Professional Development for Secondary School Principals: Delivery, Duration, and Discernments

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Professional Development for Secondary School Principals: Delivery, Duration, and Discernments

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ABSTRACT

School leaders are charged with the articulation of a clear vision for bringing about school change and providing students with an instructional program that promotes optimal learning (ISLLC, 2015). The purpose of this study was to examine secondary school principals’ perceptions of professional development to achieve and/or maintain school accreditation. The study used a quantitative non-experimental research method along with simple descriptive statistics to analyze professional development experiences of principals and principal perceptions. The study included Virginia secondary schools in Region 2. Region 2 consists of 16 different school divisions with a total of 63 middle schools and 53 high schools.

The research measured alignment of professional development to national ISLLC standards revealed in the literature review. Further examining relationship among relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for principals and variables such as school accreditation status. The research findings identified professional development experiences that were grouped by the following administrative themes: administrative, culture, data analyzing, instruction and technology. Approximately 99% of the professional development experiences were presented to principals face-to-face. All (100%) of the professional development experiences were aligned with the national ISLLC standards. Principals in the research study participated in only four online professional development experiences. Principals assigned to fully accredited schools accounted for 54.5% of the professional development experiences. Principals assigned to schools rated conditionally accredited reconstituted accounted for 28.7% of the professional development experiences. Implications for practice for improving the work of principals in secondary schools are recommended, as well as suggestions for future research.
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GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine secondary school principals’ perceptions of professional development to achieve and/or maintain school accreditation. The study included Virginia secondary schools in Region 2. Region 2 consists of 16 different school divisions with a total of 63 middle schools and 53 high schools (see Appendix A). The research measured alignment of professional development to national ISLLC standards revealed in the literature review. Further examining relationship among relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for principals and variables such as school accreditation status.

The research findings identified professional development experiences that were grouped by the following administrative themes: administrative, culture, data analyzing, instruction and technology. Approximately 99% of the professional development experiences were presented to principals face-to-face. All (100%) of the professional development experiences were aligned with the national ISLLC standards. Principals in the research study participated in only four online professional development experiences. Principals assigned to fully accredited schools accounted for 54.5% of the professional development experiences.

Principals assigned to schools rated conditionally accredited reconstituted accounted for 28.7% of the professional development experiences. Implications for practice for improving the work of principals in secondary schools are recommended, as well as suggestions for future research.
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ for giving me life, health, knowledge and the strength to complete this dream. To my mother, the late, Bernice Elizabeth Brown Johnson; she would be so proud. To my sisters; JoAnne Johnson, Sharon Johnson-Clayton, and Kimberly Johnson Britton, whose love and encouragement helped me to make it through this journey. To my two nephews; Eddie Johnson Clayton and Sherwood Cross, thanks to the both of you for your encouragement. My wish is that the both of you will continue to do well in school and keep the Lord as the center of your lives.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

School leaders are charged with the articulation of a clear vision for bringing about school change and providing students with an instructional program that promotes optimal learning, according to the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC, 2015). Principals are held accountable for critical aspects of school operation, including personnel, students, educational programs, and community (Green, 2009). Prior to the start of the twenty-first century, the role of the principal was seen as a secondary factor in student achievement. Principals were responsible for the organization and management of the school environment, for providing resources for the school environment, and for providing resources for teachers to create optimal conditions in which to educate their students (Rieckhoff & Larsen, 2011). However, recent research has linked the principal directly with student achievement (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Six years later, the same authors completed a ten-year study of leadership, which presented a key finding that student achievement is higher in schools where principals participate in leadership training with teachers and the community (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2010). The 2010 study further shows the principal has an impact on the teachers when the principal participates in professional development.

