principalship. Accountability is also one of the main reasons for evaluation. Guba and Lincoln stressed that the evaluatee must be accountable to the clients or "stakeholders" (1981, pp. 303-309).

Bolton observed that evaluation is critical to the operation and success of schools (1980, p. XIV). He cites five reasons for conducting administrator evaluations:

1. It contributes to the productivity of the organization.
2. It contributes to the morale of the organization.
3. It allows one to plan systematically for changes in the organization.
4. Because administrators are in key positions, the evaluation of them provides considerable leverage for bringing about change in the organization by allowing the school system to become more sensitive to clients and to correct errors that may creep into the system.
5. Because administrators are in key positions in the system, errors which creep into their behavior can have a particularly dysfunctional effect on the school (Bolton, 1980, p. XIV).

Bill Ernest stated that evaluation "helps plan for change and correct errors." He argues further that evaluation is necessary and functional; its purpose is to improve performance and productivity (1985, p. 290).

## Policy and Guidelines for Evaluation

An examination of the policies governing principal evaluation is a difficult task. James W. Keefe (1987) emphasized the problem of principal evaluation by citing that in research the position of principal is an enigma. He remarked,

A fundamental weakness of the principalship is that it wobbles all over the educational landscape. In most states it is not a legally defined position, mentioned only casually, if at all, in the school codes of about two-thirds of the states. . . . It is possible for principalship to mean and be something different from school district to school district (1985, p. 54).

Not everyone agrees that principal evaluation is regarded as important. Duke and Stiggins found that principal evaluation is not regarded as a critical factor in many school districts (1985, p. 93). They offered two reasons: First, "districts are constrained in their ability to reward those who receive evaluations," and secondly, the "lack of sanctions available to district officials in instances involving negative evaluations" (p. 93).

According to Bottoni, school board administrator evaluation policies provide three broad criteria. The criteria are: establish purpose, identify responsibility, and declare the task (1984, p. 4). He also named the superintendent as the individual responsible for evaluating the principal.

School board policy should provide the necessary undergirding for good administrator evaluation programs.

Savage said that the board's policy should respond to four questions:

1. Why does the board want their administrative staff evaluated?
2. Who is responsible for performing the task?
3. When is evaluation to occur and/or be completed?
4. What, in general terms, is to be done, such as measure performance on a list of district standards or mutually agreed upon goals? (1983, p. 28).

He also stressed that the board must establish the need and importance of this function and set the general philosophy for administrator evaluation (p. 28).

Bottoni agreed that a strong board policy is important.

He stated,

A major step in administrative evaluation is the establishment of a broad board policy, void of specific details. . . . A successful operation depends on the school board setting the parameters and then judging the quality of work within these parameters (1984, p. 4).

An opposing view was presented by Ezeadi. He purported that school division policies needed to be specific so that the "general apathy shown by administrators towards an evaluation program may be minimized" (1983, p. 34). As such, Ezeadi offered five elements of an evaluational policy designed to minimize any threat to the principal:

1. The principal should be provided a written copy of the evaluation, documenting evaluation observations and findings.
2. The principal should be assured the opportunity to respond in writing to all observations.

3. The principal should be given the opportunity to appeal the findings and recommendations of the evaluation.
4. The principal should be required to propose corrective measures for those areas rated less than desirable.
5. The evaluation process should incorporate pre- and post-evaluative conferences between the evaluator and the principal (Ezeadi, 1983, pp. 34-35).

A. Leis reported that principals actually resist evaluation. One reason for their reluctance is the uncertainty about the criteria used in the evaluation (1988, p. 4).

The literature suggests that principal evaluation should specifically be addressed in school board policy. Born identifies four components that board policies should contain:

1. The superintendent is responsible for evaluation
2. A timetable for the evaluation process (cycle)
3. The reasons for evaluation, and
4. The methods of response by principals to the evaluation (1988, p. 26).

Born also states that the policy should be flexible but also "provide clearly defined parameters."

### Evaluators

The principal of a school is consistently in the "public eye." Each day on the job, the principal makes hundreds of

decisions which are naturally evaluated by students, teachers, parents, the superintendents, the school board, and others. Ernest stated that "principals are judged almost every day by almost everyone, whether they like it or not" (1985, p. 290). Featherstone and Romano echoed this point, "Administrative performance is constantly appraised. Judgments stem from every public touched by the actions of the educational administrator, and there are many groups affected by the administrator's decisions" (1977, p. 412). Although important, this type of evaluation is considered informal.

Formal evaluation of principals generally appears in system policies and procedures. Buser and Banks reported that there was general agreement that the superintendent should evaluate principals (1980, pp. 1-2). They found that there was strong support for self-evaluation by the principals. They found little support for principal evaluation by students, school patrons, external consultants, or the school board (pp. 1-2). Murphy, et. al. learned that, in effective schools, superintendents were active in visiting and taking command of the supervision and evaluation of principals (1985, p. 80).

The literature reflects another perspective on who should evaluate principals. Ernest reported that the evaluation should reflect the "consensus of several people working as a team, rather than the opinion of one person" (1985, p. 291). He identifies superintendents, assistant superinten-

dents, coordinators, supervisors, directors, building teachers, students, and principals themselves as potential team members (p. 291). Other studies (Zakrajsek, 1979; Schaefer, 1982; Redfern, 1986; Langlois, 1986) agree that the participation of a variety of individuals is the best approach. Redfern warned that the use of information from clientele sources should be carefully guarded. He said, "The use of clientele input in evaluation--perception survey data from teachers, students, and/or parents--are not common. When used, such input is regarded as optional; the administrator determines whether or not to use it" (1986, p. 74).

A degree of self-evaluation appears in a number of principal evaluation programs. The merits of this practice are questionable. McIntyre and Grant stated "Principals seem to perceive more effectiveness in their own performance than do their superordinates or subordinates in the organizational hierarchy" (1980, p. 47). Zakrajsek agreed that self-evaluation is subject, but agreed that the principal should be involved in the evaluation process by establishing goals and monitoring the progress towards achieving the goals (1979, p. 111).

A practice which has drawn even more contention is that of teacher evaluations of principals. Few systems use teachers to evaluate principals. Langlois reported that while eighty-six percent of United States school districts have formal procedures for evaluating their school execu-

tives, only fourteen percent include teachers in principal evaluation (1986, p. 19). Solomon supported teachers evaluating principals by advocating "Who is in a better position to suggest weak administrative areas and possible improvements than those professionals the principal works with every day" (1983, p. 15). Scott Thompson, Executive Director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, is not so quick to agree. He stated:

We have no objection to the informal, non-official evaluation of principals by teachers on a confidential basis. We do object to the formal official evaluation of principals by teachers with the evaluation filed in the principal's personnel records at the district headquarters (Rist, 1986, p. 37).

From the literature, it is evident that there exist several opinions regarding who should evaluate principals. The superintendent often is the sole evaluator, especially in small systems. A team approach, consisting of various personnel, has support. Some critics feel that self-evaluation is worthwhile; most disagree. Teacher evaluation of principals is not widely accepted as a productive method to evaluate principals, although proponents offer a provocative rationale for such.

### Perceptions of Evaluators and Principals

The literature reveals that there are discrepancies in the perceptions of the evaluators of principals and the

principals themselves. In a recent study, Alan Leis stated that "multiple expectations and resulting role ambiguity for principals have been documented, but it is the multiple and conflicting expectations held for principals by their supervisors that seem to cause the most difficulty in the evaluation process" (1988, p. 3). Pomarico's study of Kansas principals showed that "with few exceptions, principals and evaluators differed in their view of the evaluation processes used and the degree of implementation of the recommendation of the recommended criteria" (1985, p. 190). He also found that evaluators reported a higher incidence of implementation of criteria than did the principals. On the other hand, MacQueen (1969) found that superintendents and principals closely agreed on criteria for evaluation. Principals do not always believe that the criteria by which they are assessed is of value. Letterle (1981) found that less than half of the factors by which the principal was evaluated were considered important to the principal. Bisenhauer (1980) and Hooper (1985) learned that most criteria for principal evaluation are quite similar, even though they may vary in approach or perspective. Leis found that most school systems use the same performance standards for both elementary and secondary principals' evaluations. He further declared that "while it might be desirable for principals and their supervisors to have a common set of beliefs or values relative to the importance of tasks required of the principal, it is es-

essential that, at a minimum, they clearly understand any differences in one another's perceptions" (1988, p. 5).

Hoben (1986), Blumberg and Greenfield (1980), Redfern (1980), and Erickson (1988) examined principal evaluation from a functional perspective. Erickson's listed eight components:

1. management skills
2. communication
3. business affairs
4. school community relations
5. personnel
6. physical resources
7. curriculum
8. student services (1988, p. 18).

Metzger examined 964 administrators nationwide (superintendents and principals). He found they agreed that the following seven standards accurately reflect the principals responsibilities:

1. leader and director of education program
2. coordinator of guidance and special education services
3. member of school staff
4. link between the community and the school
5. administrator of personnel
6. member of the profession of education administration

7. director of support management (1975, p. 647).

Metzger's seven areas of principal responsibility were called the PEEL (Performance Evaluation of the Educational Leader). Each area focused on a competency the principal was expected to perform (p. 647).

Other references which contain examples of competencies for principal evaluation are: National Association of Elementary School Principal, 1986; Lewis, 1982; Rebore, 1987; Stow and Manatt, 1982; McIntyre and Grant, 1980; Seal, 1977; Tucker and Greg, 1986. The example cited in these articles contains components of principal evaluation based on tasks and/or competencies which are used in numerous school systems nationwide.

Some researchers have studied the perceptions of principals and their evaluators. Novotney (1980) found no significant differences in the perceptions of elementary principals and their superintendents. Scott (1980) studied the differences in the mean scores of high school principals compared to their superintendents. He found significant differences and concluded that a lack of communication was a main reason for the variance. Earlier, Frazier (1964) concluded basically the same. Walters (1979) studied administrator perceptions of competency statements in two states and concluded that both groups rated each competency as either important or very important. MacQueen (1969) found similar

results in a nationwide study of high school principals. Newkirk-Moore (1985) used the PEEL competency statements to assess the perceptions of elementary principals, superintendents, and board chairmen in Tennessee. She found that the principals possessed differing expectations regarding their job responsibilities. She also found that there were decisive differences concerning job responsibilities and the relative importance assigned to the responsibilities. Peters (1982), Harrison and Peterson (1986), and Jurs (1976) compared the perceptions of principals and superintendents on various job competencies. Peters concluded that Illinois principals and superintendents generally agreed on the criteria and procedures that should be used for the evaluation of principals. Harrison and Peterson studied principals in another state and found that principals and superintendents did not agree on the criteria for principal evaluation. Negley conducted a statewide study of principals and superintendents and found that "The perceptions of principals regarding how much importance superintendents place on the criteria for evaluation were significantly lower than those of superintendents" (1984, p. 80).

Harrison and Peterson (1988) studied the perceptions of principals and superintendents as to which indicators superintendents should examine in evaluating principal performance. The ratings of the principals and superintendents showed a wider variance than what actually existed, but

principals saw "public reaction" as more important to superintendents than it actually was. Furthermore, eighty-seven percent of the superintendents, but only sixty-six percent of the principals, ranked "general quality of instruction" as the most important factor in principal evaluation.

Prine (1983) studied the effects of experience on job performance. He found that the total number of years in the present position and total number of years of experience as a principal or superintendent had no effect on the perception of success factors of principals in large high schools. Shull (1981) also studied the behavior and perceptions of principals. He found that the views of effective principals differed less from their superintendent's views than the same comparison of ineffective principals to their respective superintendents.

### Evaluation of Principals in Virginia

In September, 1972, the Virginia Department of Education published the Manual for Implementing Standards of Quality and Objectives for Public Schools, 1972-74. This document was the result of a legislative mandate from the Virginia General Assembly and the reaction to the public demand for accountability in Virginia's schools. These standards were said to be "The . . . most potent instrument made available for effecting substantial improvements in public education.

In the hands of skilled practitioners they should propel Virginia's public school system into a new and more productive era" (p. i). The manual also expressed the reasons necessary to evaluate principals.