Historical Perspective

A report released in the early 1980s, “A Nation at Risk” (1983), stated that the United States was falling behind the rest of the world in education, prompting concerns regarding the educational system. The Better Educator Support and Training (BEST) Act (2016) amended Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to elevate teaching and principal professions, support educators, improve student achievement, and ensure equity in the nation’s schools. The BEST Act would accomplish this by increasing the capacity of state and local educational agencies to develop and sustain a coherent, comprehensive, and aligned professional continuum for teachers, principals, and other educators that lead to accomplished practice, leadership opportunities, and increased student learning (NEA, 2015).
Statement of the Problem

Many changes are taking place in the role of the principal. The Southern Regional Educational Board (SREB) “Challenge to Lead” goals, established in 1988, confirmed an effective principal in every school is crucial to improved student performance (SREB, Schools Need Good Leaders Now, 2007). The goals further acknowledged that professional development should be continually available in order to strengthen principals’ capacities to improve curriculums and instruction, and to create a highly effective organization (Schools Need Good Leaders Now, 2007). To that end, the research supports that professional development for principals is needed in order for principals to be successful. The overall problem is whether principals are receiving the professional development they need to be successful in their schools.

Significance of the Study

How does one determine if the available professional development is providing the support structure for current and future principals to grow professionally as they lead? To research this question, an assessment tool, referred to as The Principal Professional Development Survey (PPDS), was designed. This study collected data from principals from a specific region in Virginia, allowing the researcher to identify possible trends in professional development and to determine how the role of the principal has evolved in the geographic area. The resultant information could help local school divisions evaluate their distribution of resources, consider how to effectively train their principals, and contemplate the support these leaders need. It may also encourage school divisions to reconsider the resources that they need to provide as well as the support they need to give their school leaders.

This research has the potential to reveal the gap between what school leaders desire to accomplish in their role and what they are able to achieve. It may also aid school administrators in evaluating principals’ roles and help districts prioritize those roles. Finally, findings from this study can serve to jumpstart further inquiry about the needs of the twenty-first century leader and how to better meet those needs in university preparation programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine secondary school principals’ perceptions of their professional development to achieve and/or maintain school accreditation. The resultant will be to assess the overall perception of the professional development undertaken for school accreditation.
Justification of the Study

According to Leithwood et al., (2004), principal leadership is second only to the leadership of teachers in its impact on the academic success of students. The group continued their research on this topic and in their 2010 study claimed they had yet to see one case of school improvement without a talented leader guiding the way (Leithwood et al., 2010). In 2005, Marzano and Waters went on to find that the “leadership behavior of the principal can have a profound effect on student achievement” (p.32). A 2010 WestEd study proposed, school based leadership is a vital component for the success of the school. If the principals have such a strong effect on student achievement, then it is imperative that they are prepared for and supported in this immense responsibility (Kearney, 2010, p. IV). A survey study on the professional development offerings for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia made the following recommendations for further research: examine the relationship among the relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for principals and variables be considered such as accreditation status and student achievement (Hunley-Stukes, 2014).

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to determine the types of professional development school divisions provide for their principals;

1. What type of professional development for principals was provided by each school division?
   1a. What topics were included in the division’s professional development for principals?
   1b. What topics were included in professional development from outside the school division?

2. How was the professional development aligned to the ISLLC Standards?

3. What was the length in hours of the professional development?

4. What was the delivery method of the professional development?

5. What were the principal’s perceptions of the professional development in support of the goal of achieving school accreditation?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study was developed from the analysis of the literature, and the research examined professional development of secondary school principals in Region 2,
which includes the public school divisions in the counties, cities and towns of Virginia known as the Tidewater region (Virginia Department of Education, 2016). The purpose of the study was to examine secondary principals’ perceptions of professional development to achieve and/or maintain school accreditation. The analyzed data will show the delivery of professional development to school leaders, the targeted professional development, alignment to ISLLC standards, and the appropriateness and timeliness of the scheduled professional development as they relate to school accreditation. Figure 1 further illustrates the conceptual framework.

![Conceptual Framework](image)

**Figure 1.** Conceptual framework.

**Definitions**

The following key terms will be used throughout this review and are defined to facilitate understanding.

**Accreditation:** A school earns full accreditation when at least 75 percent of students pass reading and writing Standards of Learning (SOL) tests and at least 70 percent pass state assessments in mathematics, science and history. High schools must also meet a benchmark for graduation and completion of 85 percent (Virginia Department of Education, 2016).
Non-Accreditation: A school is ranked as non-accredited when one or more of the above requirements is not met (Virginia Department of Education, 2016).

Principal: The principal is recognized as the instructional leader of the school and is responsible for effective school management that promotes positive school achievement (Virginia Board of Education, 2012).

Professional Development: Professional development is defined as purposeful and ongoing learning through the use of collegial inquiry, data analysis, dialogue, and reflection to increase capacity and improve practice. It is also a comprehensive, sustained, and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement (Hirsh, 2009; Learning Forward, 2011).

Limitations of the Study

The scope of this study will center on the professional development of middle and high school principals in Region 2. The following limitations of this study are considered beyond the researcher’s control:

1. The number of individuals who will respond to the survey cannot be ensured.
2. The possibility exists that electronic survey requests may not be returned or undeliverable if email addresses have changed, email is filtered as spam or other technology security methods in place within the school division prevents the email from being delivered.
3. The survey participants may not share the specific information in the format requested.
4. The survey participants may not have been assigned as a principal in the region or school during the years of the survey timeframe.
5. Principals within the population may not wish to participate.
6. The school division may deem the survey request outside of the scope of its goals.

Delimitations of the Study

The study consists of some conditions for which the researcher will have control. The delimitations include:

1. The study is limited to the middle and high schools in one region in Virginia.
2. The study is limited to secondary school principals and does not consider the professional development of assistant principals or principals at the elementary level.
Organization of the Study

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study, gives its historical perspective, identifies the statement of the problem and notes the significance, purpose, and justification of the study. The research questions, conceptual framework, definition of key terms and the organization of the study included in this chapter. Chapter 2 reviews the literature relevant to the field of study and sets the framework for the study as well as the context in which the data finds their value. Chapter 3 outlines the design, variables, participants, instruments and procedures of the PPDS study. It also details the emerging themes, integrity, and limitations of the study. Chapter 4 presents the results and analysis within the framework of the research questions. Chapter 5 discusses the researcher’s interpretation of the results, and the implications and recommendations for future research.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

“To be yourself in a world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment” (Emerson, 1870).

In the field of education, the role and preparation of a leader depend on a person’s individuality, knowledge, and leadership training (Gul, 2016). Leaders are increasingly looking to providers of professional development for evidence that their activities contribute to improved standardized test scores, especially among low-performing students. Researchers are becoming more concerned with describing the links between the design and conduct of professional development and subsequent improvements to both teacher practice and student learning outcomes (Borko, 2004; Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal, 2003). This literature review examines scholarly literature associated with professional development for school leaders. Current literature is integrated to (a) define professional development for principals, (b) define principal leadership preparation, (c) investigate why professional development matters for principals, (d) identify types of professional development, (e) define the principal as the instructional leader and (f) examine types of instructional training.

Purpose of the Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to provide information from recent research regarding the role of the principal’s professional development as it relates to the success and accreditation of the school. The literature will also explore the principal as the instructional leader, types of professional development, the alignment of staff development as it relates to ISLLC standards, why professional development matters, and its impact on school accreditation.

The Search Process

The search process used to conduct this comprehensive review of literature involved a variety of resources. Readings related to professional development for principals, mentoring, and the effectiveness of professional development in relation to the overall success of a high school are explored. Peer-reviewed journal articles and resources published by national organizations such as the United States Department of Education, the Alliance for Excellence in Education, the National Center for Educational Statistics and the Wallace Foundation provided
information regarding key terms including, professional development, instructional leader, and mentoring. The online search engines used to find scholarly peer-reviewed literature published within the last ten years were the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University online library; Summons; Google Scholar; and Education Resources Information Center (ERIC). Key words and search terms used include accreditation, principal, and professional development. Studies conducted prior to 2005 were included to provide a historical perspective of principal professional development.