There are many reasons for evaluating central office personnel and principals. Among them are the elimination of incompetent persons, the assessment of personnel for promotion, the assurance of accountability, the improvement of performance, and the professional development of personnel. It is believed that the prime purposes of evaluation should be to improve and to promote professional development (p. 74).

In the manual the State Department stated that performance objectives were the best way to evaluate principals, "Given the results of that diagnosis, appropriate performance objectives can be formulated, action can be taken to accomplish them, and an assessment can be made of the outcomes" (p. 74). An underlying assumption of this position was that principals were capable of improvement, "The chances that he or she will make the necessary effort are enhanced if evaluation is conducted systematically with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results" (p. 74).

To accomplish the objective, the State Department specified:

The superintendent and his staff shall provide for the cooperative evaluation of central office personnel and principals and shall provide assistance to principals in the cooperative evaluation of teachers and other school employees (p. 74).

The objective contained two items which were expressly intended:

1. evaluation shall be a cooperative process in which both evaluatees and evaluators share responsibilities in various phases of the process
2. the superintendent and his staff have direct responsibility for the evaluation of central office employees and principals and for providing assistance to principals in evaluating teachers and other school employees (p. 74).

The process of evaluating principals included five major areas:

1. establish performance criteria
2. identify performance targets
3. collect performance data
4. make evaluative assessments
5. conduct evaluation conferences (p. 74).

Each local school division was expected to develop its own set of policies and procedures for principal evaluation using the State Department's impetus as a guide. The resulting local plan was to be "the work of the evaluation committee for central office personnel and principals" and was to appear in a manual, i.e., "An Evaluation Procedures Handbook." It was to contain a clear explanation of the process developed and include the following:

1. Statement of the rationale of the evaluation plan
2. Statement and definition of performance criteria
3. Suggestions for formulating performance objectives
4. Sequential steps in the evaluation process, including some or all of the following:

- a. who are to be evaluated
  - b. who are to serve as evaluators
  - c. frequency of evaluations
  - d. timetable for completing an evaluation cycle
  - e. kinds of evaluation data that may be assembled to determine if performance objectives have been obtained
  - f. type and frequency of evaluation conferences
  - g. suggestions for documenting evidences of unsatisfactory performance
  - h. appeal procedures available to individuals whose performance has been judged to be unsatisfactory
5. Evaluation forms and records
  6. Other pertinent topics (p. 78).

An accountability component was included in the State Department's manual. It called for each division to report its progress as follows:

By June 1, 1974, each school division will be asked to submit to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction of the State Department of Education an Evaluation Procedures Handbook describing the process to be used in evaluating the performance of central office personnel and principals (p. 79).

To meet the mandate, the Department of Education offered assistance to local divisions by forming two committees. One examined teacher evaluation and the other studied administrative evaluation. Both committees included teachers, central office staff, principals, school board members, parents, consultants, and representatives from the State Department.

The resulting recommendations of these committees appeared in a report entitled the Tentative Report: Evaluation of Personnel, August 1972. To evaluate principals the report suggested that "multi-lateral" evaluation be employed and that input be accessed from three directions, i.e., downward, upward, and horizontally. Three general principles were presented to steer the local divisions:

1. evaluation by superiors
2. evaluation by peers
3. evaluation by clients (pp. 82-83).

In 1974, in yet another effort for evaluating principals, the State Department published the Evaluation Procedures Handbook (Tentative Model). Born reported that it was not known to what extent the local divisions implemented the mandates to improve principal evaluation programs (1988, p. 63). He also learned from an official of the State Department that "many school divisions developed their own administrator evaluation procedures preferring not to use the Department of Education's model" (p. 64).

Two efforts in 1986 addressed the need to examine how principals are evaluated in Virginia. The Virginia Department of Education organized a task force to study the evaluation of personnel in the public schools. Last year it published a manual for the evaluation of teachers in public schools. Principal evaluation has not yet been addressed.

It has been noted earlier in this study, it is not clear, at this time, if and when the State Department will again attempt to offer a principal evaluation model (Interview, V. Wildy, March 20, 1989). The second effort came as a result of the Governor's Commission report Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future. In addition to underscoring that principals are essential to effective schools, the report examined the ways Virginia's principals are "selected, prepared, compensated, and recertified" (1986, p. 11). The commission further recommended that "all prospective principals and those principals applying for recertification must satisfactorily complete an approved assessment program" (p. 11).

An advisory committee, appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction in Virginia, studied the above proposal and recommended "school divisions should evaluate principals' performance and assist in developing and offering professional growth opportunities. Certificate renewal and continuing employment of principals should be based on satisfactory performance" (Whittemore Report, 1987, p. 1). It is noted that even though the notion of principal preparation possibilities was most carefully examined, the evaluation of experienced principals was also addressed.

Also in 1986, in a report to the Southern Regional Board by its Commission for Educational Quality, the following recommendations were made:

1. Each state department of education should establish knowledge and skills of effective principals.
2. A statewide evaluation system for principals should be developed based on identified skills and knowledge of effective principals.
3. State and local incentive pay programs for school principals should be based on performance and effectiveness on the job (Worner, 1988, pp. 2-3).

### Summary

The literature indicates that there are various definitions of evaluation and the reasons to evaluate principals are not agreed to by all. Some believe the primary purpose is to eliminate incompetents, while others purport that assisting principals towards improvement is the purpose. It was noted that accountability has become a definite factor in any principal evaluation program.

Some school divisions do not contend that principal evaluation is an important function, but nearly all school systems have a procedure for evaluating its administrators. The literature reveals that some critics argue that school board policies on principal evaluation should be broad, while other proponents state that the criteria (policies) should be specific and well-defined.

Generally, the superintendent evaluates the principals. There are a number of authors who suggest that a team of school personnel and/or parents and students should do the

evaluating of principals. Teacher evaluation of principals is not popular among principals but is advocated by some researchers and practitioners. Self-evaluation also is offered as a worthwhile method of assessing principals.

Superintendents and principals do not necessarily perceive evaluation the same way. The literature reveals that there are discrepancies noted in some studies which have attempted to compare the two perspectives. Researchers and practitioners agree that the road to improving principal performance evaluation is through clearly identified criteria and a clear understanding by both the supervisor and employee relative to the expectations and performance (Leis, 1988, p. 3).

The literature suggests that efforts to address and improve principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia have been sporadic. In 1972, the Virginia Department of Education made a major attempt to hold local school divisions accountable for principal evaluation through a program of performance objectives. The department required that local divisions develop their own principal evaluation program, or use what the department had developed as a model. It appears that in subsequent years the local divisions in Virginia did whatever they chose to do with evaluating principals. The State Department never actually held the local systems accountable as it had intended. In 1986, renewed interest in the importance of the principalship brought se-

veral new efforts to change the way principals are evaluated. At present, the Virginia Department of Education's plan to produce a statewide prototype for principal evaluation appears to be stalled.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used in this study. The chapter restates the purpose and outlines the design of the study, describes the population, details the development of the instrument, and describes the data collection analysis procedures.

#### Design of the Study

There were four purposes for conducting this study. First, the study describes principal evaluation policies and procedures currently in place in the public school divisions of Virginia from the perspective of the principal. Secondly, the study attempted to ascertain if Virginia's public school principals believe that the policies and procedures by which they are evaluated have an impact upon their job performance. Thirdly, the study examines principal evaluation policies and procedures in one Virginia school division. Fourth, the study compares and discusses school system descriptions of

policies and procedures for evaluation of principals with principal descriptions of those same policies and procedures.

To accomplish the first objective, data were collected from survey questionnaires of a simple random sample of public school principals in Virginia. The survey contained questions specific to principal evaluation policies and procedures used in their school divisions. The data are reported through the use of frequencies and percentages.

The second objective of the study was accomplished through collection of data from a single question on the survey instrument specifically addressing the issue of whether principals perceive the policies and procedures which govern their evaluation to be connected to their job effectiveness.

The third component of the study was to closely examine one Virginia school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures. This case study provided responses from all principals within the school division relative to the system's principal evaluation policies and procedures. In addition, the same questions were directed to the Superintendent. A comparison of his responses to those of the principals provide a measure of agreement between the evaluator and the principals themselves. Once compared, the responses from the two groups present a description of the status of principal evaluation in one school division. Furthermore, albeit limited in scope, the data provide a smaller

but more realistic description of principal evaluation policies and procedures than reported in the Born study. Without the inclusion of the principals' perspective, the previous study (Born, 1988) is of limited value. The case study affords the opportunity to assess the extent of agreement between evaluator and evaluatees. Data from the case study are also presented in Chapter Four.

The fourth objective of the study was to examine the agreement between principals (the evaluatees) and their evaluators, i.e., the personnel officers. Data collected and analyzed in response to Research Question One were compared to data reported in Born's study. Is there agreement between principals and their evaluators on questions of principal evaluation policies and procedures? Does Born's study accurately reflect existing principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia? This portion of the study focuses on these questions.

### Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all public school principals in the State of Virginia. Mr. Hal Grover, Data Base Administrator in the Virginia Department of Education, provided a list of all public school principals in the State of Virginia as of December, 1988. This listing included the name and school address of each principal.

According to the State Department of Education, there are 1754 public school principals in the state as of January 1989. Using a formula for determining sample size (Schaeffer, Mendenhall, & Ott, 1986), the sample size was determined to be 337. All principals, excluding the case study subjects (Montgomery County principals), were assigned a number from 1 to 1754. The participant's number was drawn from the table of random numbers found in Basic Statistical Methods, (Downie & Heath, 1983, p. 338).

### Instrumentation

A questionnaire previously developed (Born, 1988) was used to collect data. His questionnaire was developed through a review of the literature and validated using a panel of experts.

Born's instrument was reviewed by a panel of school principals, public school central office personnel, officials of the Virginia Department of Education, directors of professional education associations, and a university professor (Born, 1988). Panel members were asked to review and critique the questionnaire. Comments and suggestions were specifically requested concerning format, directions, question clarity, response options, bias, and length. Reviewers were invited to write their observations on an evaluation form and/or directly on the questionnaire.

Born's original questionnaire consisted of 29 questions. Items one through twenty-seven referred to research question number one (i.e., What policies and procedures are in place for principal evaluation in the public schools of Virginia). Items 28 and 29 solicited information regarding the Virginia State Department of Education's efforts relative to principal evaluation.

For purposes of this study, the data collection instrument was expanded. The expanded questionnaire contains thirty-one items. The survey instrument was pilot-tested to confirm its utility. The pilot test participants were the school principals of the Montgomery County Public School System for school year 1988-89. A typed copy of the survey instrument (see Appendix A) and a Questionnaire Evaluation Form (see Appendix B) were delivered to each principal. The surveys were accompanied by a cover letter (see Appendix C). The completed surveys and Questionnaire Evaluation Forms were collected by the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and forwarded to the researcher.

The questionnaire was commercially printed. It contained a cover page followed by six pages containing the 31 survey items. The survey was reduced to 5" X 8" size and appeared on off-white high quality paper.

All of the survey questions provided for short answer responses, i.e., yes, no, and do not know. Twelve questions also allowed for open-ended responses.

### Data Collection Procedures

The questionnaire was mailed on April 1, 1989, to a randomly-drawn sample of 337 public school principals in the State of Virginia. The participants were selected from a complete roster of public school principals in the state as provided by the Virginia Department of Education. All principals were assigned a number and the sample drawn from a table of random numbers.

Demographic data on the participants were obtained through a series of questions preliminary to the survey questions. Demographic items included: gender, years as a principal, years as a principal in Virginia, years as a principal in the division where currently employed, grade levels of assigned school, and size of school division.

Surveyed principals were requested to complete the questionnaire according to the instructions given and encouraged to return the results as soon as possible. Participants were given a suggested deadline date of April 20, 1989, to provide for the timely return of responses. To provide follow-up, surveys were coded by affixing a three digit number ranging from 1 through 337 on the front cover of the survey.

Included in the initial mailing package, in addition to the questionnaire, was a cover letter which requested a prompt response and assured participants that their responses

would be kept confidential. An endorsement letter (see Appendix D) containing the signatures of Mr. Vernon Wildy, Associate Director of the Virginia Department of Education, Dr. Randy Barrack, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals, and Mr. Donald Lacey, Executive Director of the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, underscored the importance of the study and requested a prompt participant response.