**Professional Development of Principals**

School-based leaders have three jobs: managing a school, managing staff and managing instruction (Mintzberg, 2010). Learning is at the heart of leadership; therefore, leaders themselves should be, learners exploring the connections among educational leadership, policy, curriculum, human resources, accountability and student teaching (Mercer, Barker, & Bird, 2010). Educational researchers increasingly believe that teacher education promotes student learning and achievement: professional education of teachers not only promotes student learning and achievement, but also school-wide change. (Murphy & Lick, 2005)

**Why Professional Development for Principals?**

The National Staff Development Council (NSDC) defined professional development as a comprehensive, sustained and intensive approach to improving teachers’ and principals’ effectiveness in raising student achievement:

A. Professional development fosters collective responsibility for improved student performance and must be comprised of professional learning that;

1. Is aligned with rigorous state student academic achievement standards, as well as related local educational agency and school improvement goals;
2. Is conducted among learning teams of educators, including teachers, paraprofessionals, and other instructional staff at the school;
3. Is facilitated by well-prepared school principals and/or school-based professional development coaches, mentors, master teachers, or other teacher leaders;
4. Occurs primarily multiple times per week or the equivalent of several hours per week; and
5. Engages established learning teams of educators in a continuous cycle of improvement that –
(i) Analyzes student, teacher, and school learning needs through a thorough review of data on teacher and student performance;
(ii) Defines a clear set of educator learning goals based on the rigorous analysis of the data;
(iii) Achieves the educator learning goals identified in subsection (A)(5)(ii) by implementing coherent, sustained, and evidence-based learning strategies that improve instructional effectiveness and student achievement, such as lesson study and the examining of student work;
(iv) Provides classroom-based coaching or other forms of assistance to support the transfer of new knowledge and skills to the classroom;
(v) Regularly assesses the effectiveness of the professional development in achieving identified learning goals, improving teaching, and assisting all students in meeting challenging state academic achievement standards;
(vi) Informs ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning; and
(vii) May be facilitated and strengthened by the local educational agency or other external assistance providers.

B. The process outlined in (A) may be supported and strengthened by activities such as courses, workshops, institutes, networks, and conferences that:

1. Must address the learning goals and objectives established for professional development by educators at the school level;
2. Advance the ongoing school-based professional development; and provide for-profit and non-profit entities outside the school such as local education agencies, universities, education service agencies, technical assistance providers, networks of content-area specialists, and other education organizations and associations.
3. This comprehensive approach to professional development and leadership activities follows an ongoing, set pattern of approach that leads to student success (The National Staff Development Council 2001; 2007).

**Principal Leadership Preparation Certifications**

During the 1970s and 80s, critics began to question whether principals and superintendents as being out of step with public concerns and school quality. Murphy and Hallinger (1987) noted,
Practitioners have become disillusioned by the failure of university programs to ground training procedures in the realities of the workplace and by their reluctance to treat content viewed as useful by administrators. This disenchantedment, in turn, is partially fueling the demand for changes in methods of training school administrators” (p. 252).

The criticism targeted the training of school leaders. The low standards of weak programs resulted in too many unprepared administrators at the graduate level. A 1983 report, “A Nation at Risk,” continued the pressure for change within the leadership of schools. Hess (2003) noted the term instructional leadership “referred to school leaders who supported a culture focused on the core business of teaching and learning, provide professional development, and use of data to evaluate performance” (p. 9). As a result, many states boosted licensure requirements (Hess, 2003).

“The reform movement put a spotlight on school leadership, highlighted its importance for school success, made student achievement the measure of school performance, and demanded accountability from leaders for results” (Levine, 2005, p.17). The criticism also led to the evaluation and revision of programs for school principals. After evaluation and revision many programs set new standards for entry-level school administrators. In addition, there has been better communication among the diverse groups interested in the preparation of school leaders, and a notable effort to define rigorous standards for the profession (Leithwood et al., 2004).

The ISLLC Standards were developed by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in collaboration with the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) to help strengthen education preparation programs in school leadership. The ten ISLLC standards that guide the work of educational leaders were first developed in 1996 and revised in 2008 and 2015:

Standard 1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values
Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.

Standard 2. Ethics and Professional Norms
Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Standard 3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness
Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Standard 4. Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Standard 5. Community of Care and Support for Students
Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.

Standard 6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel
Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Standard 7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff
Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Standard 8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.

Standard 10. School Improvement
Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student’s academic and well-being (NPBEA, 2015).

Each standard is followed by the knowledge required for the standard, the dispositions or attitudes manifested by the accomplishment of the standard, and the performances that could be observed in an administrator who is accomplished in the standard.

According to DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) public education in the United States has seen a progression in the responsibilities associated with today's principals. The principal's job security rested on public perception and the accomplishments of the school's highest-achieving students (Brown, 2006; Herrington & Wills, 2005).
The principal's role has evolved complex and demanding responsibilities (Brown, 2006; Cooner, Tochterman, & Garrison-Wade, 2005; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Portin, 2004). Principals are expected to be leaders of personnel, students, government and public relations, finance, instruction, academic performance, cultural and strategic planning (Cruzeiro & Morgan, 2006; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Leithwood et al., 2004; Portin, 2004).

**Why Professional Development Matters**

Mizell (2010) stated colleges and university cannot adequately provide graduates to become public school educators. He further states graduates students learn through work experience once they have received a state certification. He also stated student learning suffers when principals do not receive effective profession development.

School leaders are expected to articulate a clear vision for bringing about school change and provide students with an instructional program that promotes optimal learning (ISLLC, 2015). Following the identification of measurable goals for improvement, the principal must identify and facilitate professional development that enables teachers to implement sustainable changes for improving instruction. Principals are held accountable for all aspects of school operation, including all personnel, the students, and the educational program, and are expected to work with those outside the school community (Green, 2009).

The principal's leadership impact was second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors influencing how students learn. Leithwood et al. found that while evidence about leadership effects on student learning can be confusing to interpret, much of the research actually underestimates its effects (2004). The total direct and indirect effects of leadership on student learning account for approximately a quarter of total school effects (Leithwood et al., 2004). This evidence supports improving leadership outlined in the twenty-five responsibilities of school leaders and meta-analysis of leadership studies, and the twenty-one responsibilities of a school principal and the correlation each has to student achievement (Cotton, 2003; Marzano & Waters, 2005). In 2010, Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, and Anderson completed a ten-year study of leadership which presented a key finding that student achievement is higher in schools where principals share leadership with teachers and the community. The responsibilities described in the 2010 study show a clear alignment with the documented roles and responsibilities of a principal who participates in professional development. In one study, 39 eighth-grade students from rural and semi-rural schools were interviewed regarding students'
perceptions of the principal's impact on academic performance (Gentilluci & Muto, 2007). Students believed principals had a direct impact on academic performance by being actively involved in student-centered activities related to instruction. One student stated, "She talks to us … kinda like a teacher. It makes me want to do better, you know, make her proud of my schoolwork and stuff. My other principal, she didn't do that. She just stayed in the office" (Gentilluci & Muto, 2007, p. 229).

The Professional Development School (PDS) is an important model in school reform, as it provides a means for collaboration and sharing of resources that allows partnerships to emerge and develop over time. New roles emerge as the collaboration among the partners evolves. An important aspect of PDS work is the development of teacher leaders and leadership at all levels (Teitel, 2008). The principal's role as an instructional leader is critical. Apart from the teacher, the principal is the most powerful factor affecting academic performance (Boscardin, 2005; Herrington & Willis, 2005; Leithwood et al., 2004). A school's quality of instruction directly reflects its principal's commitment to teachers' use of research-based instructional strategies (Supovitz, Sirinides, & May, 2010).