In addition to the two letters and the questionnaire, each participant received a pop-top opener. This gift, mentioned in the first letter, served as an incentive and a token of appreciation for participation in the study.

The packet, containing the two letters, questionnaire, gift, and a return-addressed, stamped 4" X 9" envelope was mailed in a 9.5" X 12.5" clasped enveloped. Peel-off labels, supplied by the State Department of Education, were affixed to the outer envelope. The labels contained the principal's name, school address, and state department school code number.

A concerted effort was made to secure the responses of all participants in the study. As recommended by Dillman (1987, pp. 180-90), on April 7, 1989, one week after the initial questionnaires were mailed, an unlined white 5" X 8" commercially printed post card (see Appendix E) was mailed. The post card reminded participants of the need to respond and served to express gratitude to those who had already re-

plied. On May 3, 1989, a second questionnaire and letter were mailed with a self-addressed, stamped envelope to those who had not responded by that date.

The issue of non-response bias was addressed as follows. Telephone interview follow-ups of ten percent of the non-respondents were conducted. The telephone responses were compared to the mail responses. No systematic differences were noted in the responses of those contacted by phone compared with those who responded by mail.

### Data Analysis

The data obtained through the questionnaire were reported by frequency and percentage of responses. Data were categorized and reported in tables.

For Research Question Number One, i.e., current policies and procedures for public school principal evaluation in Virginia, questions were categorized as follows:

<u>Inquiry</u>	<u>Table</u>	<u>Survey Items</u>
Written policy & procedures exist?	2	1,2
Policies & procedures developed by?	3	3
Procedure for revisions?	4	5
Need for revisions?	5	4,6
Evaluation instrument exists?	6	7,8
Criteria for evaluation?	7	9
Goals/criteria established?	8	20,21,27
Products/artifacts included?	9	10
Job descriptions exist?	10	18,19
Who are evaluators?	11	11,14
Evaluators are trained?	12	12,13
Cycle of evaluation occurs?	13	15,25
Evaluation is written?	14	16,17
Role of observations?	15	22,23,24
Dissenting statement included?	16	26
Purposes of Evaluation?	17	28
Need for prototype?	18	29

For Research Question Number Two, survey item number 30 was used to collect the data which are presented in Table 19 using frequency and percentages of responses.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

#### Introduction

This chapter contains three sections. Presentation of data is organized around the purposes of the study. The initial section presents the data collected from a random sample of public school principals across Virginia regarding existing principal evaluation policies and procedures. The chapter also contains a discussion of the information collected through the case study of Montgomery County principals. Thirdly, the results of a previous study (Born, 1988) are compared to the findings in Research Question One of this study.

The first two parts of the chapter report information received from selected principals in public school divisions throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Data were collected through a questionnaire sent to a randomly-selected sample of all public school principals in the state. Each participant was mailed a cover letter and survey which included a return envelope. Usable responses were received from two hundred seventy-one (80.4%) of the three hundred thirty-seven participants.

From the first mailing, two hundred thirteen surveys were returned. Of these, one hundred thirty-eight (64.8%) were elementary principals, thirty (14.1%) were middle level principals, thirty-three (15.5%) were high school principals, and twelve (5.6%) were classified as **other**. This category included: vocational schools, eight (3.6%), special education centers, one (0.5%), combined schools, two (0.9%), and a cooperative school, one (0.5%).

Sixty-four surveys were returned in response to the second mailout reminder. Of these, forty-five (70.0%) were elementary principals, ten (15.6%) were middle principals, four (6.3%) were high school principals, and five (7.8%) were classified **other**. **Other** included vocational, three (4.7%), special education center, one (1.6%), and a combined school (grades K-5 & 6-8), one (1.6%).

Pertinent data from the questionnaires were computed into frequencies and percentages. This information is presented in tables one through nineteen.

Prior to conducting the actual survey, it was necessary to validate the instrument. This was accomplished through a pilot study of one school division. An analysis of the results of the pilot study is reported as a case study in the second section of this chapter.

The first section of the survey instrument was designed to gather demographic information about the participants. Table 1 describes the survey participants. One hundred

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Responding Principals

(N=271)

Questionnaire Items	Frequency of Responses	Percentage of Responses
I. GENDER		
Male	194	71.6
Female	73	26.9
No Response	4	1.5
TOTAL	271	100.0
II. TYPE OF DIVISION		
Small (0-1000)	52	19.2
Medium (1001-5000)	71	26.2
Large (5001 & up)	147	54.2
No Response	1	0.4
TOTAL	271	100.0
III. GRADE LEVELS OF SCHOOLS		
Elementary (K-5)*	175	64.6
Middle (6-8)	77	28.4
High (9-12)	16	5.9
No Response	3	1.1
TOTAL	271	100.0
IV. YEARS AS A PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL		
1-5	87	32.1
6-10	51	18.8
11-15	50	18.4
16-20	41	15.1
over 20	40	14.8
No Response	2	0.8
TOTAL	271	100.0

\* grade compositions vary

(continued)

Table 1 (continued)

Questionnaire Items	Frequency of Responses	Percentage of Responses
V. YEARS AS A PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN VIRGINIA		
1-5	94	34.7
6-10	47	17.3
11-15	52	19.2
16-20	39	14.4
over 20	35	12.9
No Response	4	1.5
TOTAL	271	100.0
VI. YEARS AS A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL IN CURRENT DIVISION		
1-5	99	36.5
6-10	48	17.7
11-15	48	17.7
16-20	41	15.1
over 20	33	12.2
No Response	2	0.8
TOTAL	271	100.0

ninety-four (71.6%) of the principals were male, and seventy-three (26.9%) were female. Over half, i.e., one hundred forty-seven (54.2%) worked in a large school division (over 5,000 pupils). Seventy-one (26.2%) were principals in a medium size system (1001-5000 students), and fifty-two (19.2%) worked in a small division of less than 1,000 students. The largest number of the participants were elementary principals with some combination of grades K-5. Two hundred twenty-six (67.1%) were from elementary schools, forty-two (12.5%) from middle schools with grade combinations 6-8, and forty-nine (14.5%) were from high schools with grade combinations of 9-12. Twenty participants (5.9%) were principals at schools which were grouped into a miscellaneous category called **other**. This category included: vocational schools, ten (3.0%), special education centers, three (0.9%), combined schools (K-12), three (0.9%), combined school (K-5, 6-8), one (0.3%), alternative school, one (0.3%), a cooperative school, one (0.3%), and a regional school, one (0.3%).

In response to being asked the number of years as a public school principal, eighty-seven (32.1%) had served from one to five years. The balance of years as a principal were evenly distributed. Fifty-one (18.8%) said six to ten years, fifty (18.4%) said eleven to fifteen years, forty-one (15.1%) said sixteen to twenty years, and forty (14.8%) had over twenty years on the job. Five principals (1.9%) indicated

that they had been a public school principal for thirty or more years.

The responses concerning number of years as a public school principal in Virginia varied somewhat from the previous category. Most had been a principal in Virginia for a relatively brief time. Ninety-four (34.7%) were between one and five years. Forty-seven (17.3%) were in the six to ten years category, and fifty-two (19.2%) were in the range eleven to fifteen years. Thirty-nine (14.4%) had been in Virginia between sixteen and twenty years, and thirty-five (12.9%) had been a Virginia principal for over twenty years.

The data on number of years as a principal in the division where currently employed reveal that a sizeable number of principals were relatively new on the job, but the balance of years was evenly distributed. Ninety-nine (36.5%) had been principals in their school system between one and five years. Forty-eight (17.7%) had between six and ten years, and forty-eight (17.7%) had between eleven and fifteen years. Forty-one (15.1%) registered between sixteen and twenty years, and thirty-three (12.2%) had been in their current system for twenty or more years.

## PART A--RESEARCH QUESTIONS

### Research Question 1

What policies and procedures for the evaluation of principals are presently in place in the school divisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia?

Responses concerning written policies and procedures for evaluation of principals in the public school divisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia are presented in Table 2. Two hundred thirty-four or 86.3% of the principals stated their school division had written policies for principal evaluation. Twenty-two principals (8.1%) indicated there was an absence of written policies. Eight (2.9%) of the respondents did not know whether there were written policies for principal evaluation in their respective division.

Two hundred seventeen (80.1%) of the participants replied that their school system did have written procedures for principal evaluation. Thirty-five (12.9%) did not have written procedures, and nine principals (3.3%) did not know.

Who was responsible for the design?

As presented in Table 3, the results of this inquiry indicate that central office personnel have more input into the development of principal evaluation policies and procedures than others. Two hundred fifteen (79.3%) of the par-

Table 2. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Written Policies and Procedures for Principal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

Questionnaire Items	Frequency of Responses	Percentage of Responses*
Written policy is in place		
YES	234	86.3
NO	22	8.1
DO NOT KNOW	8	2.9
NO RESPONSE	7	2.6
Written procedures are in place		
YES	217	80.1
NO	35	12.9
DO NOT KNOW	9	3.3
NO RESPONSE	10	3.7

\* Percentages do not always total 100 percent because of rounding to the nearest tenth of a percent.

Table 3. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning the Development of Principal Evaluation Policies and Procedures in the Public Schools of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES*	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES**
Policies and procedures were developed by		
Central Office Personnel	215	79.3
Principals	140	51.7
Teachers	39	14.4
Students	3	1.1
Parents	9	3.3
School Board Members	50	18.5
Consultants	34	12.6
Others	8	3.0
No Response	0	0.0

\* Frequency of responses number more than 271 because of multiple answers.

\*\* Percentage of responses exceed 100% because of multiple answers.

Participants stated that central office personnel participated in the design. Principals were rated next by one hundred forty respondents (51.7%). School board members were checked by fifty (18.5%) principals, teachers by thirty-nine (14.4%), and consultants were identified by thirty-four respondents (12.6%). Rarely involved were parents as evidenced by nine (3.3%) tallies and students with only three (1.1%).

What provision is made for policy and procedure revision?

In response to whether their school division has a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation policies and procedures, more stated **no** than **yes**. One hundred six (39.1%) of the principals replied that there was no procedure, while sixty-five (24.0%) indicated there was a procedure in place. A large number, ninety-three (34.3%), of the principals did not know if a procedure exists in their system. Of those who responded **yes** the greatest percentage (16.9%) said a review takes place annually. The next highest percentage was every five years (7.7%). A complete description of data pertaining to reviewing and revising policies and procedures is contained in Table 4.

One hundred twelve principals (41.3%) reported that their evaluation policies and procedures had been updated within the last three years. Of those, fifty-seven (21.0%) indicated that revisions had occurred in the 1988-89 year. The balance of the distribution of results regarding when

Table 4. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses for Reviewing and Revising Principal Evaluation Policies and Procedures in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Procedure for reviewing and revising policies and procedures exists		
YES	65	24.0
NO	106	39.1
DO NOT KNOW	93	34.3
NO RESPONSE	7	2.6
If yes, how often (N=65)		
Annually	11	16.9
Biannually	4	6.1
Triannually	3	4.6
Every 5 years	5	7.7
Every 6 years	3	4.6
Every four months	1	1.5
As needed	4	6.2
Continuously	4	6.2
Do not know	4	6.2
System currently being tested	2	3.1
No Response	24	36.9

systems have updated principal evaluation policies and procedures reveals that more than one in ten (11.9%) preceded the 1984-85 year, which constitutes five or more years since the last revisions.

More principals saw no immediate need to revise their system's principal evaluation policy than those who saw a need to do so. As specified in Table 5, one hundred forty-six (53.9%) of the participants replied there was no need, while one hundred fifteen (42.4%) felt their policy needed revisions.