Meta-ethnography of twenty case studies involving PDS identified the importance of the principal as one of emergent themes found in the literature (Rice, 2002). The role of the PDS principal was described as a critical component, as their support of teacher involvement and collaboration allowed leadership to be shared. In 1995, Bowen, Adkison, and Dunlap examined the role of principals in seven elementary PDS’s, suggesting that the role of the PDS principal falls on a continuum evolved over time, with early stages focused on management and organizational issues, and later stages focused on school-wide changes and new approaches to leadership. In 2000, Foster, Loving, and Shumate identified core characteristics of effective PDS principals and indicated that a philosophy and belief system supportive of collaboration and teacher advocacy are critical factors. Bier, Foster, Bellamy, and Clark identified four functions that reframe and expand the principal’s role: the partnership, preparing great new teachers, supporting inquiry to improve practice, and keeping a complex partnership focused on student learning (2008).

Classroom factors explain only a slightly larger proportion of variation in student achievement than the variation explained by school leadership (2004). Cheney and Davis (2001) stated that though a single teacher can make a major impact on student learning, the principal has
the greatest influence on assuring the likelihood of a student having an effective teacher year after year. Kearney (2010) noted that leadership development is a key strategy for school improvement efforts. She argued that principals develop their leadership capacity over their career and this development takes place over five specific stages of the principalship: aspiring principal, principal candidate, novice principal, development principal, and expert principal (2010, p. iii).

There is no doubt that good principals often begin as good teachers. According to Kearney (2010), identifying strong teacher leaders is an appropriate place to start when trying to identify next groups of successful school principals. Once these individuals, who will become known as “aspiring principals,” have been identified, the recruitment process begins (Kearney, 2010).

As soon as an aspiring principal enters into an administrative credential program, he or she becomes a principal candidate (Kearney, 2010). Traditionally, administrative credential programs are run by universities and focus heavily on management and theory. They may include classes in resource management. Kearney (2010) suggested that effective administrative programs give aspiring leaders the opportunity to practice what they are learning, while being supported by a mentor in order to develop their effectiveness as a leader.

A novice principal is defined by Kearney (2010) as either a first year principal or a principal who is new to their district. It is the responsibility of the district to orient the novice to the ways of the district and to the demands of a principal. Kearney argued that many districts fail at this stage, “The gap between the kind of information and support that some districts provide (or don’t provide) for their novice principals and what novice principals actually need in order to be successful and satisfied as they begin their administrative career has always been a problem” (2010, p.15). Both Kearney (2010) and Mitgang (2007) suggested that novice principals have a better chance for success when they are supported by well-trained mentors.

A principal’s need for continual growth never stops. Principals develop at different paces, yet have one thing in common: no matter how fast they develop, their need for growth will remain constant throughout their careers (Kearney, 2010). According to one study, schools perform higher when led by experienced principals (Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009); therefore, a principal’s developing years are crucial to the successful performance of their students.
Expert principals are those who have demonstrated high levels of student achievement and have led successful efforts in school improvement (Kearney, 2010). Because of their demonstrated success, expert principals should be allowed the opportunity to mentor novice and developing principals in order to push them towards innovative ideas and train new leaders (Kearney, 2010).

Novice principals who are, for the first time, in charge of an entire school, are most in need of support. (Kearney, 2010). In a study of eight states with exemplary leadership development programs for principals, the following seven characteristics were present in each of the programs:

1. Clear focus and values about leadership and learning – and a program coherently organized around these values;
2. A standards-based curriculum that emphasizes instructional leadership, organizational development, and change management;
3. Field-based internships with skilled supervision in pre-service programs;
4. Cohort groups that create many (and ongoing) opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice-oriented situations;
5. Active instructional strategies linking theory and practice (e.g., problem-based learning, case methods, assignments that engage candidates in instructional work, such as planning and delivering professional development);
6. Proactive recruiting and selection of both candidates and faculty; and
7. Strong partnerships with schools and districts to support quality, field-based teaching (Darling-Hammond, et al. 2010 p. 18).

A principal will encounter many new experiences during their first year. According to The Wallace Foundation, principals shape the vision of the school, set the cultural climate, work to help others learn to lead, focus on effective instruction for students, and work as the manager of the entire school system (Foundations, 2012).

Types of Professional Development for Principals

The Wallace Foundation has supported a range of efforts to improve the training and conditions of education leaders to better enable them to lift student achievement, especially in high-needs schools. They issued recommendations that could help guide states, districts and universities in better preparing principals:
1. Principal training programs should be more selective, more focused on improvement of instruction, more closely tied to the needs of districts, and provide more relevant internships experiences; Leadership preparation should not end when new principals are hired, but should continue with high-quality mentoring and career-long growth opportunities;
2. Because of the likely added cost, resources for improving preparation should be directed at programs with proven benefits; and
3. Better leadership training is essential, but state and districts should also address the conditions that support or undermine leadership (DeVita, Colvin, Darling-Hammond & Haycock, 2007, p. 17)

**Principal as the Instructional Leader**

The principal as the instructional leader influences the learning in the school. They focus the major portion of their time on the instructional programs of the school. The monitoring of the teachers and the professional development of instruction are the major duties. The non-instructional responsibilities are assigned to an assistant principal. Kati Haycock (2012), president of the Education Trust, summarized this view of leadership. She pointed to three broad sets of leadership practices that are consistently linked to improved student learning: setting directions, development of people, and redesigning the organization. Murphy and Lick (2005) argued that it is the instructional leader who must prioritize the professional growth of teachers, ensuring they receive developmental opportunities that expand their practitioner knowledge and instructional repertoire. This will articulate a vision for shared organizational purpose by setting high expectations and monitoring performance. Creating stimulating opportunities and providing models of effective practice and individual support helps people develop their administrative skills. Redesigning the organization strengthens the culture of the school and modifies its structures and practices to achieve a shared vision for effective teaching and learning (Haycock, 2012).

Christopher Cerf, New York City Deputy Schools Chancellor (2011), states; “Pick the right school leader and great teachers will come and stay. Pick the wrong one and, over time, good teachers leave, mediocre ones stay, and the school gradually (or not so gradually) declines.” He continued, “Reversing the impact of a poor principal can take years. too often,
however, school districts don’t invest the requisite level of care, resources and hard work into the critical mission of recruiting and identifying school leaders.”

Principals are pressured from reform initiatives to push their faculty to improve student success. (DuFour, 2006; Gupton, 2003). Principals are encouraged to include all faculty in quality professional development to achieve academic success for all student groups. (NSDC, 2001). Principals are strongly urged to learn alongside their teachers (Murphy & Lick, 2005). Principals and teachers immersing themselves in analyzing student data, exploring research-based strategies, and studying academic outcomes become a recipient of new information, and even an activist for professional learning (DuFour, 2006; Roberts & Pruitt, 2003). Principals can better prioritize teachers’ need for assistance related to student achievement and, with their faculties, set goals based on content knowledge and instructional skills (DuFour, 2006; Speck & Knipe, 2005).

The principal is expected to understand the views of quality instruction as well as have sufficient knowledge of the curriculum to know that appropriate content is being delivered to all students. This presumes that the principal is capable of providing constructive feedback to improve teaching or is able to design a system in which others provide this support (DuFour, 2006). Research supports the increasing pressure on principals to deliver better instruction. Newman, Smith, Allensworth, and Bryk (2001), for example, found that “principals are key to instructional program coherence and the delivery of high-quality instruction in Chicago schools” (p. 315).