#### Is there an evaluation instrument?

Table 6 demonstrates that two hundred twenty-one (81.5%) of the principals reported that an instrument is used in their evaluation program. Thirty-four (12.5%) stated there was no instrument used, and eight (3.0%) of the principals did not know whether an instrument was used. Nearly all principals surveyed indicated that the instrument used was the same for all principals. Two hundred ten (77.5%) specified it was the same instrument. Only thirteen (4.8%) responded that the instrument was not the same. Of those who replied it was not the same, ten (3.7%) indicated that it varies by level, and three (1.1%) marked that the evaluation instrument used was individualized. Sixteen (5.9%) of the principals reported that they did not know if the evaluation instrument was the same or different.

Table 5. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning the Updating and Review of Principal Evaluation Policies and Procedures in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Last Update of policies and procedures		
1972-73	1	0.4
1973-74	0	0.0
1974-75	0	0.0
1975-76	0	0.0
1976-77	2	0.7
1977-78	0	0.0
1978-79	1	0.4
1979-80	4	1.5
1980-81	3	1.1
1981-82	5	1.8
1982-83	6	2.2
1983-84	10	3.7
1984-85	12	4.4
1985-86	25	9.2
1986-87	25	9.2
1987-88	30	11.1
1988-89	57	21.0
DO NOT KNOW	56	20.7
NO RESPONSE	26	9.6
NOT APPLICABLE	8	3.0
Current need for revision of policies and procedures		
YES	115	42.4
NO	146	53.9
NO RESPONSE	10	3.7

Table 6. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning the Evaluation Instrument for Principal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Evaluation Instrument Is Used		
YES	221	81.5
NO	34	12.5
DO NOT KNOW	8	3.0
NO RESPONSE	8	3.0
Instrument is the same for all principals		
YES	210	77.5
NO-Varies by level	10	3.7
NO-individualized	3	1.1
DO NOT KNOW	16	5.9
NO RESPONSE	29	10.7

### How was the evaluation process formulated?

Three tables have been prepared to report the data relevant to this question. In response to whether criteria used for the evaluation of principals was specified in policy, procedure, and/or instrument, Table 7 indicates one hundred twenty-seven (46.9%) said **policy**. A slightly higher number, one hundred forty-six (53.9%), indicated **procedure**. As noted by one hundred seventy-nine of the principals, the greatest percentage (66.0%) reflects that the criteria are contained in the instrument used for evaluation.

Table 8 addresses the establishment of goals and criteria in the evaluation process. One hundred seventy-three (63.8%) said goals and criteria are determined in a formal conference at the beginning of the evaluation cycle. Eighty-three (30.6%) said **no**, while four (1.5%) marked they **did not know**. When asked how goals were established, the greatest number, one hundred eight (39.9%), said goals were equally established by the school division and principal. Seventy-five (27.7%) indicated goals were formulated mostly by the school division. Fifty-one (18.9%) said goals were mostly established by the principal. Twenty-three (8.5%) did not know who established principal evaluation goals.

When examining the comparison between goals being "equally established" (39.9%) and "mutually agreed upon" (62.7%), a wide disparity is found. One hundred seventy (62.7%) indicated performance goals were mutually agreed

Table 7. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Criteria Used for the Evaluation of Principals in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Criteria are specified		
a. in policy		
YES	127	46.9
NO	85	31.4
DO NOT KNOW	29	10.7
NO RESPONSE	30	11.1
b. in procedure		
YES	146	53.9
NO	66	24.4
DO NOT KNOW	29	10.7
NO RESPONSE	30	11.1
c. in the instrument		
YES	179	66.0
NO	41	15.1
DO NOT KNOW	20	7.4
NO RESPONSE	31	11.4

Table 8. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Establishing Goals and Criteria for the Principal Evaluation Cycle in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Goals and criteria are established in a formal conference at the beginning of evaluation cycle		
YES	173	63.8
NO	83	30.6
DO NOT KNOW	4	1.5
NO RESPONSE	11	4.1
Goals are established		
a. MOSTLY BY SCHOOL DIVISION	75	27.7
b. MOSTLY BY PRINCIPAL	51	18.9
c. EQUALLY BY SCHOOL DIVISION AND PRINCIPAL	108	39.9
d. DO NOT KNOW	23	8.5
e. NO RESPONSE	14	5.2
Performance Goals are mutually agreed upon		
YES	170	62.7
NO	72	26.6
DO NOT KNOW	19	7.0
NO RESPONSE	10	3.7

upon, but seventy-two (26.6%) said there was not mutual agreement between school division and principal. Almost one-in-ten, i.e., nineteen (7.0%), reported that they did not know whether performance goals were mutually agreed upon.

According to principals, products/artifacts are used in some systems, however, a large number of divisions do not include products or artifacts in the principal evaluation process. As found in Table 9, one hundred fifty-nine (58.7%) do not, while eighty-five (31.4%) do. Fifteen principals (5.5%) indicated they did not know whether these items were a part of their evaluation program.

Two hundred twenty-six (83.4%) of the surveys reported that a job description for principals does exist. Almost ten percent (9.2%) of the principals reported they do not have a job description, and twelve principals (4.4%) did not know if a job description exists. Of those who said a job description exists, most agreed their evaluation was based on the job description to a large extent (one hundred fifty or 63.0%). Sixty-two (26.0%) indicated their evaluation was based on the job description to a small degree, while nineteen (8.0%) said their evaluation was not based on a job description at all. Complete data on the use of job descriptions are presented in Table 10.

Table 9. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning the Use of Products/Artifacts or Presentations for Principal Evaluation in the Public Schools of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Evaluation includes review of products/artifacts or presentations		
YES	85	31.4
NO	159	58.7
DO NOT KNOW	15	5.5
NO RESPONSE	12	4.4
If answered yes, examples are:		
Newsletters or any documents to patrons		
Memos to teachers		
Regular communications to staff & community		
Weekly bulletin		
Observations		
Environment Awards		
Presentations		
Reports		
File Reviews		
Teacher Handbook		
Parent/Student Handbook		
Annual school plan		
Meeting agendas		
Test results		
Workshops		
Attendance		
Awards		
Maintenance Reports		

Table 10. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Job Descriptions for Principals in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Job descriptions for principals exist (N=271)		
YES	226	83.4
No	25	9.2
Do Not Know	12	4.4
No Response	8	3.0
If yes, to what extent is evaluation based on job description (N=238)		
Not at all	19	8.0
Little Extent	62	26.0
Large extent	150	63.0
Do Not Know	4	1.9
Other	3	1.3

Who are the evaluators?

The data in Table 11 suggest that principal evaluation is conducted by a variety of sources. For the most part, one person handles the responsibility. In one hundred eighteen responses (43.5%) that individual was the superintendent. Second to the superintendent was the position of assistant superintendent with sixty-seven (24.8%) responses. Others identified were: Directors of Elementary/Middle/Secondary Education with thirty-five (12.9%), Director of Instruction with twelve (4.4%), Deputy Superintendent with eight (2.9%), Associate Superintendent with seven (2.6%), Grade Level Supervisor with seven (2.6%), Vocational Director with three (1.1%), and Director of Personnel with three (1.1%). Receiving a single response (0.4%) were: Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, Committee, Central Office, myself, and the position directly above. Four of the responses (1.5%) indicated that no one conducts a formal evaluation of the principal(s).

The findings specific to who else provides input into the principal's formal evaluation (also Table 11) are mixed. Principals ranked themselves the highest, seventy-six (28.0%), followed by teachers, fifty-six (20.6%), school board members, thirty-eight (14.0%), a team, twenty-seven (10.0%), peers, twelve (4.4%), consultants, eight (3.0%), and students, four (1.5%). Seventy-seven (28.4%) of the princi-

Table 11. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Who Conducts and Who Provides Input into Formal Principal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES*	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES**
Formal evaluation is conducted by		
Superintendent	118	43.5
Assistant Superintendent	67	24.8
Associate Superintendent	7	2.6
Deputy Superintendent	8	2.9
Director of Instruction	12	4.4
Dir. Elem., Dir. Middle, or Dir. Sec. Education	35	12.9
Level Supervisors	7	2.6
Central Office	1	0.4
Administrative Assistant	1	0.4
Committee	1	0.4
Vocational Director	3	1.1
Director of Personnel	3	1.1
Director of Special Educ.	3	1.1
Assistant Principal	1	0.4
Myself	1	0.4
Position directly above	1	0.4
No One	4	1.5
No Response	17	6.3
Input into formal evaluation includes		
Teachers	56	20.6
School Board Members	38	14.0
Peers	12	4.4
Self	76	28.0
Students	4	1.5
Consultants	8	3.0
Team	27	10.0
Others	24	8.9
Do Not Know	77	28.4
No Response	5	1.8

\* Frequency of responses is more/less than 271 because of multiple answers.

\*\* Percentage of responses is more/less than 100% because of multiple answers.

pals did not know who, if anyone else, provides input into their evaluation.

Is training provided for the evaluator and the evaluatee?

Approximately half of the principals, one hundred twenty-eight (47.26%), indicated that they did not know whether the person(s) who evaluate them had had training to do so. Ninety-nine (36.5%) responded that their evaluator(s) had received some training. Only slightly more than ten percent replied there was no prior evaluator training. The type of training reported was primarily in-service training at the local division level. Table 12 provides the data regarding types of training.

How often are principals formally evaluated?

The majority of principals (54.7%) responded that a regular cycle of formal evaluation takes place once every year. The balance of the responses was mixed: Every Two Years (12.2%), Twice Yearly (10.3%), Other, i.e., Every Three, Four, or Five years combined (8.9%), and Varies (1.8%). Twenty (7.4%) did not know if a regular cycle of evaluation for principals takes place. When asked to reply to whether a formal conference is held at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle, two hundred three (75.0%) said a formal conference was in fact held, and thirty-seven (13.7%) reported it was not. Fourteen (5.2%) indicated that they did

Table 12. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Training Provided Evaluators in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Evaluators are trained to evaluate		
YES	99	36.5
NO	28	10.3
DO NOT KNOW	128	47.2
NO RESPONSE	16	6.0
If yes, describe the training:		
In-Services		
Normal Master's program		
Staff development		
Seminars & workshops		
UVA leadership course		
Madeline Hunter workshop on Effective Schools		
One-on-one training with direct supervisor		
College course work		
Summer updates		
Local and state workshops		
State training for career level evaluation in Tennessee		
VPI&SU Workshops		

not know if a formal conference was held. The data are reported in Table 13.

The results in Table 14 reflect that two hundred twenty-three (82.3%) receive a written evaluation, but twenty-seven (10.0%) do not.

#### Does evaluation include observation?

Table 15 presents evidence that observations are a part of the evaluation process. One-hundred forty-two (52.4%) said they were, but one hundred principals (37.0%) said observations are not a part of the evaluation process. Twenty-three (8.5%) did not know. By a wide margin, the observations were said to be informal (78.2%) as opposed to formal (17.0%). One-hundred one (51.3%) reported no conference, while seventy-six (38.6%) said conferences did follow each observation. Eighteen responses (9.1%) indicated they did not know if a conference followed each observation.

#### What recourse does the evaluatee have after evaluation?

As presented in Table 16, one hundred seventy-five responses (64.6%) indicated that a dissenting statement by the principal may be attached to the formal evaluation. Only thirty-six (13.3%) indicated that a dissenting statement cannot be a part of the evaluation. Forty-nine (18.1%) principals indicated that they did not know if it was possible to file a dissenting opinion.

Table 13. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning How Often Formal Principal Evaluation Takes Place in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
A regular cycle of formal evaluation takes place		
TWICE YEARLY	28	10.3
ONCE YEARLY	148	54.7
EVERY TWO YEARS	33	12.2
EVERY 3, 4, OR 5 YEARS	24	8.9
VARIES	4	1.8
DO NOT KNOW	20	7.4
NO RESPONSE	14	5.2
Formal Conference is held at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle		
YES	203	75.0
NO	37	13.7
DO NOT KNOW	14	5.2
NO RESPONSE	17	6.3

Table 14. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Written Principal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Principal receives a written evaluation		
YES	223	82.3
NO	27	10.0
DO NOT KNOW	5	1.8
NO RESPONSE	16	6.0
If yes, how often (N=223)		
THREE TIMES YEARLY	1	0.4
TWICE YEARLY	23	10.3
ONCE YEARLY	138	61.9
EVERY TWO YEARS	28	12.6
EVERY THREE YEARS	14	6.3
NO RESPONSE	19	8.5

Table 15. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning On-The-Job Observation of the Principal for Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
Observation on-the job is part of evaluation process (N=271)		
YES	142	52.4
NO	100	37.0
DO NOT KNOW	23	8.5
NO RESPONSE	6	2.2
Observation is (N=142)		
FORMAL	24	17.0
INFORMAL	111	78.2
FORMAL/INFORMAL	2	1.4
NO RESPONSE	5	3.5
Conference follows each observation (N=197)		
YES	76	38.6
NO	101	51.3
DO NOT KNOW	18	9.1
NOT APPLICABLE	2	1.0

Table 16. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning the Filing of a Dissenting Statement by the Principal to be Attached to the Formal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
A dissenting statement by the principal may be attached to the formal evaluation		
YES	175	64.6
NO	36	13.3
DO NOT KNOW	49	18.1
NO RESPONSE	11	4.0

### What are the purposes of the evaluation?

As noted in Table 17 principals report a variety of purposes for principal evaluation. The top response of two hundred nineteen (80.8%) was to improve task performance. Closely behind with one hundred ninety-eight (73.1%) responses was to aid in professional growth. One hundred seventy-two (63.5%) said a purpose of principal evaluation was to comply with legal requirements. In addition, one hundred thirty-eight (51.0%) said identifying job targets was a purpose; and one hundred three (38.0%) reported one purpose was to retain or dismiss the principal.

Evaluations used as a motivation for promotion or to receive financial reward were not major factors. Determination for promotion gathered forty-three (15.9%) responses, and granting merit pay received only thirty-six (13.3%) responses.

### Would an evaluation prototype be helpful?

Table 18 presents the results of the inquiry into whether a prototype developed by the State Department of Education would be helpful to local school divisions. The data confirm that there is not substantial support for the Department of Education to develop such an instrument. One hundred ten (40.6%) stated that a prototype would not be desirable. Approximately one-third (32.5%) indicated they did not know whether a state-developed prototype would be help-

Table 17. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Purposes for Principal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES*	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES**
Purposes of principal evaluation are to		
a. Improve task performance	219	80.8
b. Comply with legal requirements	172	63.5
c. Identify job targets	138	51.0
d. Retain or dismiss the principal	103	38.0
e. Grant merit pay	36	13.3
f. Aid in professional growth	198	73.1
g. Determine promotion	43	15.9
h. Do Not Know	20	7.4
i. Others	2	0.7

\* Frequencies of responses are greater than 271 because of multiple answers.

\*\* Percentage of responses is greater than 100% because of multiple answers.

Table 18. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Assistance From the Virginia Department of Education in Principal Evaluation in the School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
An evaluation prototype developed by the Virginia Department of Education would be helpful to formulate evaluation procedure		
YES	62	22.9
NO	110	40.6
DO NOT KNOW	88	32.5
NO RESPONSE	11	4.1

ful. Sixty-two (22.9%) replied that such a model would be beneficial.

## **Research Question 2**

In addition to assessing the status of existing policies and procedures for principal evaluation across the state, a major focus of the study was to determine if the principal's evaluation process made any difference in his/her job performance. To accomplish this, a separate question was added to the original questionnaire. Table 19 presents evidence which reveals that the principals believe the evaluation process does have a positive effect on job performance. One hundred ninety (70.1%) reported that the impact was positive. Of that group, 31.7% said it was very positive and 38.4% slightly positive. Over fifty (18.8%) noted that their evaluation process had no effect on job performance; six (2.2%) said the impact was negative.

## **PART B--PILOT TEST/CASE STUDY**

With permission of the doctoral committee the Montgomery County Public School Division was selected for the pilot study. It was important to collect the opinions of the principals specific to the survey instrument in order to determine strengths and weaknesses in the questionnaire. A six

Table 19. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses Concerning Effect Evaluation has on Job Performance of Principals in the Public School Divisions of Virginia

(N=271)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
The Evaluation Procedures and Policies have had a positive impact on principals' job performance		
Yes, very positive	86	31.7
Yes, slightly positive	104	38.4
No, no effect	51	18.8
No, had negative effect	6	2.2
No Response	24	8.9

item **Questionnaire Evaluation Form** was administered to all of the Montgomery County principals (see **Appendix B**).

In addition to validating the instrument, the data collected through the questionnaires from the principals in the Montgomery division yielded information about a single school system's principal evaluation procedures.

The procedures for administration of the pilot study were arranged with the cooperation of the Superintendent of the Montgomery County School System. The **Questionnaire** and the **Questionnaire Evaluation Form** were mailed to the principals on March 9, 1989, one day after it was announced and explained at an administrative staff meeting by the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Instruction. Of the seventeen principals in the Montgomery County School System, completed questionnaires were received from sixteen. One principal was recuperating from a long term illness and was unable to participate. All available principals therefore responded.

The **Questionnaire Evaluation Form** was a single-sheet, six-question survey designed to determine the feasibility and utility of the survey instrument. The questions were followed by **yes** or **no** answer blanks. In addition there was a section for open-ended comments.

An analysis of the **Questionnaire Evaluation Form** results indicated the survey gathered information without problems of clarity, ambiguity, or bias on behalf of the researcher. See Table 20 for a summary of results. The responses, with

Table 20. Frequencies and Percentages of Responses, Questionnaire Evaluation Form, Montgomery County Principals

(N=16)

QUESTIONNAIRE ITEM	FREQUENCY OF YES RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE OF YES RESPONSES
1. Is format easy to follow?	15	93.7
2. Are directions clear?	15	93.7
3. Is meaning of each question clear?	14	87.5
4. Are response options adequate?	14	87.5
5. Any bias by researcher?	3	18.7
6. Is length excessive?	2	12.5

yes percentages in parentheses, indicated that the questionnaire was easy to follow (93.7%), directions were clear (93.7%), the meaning of each question was understood (87.5%), and the response options for each question were adequate (87.5%). Seventy-five percent of the responses indicated no apparent bias on the part of the researcher, and 81.2% of the respondents indicated that the length of the survey was not excessive. The questionnaire was therefore deemed acceptable for the purposes of collecting data from a random sampling of all public school principals. The pilot study, as a case study, provided a wealth of information about the Montgomery County principals and provided a close look at one system's principal evaluation process. Demographic data showed that the Montgomery County principals were mostly male (87.5%). Ten principals (62.5%) were at the elementary level with grades K-5, 3-5, or K-2; two principals (12.5%) were middle level (6-8); two principals (12.5%) were high school level (9-12); and two principals were at a middle/high combined school (6-12). All principals (100%) indicated that there was a written policy for principal evaluation. Nearly all (93.75%) indicated that written procedures exist for principals' evaluation in the county.

According to principals in Montgomery County, principal evaluation policies and procedures were developed by: central office personnel (93.75%), principals (93.75%), teachers (87.5%), school board members (87.5%), and consultants

(87.5%). Fewer principals indicated parents had input (18.75%). No principals indicated students had input (0.0%).

The principals responded that the division's principal evaluation policies and procedures had been updated within the past twenty-four months.

It was agreed (100%) that an instrument is used to evaluate principals, and the instrument used is the same for all levels.

It was also agreed among the principals (93.75%) that artifacts or other products are reviewed as a part of their evaluation. These artifacts include: parent newsletters, workplans, handbooks, writing samples, newsclippings, budgets, and presentations.

Fourteen principals (87.5%) replied that they have been formally evaluated. One (6.25%) said he/she had not, and one (6.25%) did not respond to the question.

In response to who evaluates the principals, the answers varied: Assistant Superintendent for Instruction & Director of Elementary Education (31.25%), Assistant Superintendent for Instruction & Director of Secondary Education (12.5%), Director of Special Education (6.25%), Director of Secondary Education (12.5%), Director of Elementary Education (12.5%), and "next two bosses" (6.25%).

Less than half of the principals (43.75%) knew whether their evaluator had received training. Of those who indi-

cated training had been received, the type of training was In-Service at the school board office.

As to frequency of evaluation, most principals (68.75%) indicated that they were evaluated once per year. Four (25%) reported twice yearly.

As to who provides input into principals' evaluation, the results showed that self (50%), teachers (43.75%), and students (25%) contributed.

All of the principals (100%) agreed that they were furnished a written evaluation. Most (62.5%) indicated it was done annually.

It is clear from the responses that there are job descriptions (93.75% agreement) for principals upon which their evaluation is based to a large extent.

The respondents concurred (93.75%) that a formal conference was held at the beginning of the evaluation cycle to establish goals and the evaluation criteria. The actual performance evaluation was based on goals established mostly by both the school division and the principal (68.75%). Five responses (37.25%) indicated performance was based solely on goals established by the school division.

The principals were not in agreement on the question of whether (on-the-job) observation of the principal was a part of the evaluation process. Half (50.0%) replied it was, while seven (43.75%) answered no. One principal (6.25%) "did not know."

Of the eight principals who indicated (on-the-job) observation was a part of the process, all (100%) said it was informal as opposed to formal.

Mixed responses were found to the question of whether a conference was held following each observation. Seven principals (43.75%) responded yes, and five (31.25%) said no.

All sixteen participants (100.0%) reported that a formal conference was held with the principal after the evaluation was completed.

Twelve respondents (75.0%) reported that principals in Montgomery County were evaluated on mutually agreed upon performance goals.

With but one exception, principals agreed (93.75%) that there was opportunity for the principal to file a dissenting statement to be attached to the evaluation document.

When asked to indicate the purposes of principals' evaluation, granting merit or performance pay (87.25% agreement) and improving task performance (87.25% agreement) were mentioned most often. Providing information related to strengths and weaknesses to aid in professional growth was identified by 81.25% of the respondents.

If the State Department of Education developed a prototype principal evaluation system, would it be helpful to the Montgomery system? The response from the Montgomery principals was mixed. Five participants said yes (31.25%); six (37.5%) reported no; five (31.25%) were undecided.

What impact, if any, has the evaluation process had on the principals of Montgomery County? Thirteen principals (81.25%) were favorable. Six (37.5%) indicated the process had a very positive impact while seven (43.75%) agreed the process was slightly positive. Three participants (18.75%) said the process had no effect or had a negative effect.

Following computation of the data from the principals, an interview was conducted with the superintendent of schools. In addition to discussing the results of the pilot study, the purpose of the interview was to gain the superintendent's perspective on Montgomery County's principal evaluation policies and procedures. The superintendent willingly supplied information throughout the interview process.

In response to whether there are written policies and written procedures, the superintendent responded yes to both, thus matching the strong positive response from the principals.

There was agreement as to who developed the principal evaluation policy and procedures. The superintendent and principals agreed that central office personnel, principals, teachers, school board members, and consultants developed the program(s).

The superintendent answered that Montgomery County's principal evaluation policies and procedures were last updated in 1988-90. His response emphasized that the proce-

dures, more so than policies, were addressed in the current year. The principals indicated that the last update was in 1987 and 1988. Although this is not an identical match, it does point to the fact that Montgomery County has recently updated its principal evaluation program.

Conflicting responses were received relative to the question of whether there exists a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising evaluation policies and procedures. The superintendent said there was no such a provision. Eleven (68.7%) of the principals believe there is. One-fourth of the principals answered that they did not know.

There was unanimity that an evaluation instrument is used; and, except for one principal, there was agreement that the instrument is the same for all. Further, there was agreement between the superintendent and principals on the issue of specification of criteria in policy, procedure, and in the instrument.

Concurrence was also present regarding the use of artifacts/products in the evaluation of principals.

The superintendent identified the assistant superintendent for curriculum & instruction and the two directors (elementary and secondary) as the individuals who conducted formal principal evaluations. Generally, the principals agreed, although there appeared a greater variation of responses in the position titles identified by the principals.

The superintendent reported that the evaluators had received training; over half (56.3%) of the principals said no or did not know.

There was agreement that teachers and the principals themselves provide additional input into the evaluation of principals. However, it is noted that one-fourth of the principals reported that students also had input.

Five principal's responses (31.2%) did not match the superintendent's when asked how often formal evaluation takes place. The superintendent said once yearly. Eleven (68.8%) principals agreed.

All principals agreed with the superintendent that a written evaluation is provided, and ten (62.5%) reported that it was once per year. One-fourth of the principals indicated they were furnished a written evaluation twice a year and one (6.25%) said "after each visit."

All but one principal (93.7%) concurred that the division has a job description for principals, and twelve (75.0%) agreed with the superintendent that the job description was used to a large extent in the process.

There was agreement that a formal conference is held at the beginning of the evaluation cycle to establish goals and criteria for assessment. Eleven principals (68.7%) concurred with the superintendent that the goals and criteria for assessment were equally developed by the school division and the principal. Five (37.2%) principals believe that per-

formance evaluation based on goals was developed only by the school division.

The superintendent responded that (on-the-job) observation of the principal is a part of the evaluation process. Responses from the principals indicate they have different perceptions on that issue. Half of the principals agreed with the superintendent; the other eight either disagreed (43.7%) or did not know (6.2%). Of those who concurred with the superintendent, it was agreed that the observation was informal.

The superintendent said a conference was held following each observation. Seven (43.7%) of the principals agreed; nine (56%) principals did not agree with that view. Of the nine, five principals (31.2%) said no, a conference was not held, one (6.2%) did not know the answer, one (6.2%) said not applicable; two others (12.5%) did not respond.

One principal (6.2%) did not know if there are provisions for principals to file a dissenting opinion which could be attached to the evaluation document. The balance of the principals (93.7%) and the superintendent agreed there was.

Three fourths (75.0%) of the principals concurred with the superintendent's response that principal evaluation is based on mutually agreed upon performance goals. One-fourth (25.0%) of the principals disagreed.

In response to the question of purposes of principal evaluation in the Montgomery division, principals generally agreed with the superintendent. The following is a listing of reasons given by the superintendent with percent of principals' agreement in parentheses: improve task performance (87.5%); comply with legal requirements (62.5%); identify job targets (56.2%); retain or dismiss the principal (56.2%); grant merit pay (87.5%); provide information related to strengths and weaknesses (81.2%); and determine qualifications for promotion (37.5%).

Neither principals nor superintendent thought the Virginia Department of Education should attempt to develop a prototype principal evaluation program. Only five (31.2%) of the principals thought the development of a state prototype was a positive idea.

One insight into the Montgomery County system was gained in responses to the question whether the policies and procedures for principal evaluation had changed since February, 1988. Over half (56.2%) of the principals said the policies and procedures have not changed. The superintendent indicated that change had occurred. He explained that while the instrument for evaluation was still the same, a work plan for principals is now required. He pointed out that this is a radical departure for most of the principals, since, prior to this superintendent, a work plan had not been a part of the evaluation process.

A review of the overall picture reveals that the Montgomery County principals and their superintendent concur on most issues regarding the mechanics of principal evaluation policies and procedures. The analysis of data in the case study did, however, identify some areas which could become the focus for staff improvement programs in the future. The three areas where disparity was found were: a procedure for reviewing principal evaluation policies and procedures, current need to revise policies and procedures, and the purpose of (on-the-job) observation as a component of principal evaluation.

#### PART C--COMPARISON OF PERSPECTIVES OF THE PRINCIPALS AND PERSONNEL OFFICERS

In a 1988 study by William Born (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University doctoral dissertation) the status of principal evaluation policies and procedures in the Commonwealth of Virginia was assessed by examining data gathered from a central office representative who was knowledgeable of his/her system's policies and procedures for principal evaluation. All one hundred thirty-one public school divisions in the state responded to the survey. The questionnaire was directed to the school division personnel officer. In small school divisions this person was often the superintendent. In larger divisions this individual was an

assistant superintendent or some other subordinate to the superintendent.

The following comparison of the Born data and the data gathered in this study explores the status of principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia through two sets of lenses. It is noted that in the Born study each school system's data was weighted equally, i.e., large systems had the same impact on the data results that small systems had--equal weight in the study. However, in this study, because a random sample of principals was employed to collect data, the larger school systems had more principals participating than smaller systems. Randomization assures that school systems representing more populated areas have a greater number of participants in the study than areas with less population and fewer schools. Therefore, differences in the results to some questions of the two studies might be a function of the sample group rather than actual differences in perceptions of the respective respondents. Direct comparison is not possible because sample size and composition were different in the two studies. Only percentage comparisons are presented in this discussion. The reader is reminded that the Born data is synonymous with the opinions of the evaluators, i.e., the school system.

#### Written Policy and Procedure in Place?

Virginia's principals acknowledge by a large percentage

that written policies (86.3%) and written procedures (80.1%) currently exist in their respective systems (Table 2). The personnel officers' responses compared closely with 84.0% for written policies and 77.9% for written procedures.

#### Who was responsible for design?

The results presented in both studies are similar. Central office personnel ranked first in each. The principals reported (79.3%) and the personnel officers (87.0%) for this category. Next, with 51.7% of the principals and 75.6% of the personnel officers, were the principals. The group mentioned third highest in development of evaluation policies and procedures were school board members. The personnel officers were more likely to list school board members (31.0%) than were the principals (18.5%). Teachers received comparable numbers, i.e., 14.4% from principals and 15.3% from personnel officers. Students were included least frequently by both groups. Only 1.1% of the principals said students were involved while none of the personnel officers indicated students were responsible for the design of principal evaluation programs.

#### What provision is made for policy and procedure revision?

Approximately seven out of ten (69.5%) of the personnel officers said there was a procedure for revising principal evaluation policies and procedures. Only two of five (39.1%)

of the principals agreed. A large segment of the principals (34.3%) did not know. The percentage of personnel officers who said there was a revision procedure in place (35.0%) was close to the percentage of principals responding to that item (34.0%). The discrepancy in the comparison is accounted for in the number of principals who did not know if procedures for revising policies and procedures exist in their school system.

When asked to indicate when the policies and procedures were last updated, 52.7% of the personnel officers said within the last three years. Only 22.3% of the principals responded similarly. Again, it was noted that a large percentage (30.3%) of the principals either did not know (20.7%) or did not respond (9.6%).

More personnel officers (49.6%) saw a need to revise policies and procedures than those who did not (47.3%). However, a higher percentage (53.9%) of the principals indicated there was no need to revise current policies and procedures.

#### Is there an evaluation instrument?

Both groups strongly agreed that an evaluation instrument exists in their school division. In fact, the percentages were very close; 84.7% of the personnel officers and 81.5% of the principals agreed an instrument exists.

Of those who said there was an evaluation instrument in place, 93.7% of the personnel officers reported it was the same for all principals. By contrast, a smaller percentage (77.5%) of the principals concurred with that statement.

#### How was the evaluation process formulated?

In comparing the two studies with respect to the development of the evaluation process, several factors were reviewed. In response to criteria being specified in the policy, only 28.2% of the personnel officers so indicated. A larger percentage (46.9%) of the principals said criteria were contained in the policy. Over half (55.7%) of the personnel officers said criteria were specified in procedures. This compares closely to 53.9% of the principals. Most personnel officers (81.7%), compared to a smaller percentage (66.0%) of the principals, said criteria were specified in the evaluation instrument. Mutually-developed performance goals are a part of the evaluation process according to 79.4% of the personnel officers and 62.7% of the principals. More personnel officers (77.9%) than principals (63.8%) reported that goals were established in a formal conference at the beginning of the evaluation cycle. A contrast exists in the data on who formulates principal evaluation goals. Seven out-of-ten (71%) of the personnel officers responded that goals were mutually (or cooperatively) developed by the school division and the principal. Only 39.9% responded

similarly. In fact, nearly one-third (27.7%) of the principals said goals were formulated mostly by the school division without significant principal input.

Products or artifacts are used in evaluating principals in 71.0% of the systems, according to the personnel officers. Fewer principals (58.7%) report that products/artifacts are employed. Personnel officers said job descriptions for principals exist in 88.5% of Virginia's school systems. Over eighty percent (83.5%) of the principals agreed that job descriptions do exist. According to personnel officers (78.4%), the job descriptions are used in the evaluation process to a large extent. By comparison a smaller percentage of principals (63.0%) agreed that the job description is used to a major degree.

#### Who are the evaluators?

By far, the personnel officers said that superintendents handle principal evaluation (60.3%). However, principals perceive matters differently. They reported that the superintendent was indeed the most involved individual in principals' evaluation, but by a lower percentage (43.5%). Numerous principals (24.8%) also credited the position of assistant superintendent with the responsibility. Both groups reported small percentages of a wide range of individuals in addition to the two mentioned here. Personnel officers most often mentioned principals (36.6%) as the cat-

egory which had input into principal evaluation. The highest percentage of principal responses (28.4%) fell into the do not know column. Behind principals, the personnel officers rated teachers (16.0%) and school board members (11.5%). Principals followed the same sequence, i.e., teachers (20.6%) and school board members (14.0%).

#### Is training provided for the evaluator?

The majority of personnel officers (73.3%) said training was provided for the evaluator. The largest percentage of personnel officers (47.2%) reporting did not know if the evaluator had received training. Only 36.5% of the principals said that their evaluator had indeed received some form of training. In-service programs were again cited as the most widely used type of training.

#### How often are principals formally evaluated?

Personnel officers (74.8%) and principals (54.7%) reported that principals are evaluated one time annually. The next closest classification offered by personnel officers was twice annually (9.2%). Principals listed every two years as the next highest response (12.2%). Almost every school division (92.4%) said a formal conference was held at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle. The principals agreed, although to a lesser extent (75.0%). The data reveal prin-

cipals concurred (82.3%) with personnel officers (87.8%) that principals do receive some type of written evaluation.

Does evaluation include observation?

A high percentage (81.7%) of personnel officers said that evaluation includes observing the administrators. Almost forty percent (37.0%) of the principals do not believe this is true. Both personnel officers (86.9%) and principals (78.2%) believe that the observations are informal as opposed to formal. Likewise, the responses regarding conferences following each observation are similar. Sixty-six percent of the personnel officers indicated conferences are not tied to observations, and the highest percentage (51.3%) of the principals concurred.

What recourse does the evaluatee have after evaluation?

Most personnel officers (86.3%) reported that principals were able to file a dissenting statement to their evaluation. Of the principals surveyed, 64.6% agreed. A noteworthy statistic was that 18.1% of the principals did not know whether a dissenting statement was permitted.

What are the purposes of the evaluation?

The same three responses were listed most frequently by both groups concerning the purposes of principal evaluation. The most frequent response was to improve task performance,

cited by 93.9% of personnel officers and 80.8% of the principals. Next highest, to aid in professional growth, was listed by 87.8% of the personnel officers and 73.1% of the principals. The third purpose most often mentioned was to comply with legal requirements. This purpose was selected by 67.9% of the personnel officers and 63.5% of the principals.

Would an evaluation prototype be helpful?

Personnel officer responses were split on this issue. Slightly over half (51.9%) said yes, but a large segment (35.1%) stated a state model would not be helpful. In contrast, the largest percentage (40.6%) of the principals said a state prototype would not be beneficial. Over thirty percent (32.5%) of the principals had no opinion on the question.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Introduction

As presented in Chapter I, the purposes of this study were to:

1. Describe principal evaluation policies and procedures currently in place in the school divisions of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

2. Determine if existing evaluation policies and procedures affect the job performance of Virginia's public school principals.

3. Examine and describe one school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures.

4. Compare and discuss school system descriptions of policies and procedures related to evaluation of principals with responses of principals describing those same policies and procedures.

Chapter II examined pertinent literature on the status of principal evaluation practices with a focus on effective schools research. Chapter III outlined the design of the study. Chapter IV presented the findings based on the data secured through a questionnaire mailed to a random sample of

337 of the 1754 public school principals in Virginia. Survey responses were received from 80.4% of the participants. The second part of Chapter IV presented a case study of principal evaluation policies and procedures. The third part of Chapter IV compared principal responses to school system responses.

Chapter Five offers a summary of the data collected and analyzed in Chapter IV. In addition, recommendations and conclusions are found in Chapter Five.

### Findings

The literature supports the premise that an effective principal is essential to having an effective school. The literature also documents the potential for effective evaluation practices to maintain and improve job related skills. Combined, both concepts justify why evaluation policies and practices of principals are essential to the future of the public schools in Virginia.

#### I. Results of Principals' Responses

The results of this study indicate that principal evaluation policies and procedures are firmly established in the school divisions across Virginia and apparently meeting the expectations for which they were designed. Eighty-six percent of the principals surveyed reported that written poli-

cies for principal evaluation are currently in place in their school system. Eighty percent of the principals surveyed indicated that written procedures currently exist in their school system. Principals reported that central office personnel and principals are the chief contributors to the development of evaluation systems. According to the principals, approximately one-fourth of the systems have a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising policies and procedures. Slightly more than half of the principals indicated that they did not feel a need to revise existing policies and procedures.

Over eighty percent of the principals surveyed said that an instrument is used to evaluate principals. Principals also reported that the criteria for evaluation were more often found in the instrument than in either the policy or procedure. Two-thirds of the principals reported that goals and criteria are established in a formal conference at the beginning of the evaluation cycle. Performance goals are agreed upon mutually and most often established equally by the school division and the principal. However, one-third of the principals stated that goals are established mostly by the school division and not mutually developed.

Over half of the principals said that products/artifacts are not used as a component of the evaluation. The types of products/artifacts which are used varies from informal written memos to formally developed handbooks and/or newsletters.

Most principals report that a job description exists for their position. A majority of the principals who report having a job description indicate that their evaluation is based on the job description to a large extent.

The primary evaluator of principals is the superintendent of schools. About one-fourth of the principals indicated that an assistant superintendent handles their evaluation. Numerous other positions, including committees, are involved in the evaluation of principals. Other input into the evaluation comes primarily from the principals. Almost one-third of the principals did not know who had input into their evaluation.

One-half of the principals did not know if their evaluator had been trained in evaluation procedures. Of the principals who said that their evaluator had received training, the types of training most often cited included seminars, workshops, staff development, and college coursework.

Most principals are evaluated once a year. Three-fourths of the principals reported that a formal conference is conducted at the conclusion of the cycle. Over eighty percent of principals said that they receive a written evaluation. Of those who receive a written evaluation, slightly over sixty percent stated that the written evaluation is received annually.

According to fifty-two percent of the principals, observations are part of the evaluation. The observations are

informal as opposed to formal. Over half of the principals reported that there is not a conference following each observation. Most principals indicated they have the opportunity to file a dissenting statement which can accompany the written evaluation.

According to principals, the three primary purposes for principal evaluation are: improve task performance, aid in professional growth, and comply with legal requirements. The granting of merit pay was identified by only thirteen percent of the respondents.

Research Question Two examined the impact of evaluation on job performance. A single inquiry on the questionnaire solicited the principals' views regarding whether the school systems evaluation policies and procedures make a difference in their job description. The question also sought to determine the extent, if any, of impact the evaluation had. The results indicated that over seventy percent of the principals believe that evaluation has had a positive impact on the performance. Nearly thirty-two percent reported that their evaluation had a very positive impact, while thirty-eight percent said slightly positive. Twenty percent of the principals perceived their evaluation to have no effect or a negative effect.

Additional data were requested and received on the question of the benefits of a principal evaluation model which would be developed for local school divisions by the

Virginia Department of Education. Twenty-three percent of the principals said that such a prototype would be helpful. However, forty-one percent did not respond favorably to the idea of a state model developed by the Department of Education.

## II. Comparison of Principals to Personnel Officer Responses

### A. Areas of Apparent Agreement

Direct comparison of the responses reported by school systems' personnel officers (Born, 1988) to the results reported by principals in this study is difficult. As explained in Chapter Four, because of randomization, responses in this study are weighted towards more populated school systems whereas the Born data weights responses from each school system equally. Two hundred seventy-one principals responded in this study compared to 131 personnel officers in the Born study.

Agreement between the school system personnel officers and principals was found in the following areas:

1. Written Policy--86.3% of the principals stated that a written policy exists compared to 84.0% of personnel officers.

2. Written procedures--80.1% of the principals responded that written procedures exist in their system compared to 77.9% of the personnel officers.

3. Principals and personnel officers responded similarly when asked to identify who developed policies and procedures for principal evaluation. Central office personnel were identified most often by principals (79.3%) and also personnel officers (87.0%). The input of principals was ranked second by both principals (51.7%) and personnel officers (75.6%). School board members' input was rated third by principals (18.5%) and also personnel officers (23.7%). Parents and students were mentioned least often by both groups.

4. Principals (81.5%) and personnel officers (84.7%) reported that an evaluation instrument is used to evaluate principals.

5. A majority of principals (58.7%) and most personnel officers (71.0%) reported that artifacts/products are used in the evaluation of principals.

6. According to principals (83.4%) and personnel officers (88.5%), a job description does exist for principals in the respective school systems. Both groups agree that to a large extent the principal's evaluation is based on the job description. The response of principals (63.0%) compared similarly to personnel officers (78.4%).

7. Principals (43.5%) and personnel officers (60.3%) agreed that the superintendent evaluates principals.

8. Most principals (54.7%) agreed with personnel officers (74.8%) that a regular cycle of formal evaluation exists and most often takes place annually.

9. Principals (82.3%) concurred with personnel officers (87.8%) that the principal receives a written evaluation. Principals (61.9%) and personnel officers (74.8%) most often responded that the written evaluation is received once every year.

10. Principals (51.3%) and personnel officers (66.4%) concurred that a conference does not follow each on-the-job observation of the principal.

11. The purposes of principal evaluation were rated similarly by principals and personnel officers. First, "to improve task performance" was listed by 80.8% of the principals and 93.9% of the personnel officers. Second, "to aid in professional growth," was cited by 73.1% of the principals and 87.8% of the personnel officers.

#### B. Areas of Apparent Disagreement

The findings of this study, reported by principals, when compared to results reported by personnel officers, reveal several areas of apparent disagreement. It is noted that the differences are likely a function of: differences in the sample groups attributed to size of school system, the nature of the respondents, ambiguous questions, or actual differences of opinion between principals and personnel officers.

1. When asked if a procedure for reviewing and revising evaluation policies and procedures exists, 39.1% of the principals and 69.5% of the personnel officers said no. One explanation for the large differences in negative answers is that an additional category of responses was included in the study of principals. Thirty-four percent of the principals reported that they did not know the answer to the inquiry. The percent of yes answers for principals (24.0%) and personnel officers (26.7%) was nearly equal. Therefore, the apparent large difference in no responses is actually a function of a different type of response option available to the respondents. It is important to note, however, that one out of three principals indicated that they do not know if their school system has a procedure to regularly review principal evaluation programs. It is discouraging to note that, even though the literature supports regular review and revision of principal evaluation policies, over two-thirds of the systems indicate this feature is not present in their system. It is understandable that over thirty percent of the principals are not aware of review and revision components within their system's evaluation program. The principal is the practitioner; the person who is on the job each day implementing the many programs and responsibilities inherent to being a building level administrator. It may not be so important to the success of the principals that they know whether their evaluation policies and procedures will be

regularly reviewed. It is, however, most important that the personnel at the central office level responsible for evaluating principals know whether there is a procedure to regularly review and revise policies and procedures for principal evaluation.

2. It was earlier noted that principals (42.0%) and personnel officers (52.7%) concurred that their principal evaluation policies and procedures had been updated within the past three years. It was also reported that 30.3% of the principals either did not know or did not respond to the question. That one-third of the principals were unaware may be attributed to two conditions. First, the personnel officers did not have the response option "do not know." Had the principals not had that response option, perhaps more similar results would have been attained. Secondly, the answer may be explained in that it may not be as important for the principals to know when their evaluation policies were last updated; only that policies are occasionally updated. Only 5.4% of personnel officers responded that they were uncertain or did not know the answer. The individuals responsible for evaluating principals certainly need to know when the policies and procedures were last updated. It is likely their responsibility to see that the policies and procedures are reviewed at some prescribed time.

3. Personnel officers were nearly unanimous (93.7%) that the principal evaluation instrument used in their school

system is the same for all levels. Although most principals concurred (77.5%), one-sixth (16.6%) of the principals responded that they either did not know the answer or did not respond to the question. The large percentage of principals who were apparently unsure or unknowing is attributed to recognition of the role of the evaluator versus the evaluatee. As was the case in items one and two above, it may not be important to the principal's successful job performance that he/she know if the instrument is the same for elementary as well as secondary principals. It is, however, most important that the principal, at whatever level, be familiar with the instrument which governs his/her specific job. Subsequently, the nonresponse of one-sixth of the principals may be statistically significant but of little practical significance.

4. Major differences were noted on the questions relating to establishment of and agreement on performance goals for principal evaluation. A relatively small percent of principals (39.9%) reported that goals are established equally by the school division and principals. This percentage contrasts sharply with the 71.0% of personnel officers who report the same response. A sizable number (26.6%) of principals responded that performance goals were not mutually agreed upon by the evaluators and the evaluatees. Nearly eight out of ten (79.4%) personnel officers stated that the goals were in fact mutually agreed upon. The difference in these responses likely represents a difference of

opinion and possible cause for concern. Better communications between the evaluators and the principals would reduce the disparity in this area. In order for the very best principal evaluation program to exist in a school system, it is paramount that principals, central office evaluators, and policy makers communicate and understand the basis for evaluation as well as the policies and procedures which support it.

5. According to the results of this study, one-third (30.2%) of the principals in Virginia do not know who has formal input into their evaluation policies and procedures, whereas none of the personnel officers were ambiguous about who contributes to the process. Clearly, with the recent focus on creating effective schools, it is imperative that principals know which stakeholders are contributors to the evaluation procedures that determine their job responsibilities and whether the principal continues his/her job. Again, the margin of difference is explained by an apparent lack of communications between evaluator and principals.

6. Over one-half (53.2%) of the principals reported that they did not know if their evaluator had received training to evaluate. The personnel officers (73.3%) clearly indicated that the evaluators had indeed received training. The difference between sample groups is likely due to the relative importance each group attached to knowing if the evaluators had received training. One would expect a per-

sonnel officer to know if those responsible for evaluation had received training. However, it is not so important that principals know; only that the interaction with the personnel officer results in satisfactory performance.

7. One-fourth (25.2%) of the principal survey responses revealed a lack of knowledge as to whether a formal conference is held at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle. Personnel directors (92.4%) overwhelmingly reported that a formal conference is held at the conclusion of the evaluation cycle. The wide disparity appears to be a function of a lack of communication between evaluator and principals, and/or perhaps a degree of principal apathy. It is possible, as some critics have stated, that principals are not very concerned about the specifics of their evaluation policies and procedures. Numerous principals have worked in their current position for many years, and a lack of this type of information has not caused them to receive inadequate evaluations, lose their job, or, in their opinion, be less effective.

8. This study found that nearly 40% of the principals said that on-the-job observation is not a part of their evaluation. This contrasts significantly with over eighty percent (81.7%) of the personnel officers reporting that on-the-job observation is a part of the principal's evaluation. Clearly, the principal should know if the superintendent, or whoever the evaluator is, considers observation, informal or otherwise, a part of the evaluation process. Once again,

perhaps principal apathy is reflected in the responses. Even so, it is important for this information to be clearly stated in policy and clearly communicated in practice.

9. Principals (64.6% agree) and personnel officers (86.3% agree) differed slightly on the response regarding whether a dissenting opinion by the principal could be attached to the evaluation. As the caretakers of the policies and procedures, the personnel officers should know that this is or is not a feature of the principal evaluation program in the respective school system. However, principals probably do not attach much significance to this type of detail in the overall principal evaluation process. It should be noted that, if a principal receives an evaluation with which he/she did not agree, whether a dissenting statement could be attached would take on real meaning and importance.

10. In response to whether a principal evaluation prototype developed by the Virginia Department of Education would be helpful, only 22.9% of the principals said yes. Twice the number of personnel officers believed that a state model would be beneficial. The variance in yes responses may be explained by the additional category "do not know" which was present on the principals' survey. Over thirty percent of the principals responded that they did not know if a state prototype would be helpful. The fact is that many principals (40.6%), for whatever reason(s), do not want the Virginia Department of Education to develop an evaluation program for

them. Principals apparently are not confident that the State Department of Education will produce an evaluation program that is more effective than the program already being used in their school system. Also, principals may feel that the Department of Education has made too many decisions at the state level; decisions which are better made at the local level. The difference in responses of personnel officers and principals may also reflect the variations in the response groups. The personnel officers' response group was more heavily weighted toward small school system responses and may, in fact, reflect greater need for state assistance in the development of such procedures for smaller school divisions.

### III. System Level Analysis

To address the third purpose of the research, a case study of the principal evaluation policies and procedures in Montgomery County was conducted. The case study was employed to validate the data collection instrument. A Questionnaire Evaluation Form, completed by all available Montgomery County principals, revealed that the survey instrument produced results which were usable in the study. Likewise, the principals and the Superintendent completed the 31 item survey. The principals' responses were compiled and compared to the responses of the Superintendent. By comparing responses within a school division, one can better assess the degree

of effectiveness of principal evaluation policies and procedures. Insights about principal evaluation can be obtained by examining principals or personnel officers statewide; however, differences which occur within local school systems between superintendent and principals, or among principals, are likely to produce a greater opportunity to effect change and improve the evaluation system. The real issue is not comparing principals and personnel officers at the state level, but examining differences which may exist at the local level.

### Conclusions

Written policies and procedures for the evaluation of principals are in reasonably sound condition in the public schools of Virginia. As supported by data gathered as a part of this study, clearly a large percentage of principals are aware of existing policies and procedures for principal evaluation within their school division. The data confirm previous findings of Born (1988, p. 119).

A procedure to regularly review and revise principal evaluation policies and procedures needs to be established in each school division in Virginia. Fewer than one-fourth of the principals believe that such a procedure exists. The literature clearly indicates that periodic reviews of existing programs are advisable.

Most principals believe their current evaluation process is having a positive impact on their job performance. This is apparent from the fact that over seventy percent of the principals perceive their evaluation as having a positive effect on job performance.

At this time, a prototype developed by the Virginia State Department of Education is not recommended. Fewer than one-fourth of the principals perceive such a model as being helpful. Coupled with the data previously received from the school divisions (Born, 1988) there is currently little support for the Department of Education to undertake such an effort.

#### Further Research

The main focus of this study was to collect and analyze data from Virginia's public school principals about their evaluation policies and procedures. Along with the Born study (1988), the status of principal evaluation policies and procedures in Virginia's public schools has been examined through two sets of lenses--the principals and the personnel officers representing the local system's perspective. It is recommended that this study be replicated in other states. Such research would further confirm if these findings are consistent within states other than Virginia.

Additional research, which would focus on case studies of local school divisions, possesses the potential to reveal a wealth of information about principals and the policies and procedures which govern their assessment. In-depth analysis and on-site study provide rich opportunities to learn much about the evaluation of principals, how that evaluation influences the performance of principals, and how both can be improved.

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**APPENDIX A. QUESTIONNAIRE**

Questionnaire  
Principal Evaluation Policies and Procedures  
in the School Divisions of Virginia:  
The Principals' Perspective

**Instructions:** Please respond to each of the questions by checking the most accurate answer. Use the space provided to explain answers where applicable. Please answer all questions.

1. Does your school division have a written policy for principal evaluation?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
2. Does your school division have written procedures for principal evaluation?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
3. Was your principal evaluation policy and procedure developed by (Check all that apply):
  - a. Central Office Personnel? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Principals? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Teachers? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Students? \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Parents? \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. School Board Members? \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Consultants? \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Others (Specify)? \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
4. When were your division's principal evaluation policies and procedures last updated? (Year) \_\_\_\_\_
5. Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation policies and procedures in your school division?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, how often? \_\_\_\_\_
6. As a principal in your respective school division, do you see a current need for revision of your division's principal evaluation policy?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_
7. Is an evaluation instrument used in your division to evaluate principals?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_

8. Is the instrument the same for all principals?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
 No (varies by level, elementary or secondary) \_\_\_\_\_  
 No (Individualized) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_
9. Are the criteria which are used for the evaluation of principals specified (Check all that apply):  
 In policy? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_  
 in procedure? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_  
 In the instrument? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Specify)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 
10. In some school systems a principal's evaluation may include the review of products/artifacts or presentations (e.g. newsletters, publications, presentations to the Board or community). Are such data formally included in your evaluation procedures?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
- If yes, please provide some examples: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- 11.a. Who conducts your formal evaluation (position)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Have you been formally evaluated as a principal?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. When was your last formal evaluation? (Date) \_\_\_\_\_  
 month-year
12. Has the evaluator received training prior to conducting evaluation?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
13. If the answer to number 12 was yes, describe the training if possible.  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
14. Who else provides input into the evaluation of principals?  
 a. Teachers? \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. School Board Members? \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Peers? \_\_\_\_\_  
 d. Self? \_\_\_\_\_  
 e. Students? \_\_\_\_\_  
 f. Consultants? \_\_\_\_\_

- g. Evaluation team (Specify)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- h. Others (Specify)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- i. Unknown \_\_\_\_\_
15. How often are you formally evaluated:  
 Twice yearly? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Once yearly? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Every two years? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Specify)? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_  
 Varies depending on these factors: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
16. Are you provided with a written evaluation?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
17. If the answer to number 16 was yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
18. Does your division have job descriptions for principals?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
19. If the answer to number 18 was yes, to what extent is  
 your evaluation based on job descriptions?  
 To a little extent \_\_\_\_\_  
 To a large extent \_\_\_\_\_  
 Not at all \_\_\_\_\_
20. Is a formal conference held with the principal to  
 establish the goals and the evaluation criteria at the  
 beginning of the evaluation cycle?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
21. Is the principal performance evaluation based on goals  
 established:  
 Mostly by the school division? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mostly by the principal? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Equally by both school division and principal? \_\_\_\_\_  
 Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
22. Is on-the-job observation of the principal a part of  
 the evaluation process?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
23. If the answer to number 22 was yes, is the observation  
 formal or informal?  
 Formal (e.g. half-day twice annually) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Informal (no established time) \_\_\_\_\_

24. Is there a conference following each observation?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
25. Is a formal conference held with the principal after the evaluation cycle has been completed?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
26. Are there provisions for principals to file a dissenting statement to be attached to the evaluation document?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
27. Is the principal evaluated on mutually agreed upon performance goals?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
28. Are the purposes of principal evaluation in your school division to (Check all that apply):
- a. Improve task performance? \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Comply with legal requirements such as state law and division policy? \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Identify job targets? \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Retain or dismiss the principal? \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Grant merit or performance pay? \_\_\_\_\_
  - f. Provide information related to strengths and weaknesses to aid in professional growth? \_\_\_\_\_
  - g. Determine qualifications for promotion? \_\_\_\_\_
  - h. Others (Specify)? \_\_\_\_\_
  - i. Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
29. Do you feel that another evaluation prototype developed by the Virginia Department of Education would be helpful?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Do Not Know \_\_\_\_\_
30. Have the policies and procedures by which you are currently evaluated had an impact on your job performance?  
 Yes, very positive \_\_\_\_\_  
 Yes, slightly positive \_\_\_\_\_  
 No, no effect \_\_\_\_\_  
 No, had a negative effect \_\_\_\_\_
- Please explain how they have made a difference? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
31. Have the policies and/or procedures by which you are evaluated changed since February, 1988? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION FORM

Name of Reviewer \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTIONNAIRE EVALUATION FORM

Please consider each of the following questions as you review and critique the questionnaire. Any comments or suggestions you might have in addition to these questions will be greatly appreciated. Feel free to make your comments on this form and/or on the questionnaire.

1. Is the format of the questionnaire easy to follow? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
2. Are the directions for completing the questionnaire clear? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
3. Is the meaning of each question readily understood? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
4. Are the response options for each question adequate? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
5. Does any aspect of the questionnaire suggest bias on the part of the researcher? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No
6. Is the length of the questionnaire excessive? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

APPENDIX C. LETTER OF INTRODUCTION AND COVER LETTER

James L. Ruffa  
Virginia Tech University  
Graduate School of Education  
Blacksburg, Virginia

April 1, 1989

Dear Virginia School Principals,

As a part of my doctoral program at Virginia Tech, I am researching the topic "Principal Evaluation." This research has the support of the Virginia State Department of Education, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP), and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP).

The enclosed questionnaire will provide valuable data about principal evaluation practices across the state. You have been randomly selected from a listing of all active Virginia public school principals to participate in this study. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey.

The information you provide will be used solely for the purposes of this study. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses is assured each participant. The coding number indicated in the upper right corner is for this purpose or follow-up only.

Please return the questionnaire with your comments by April 20, 1989. A self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, time, and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

James L. Ruffa

PRINCE GEORGE HIGH SCHOOL  
7801 LAUREL SPRING ROAD  
PRINCE GEORGE, VIRGINIA 23875

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

April 1, 1989

Dear Virginia School Principal,

As part of a research study, I am reviewing principal evaluation procedures in Virginia's schools. This research has the support of the Virginia State Department of Education, the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP), the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals (VAESP), and Virginia Tech University.

The enclosed questionnaire will provide valuable data about principal evaluation practices across the state. You have been randomly selected from a listing of all active Virginia public school principals to participate in this study. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey.

The information you provide will be used solely for the purposes of this study. Anonymity and confidentiality of responses is assured each participant. The coding number indicated in the upper right corner is for the purpose of follow-up only.

Please return the questionnaire with your comments by April 20, 1989. A self-addressed envelope is included for your convenience.

Thank you in advance for your assistance, time, and cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

James L. Ruffa  
Principal

**APPENDIX D. ENDORSEMENT LETTER**

Principals compose the vanguard which will lead our country into the twenty-first century (former Secretary Bell, '87)

Virginia Department of Education  
Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals  
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals

April 1, 1989

Dear Virginia School Principal,

James L. Ruffa, principal at Prince George High School, is conducting research on principals' evaluation in Virginia. The study is designed to obtain an accurate assessment of existing principal evaluation practices within the state's public schools.

You have been randomly selected to be a participant in the research. We urge you to spend a few moments of your time responding to the enclosed questionnaire. When completed, please return the form promptly in the self-addressed envelope provided.

Be assured that the few minutes you spend responding to the questions will be a worthwhile investment.

Thank you, and best wishes for a continued good year!!!

Professionally Yours,

Vernon L. Wildy  
Associate Director  
Va. Department of Education

Dr. Randy D. Barrack  
Executive Director  
V.A.S.S.P.

Donald Lacey  
Executive Director  
V.A.E.S.P.

APPENDIX E. POST CARD FOLLOW-UP

POST CARD FOLLOW-UP AFTER ONE WEEK

April 10, 1989

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinion about principal evaluation policies and procedures was mailed to you. Your name was drawn in a random sample of principals from across the state of Virginia.

If you have already completed and returned it to me please accept my sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because it has been sent to only a small, but representative, sample of Virginia principals it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent the opinions of Virginia's principals.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, please call me right now, collect (804-733-2720), and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

James L. Ruffa  
Principal  
Prince George H.S.

**APPENDIX F. FOLLOW-UP LETTER**

PRINCE GEORGE HIGH SCHOOL  
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL  
7801 LAUREL SPRINGS ROAD  
PRINCE GEORGE, VIRGINIA 23875  
804-733-2720

May 3, 1989

About a month ago, I wrote to you seeking your opinion on the status of your school division's principal evaluation policies and procedures. As of today I have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

I am conducting this research to determine how principals across the state are evaluated. It is because principals are the key individual in an effective school, and evaluation is the avenue for improvement, that makes this research effort important. Before more extensive efforts are made by local school divisions or the State Department of Education to improve principal evaluation practices, it is important to examine what currently exists.

I am writing to you again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. Your name was drawn through a scientific sampling process in which every public school principal in Virginia had an equal chance of being selected. Of the 1,764 principals, only 337 were chosen. In order for the results of this study to be truly representative of the opinions of all Virginia principals it is essential that each person in the sample return their questionnaire.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

James L. Ruffa  
Principal

P.S. A number of participants have expressed interest in the results of the study. If you would like a personal copy, please just write "yes" on the back cover of the survey in the upper left corner.

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