The research shows there are seven distinct roles the contemporary principal plays Colvin (2007), Hess and Kelly (2007), Leithwood et al., (2004), and Portin (2004) identified the following; First, as managers of personnel, the principal ensures the hiring of qualified professionals, which directly affects hiring and mentoring practices. Today's principal directly influences educator retention through the development and maintenance of effective mentoring programs (Portin, 2004). Second, as managers of students, the principal influences moral character by implementing discipline procedures. Effective discipline procedures create environments that foster learning for all students (Colvin, 2007). Third, through government and public relations, the principal influences both the state- and community-level perceptions of the school (Hess & Kelly, 2007). The principal serves as a connection between the school system and the community, and often acts as a mediator between the two groups (Portin, 2004). Fourth,
as manager of external development, the principal serves as the school's advocate by securing resources and promoting the public image of the school (Portin, 2004). Fifth, as manager of finances, the principal is now responsible for tasks once assumed by central office staff, such as balancing the school budget, cutting costs, and raising funds (Portin, 2004). Sixth, the principal develops long-term plans to promote the school's "vision, mission, and goals" (Portin, 2004, p. 17). Finally, as a manager of instruction and academic performance, the principal heavily influences the development of learning environments that contribute to increased academic performance (Leithwood et al., 2004).

Cruzeiro and Morgan (2006) surveyed 255 in-service principals from rural schools in Nebraska, North Dakota, and Wyoming regarding time spent on (a) program development, (b) personnel matters, (c) school management, (d) student activities, (e) district office matters, (f) community activities, (g) professional development planning, and (h) student behavior. They reported that principals spent only 12% of their time on instructional leadership tasks, despite empirical evidence that instructional leadership is the principal’s most important responsibility.

DiPaola and Walther-Thomas (2003) identified five responsibilities of effective instructional leaders; First, through defining and communicating the school’s educational mission, effective instructional leaders emphasize the importance of educating all students, including students with disabilities. Secondly, through managing curriculum and instruction, effective instructional leaders support teacher use of research-based practices. Thirdly, by supporting and supervising teaching, effective instructional leaders demonstrate the school’s commitment to teachers, which increases teachers' sense of belonging and self-worth, a critical factor in retaining special education teachers. Fourthly, through monitoring student progress, effective instructional leaders demonstrate the schools’ commitment to students, which enhances student self-worth and promotes higher academic performance. Finally, effective instructional leaders establish the same high expectations for all students (DiPaola, 2003).

The SREB (2005) reported that states need to do more to accelerate change in the training and development of principals. The board’s research stated that the leaders in universities determine the quality and design of their programs and are assisted by the states when necessary.

The SREB further argued that the state’s power to license principals can be an effective tool to ensure schools have leaders focused on improving instruction. Potentially, the state can determine who may enter training programs, the content education, and certification
requirements for the principal and other administrative appointments. In addition, the SREB found in 13 of the 16 states it reviewed, fewer that 40 percent of school leaders’ responsibilities, as defined by states’ standards, relate directly to student learning.

**Types of Instructional Training**

States and districts facing pressure to have all children meet high standards have been paying overdue attention to improving school leadership as a way to advance instruction and drive needed changes throughout their schools (The Wallace Foundation, 2012). The Wallace research further validated examples of effective practices, more districts - especially large urban districts with the most acute needs - have been investing in raising the quality of pre-service training and providing more rigorous mentoring and other support to newly hired principals. It also states that accreditation rules and new standards to push universities and other training providers to improve their programs (Wallace, 2012).

The Wallace Foundation (2012) states that some districts, such as Chicago and Denver, have collaborated with willing universities to design better training for aspiring principals. Others, such as New York City, Boston and Gwinnett County, GA, have formed their own training academies or are working with non-profit training providers to create programs suited to their needs. It's too soon to say for sure, but early evidence suggests payoffs for schools might include lower principal turnover and higher student performance.

Mitgang (2012) states that signs of heightened attention are encouraging, however, there is still a long way to go before the majority of the nation's aspiring principals get the training they need to succeed. Experience and new research suggest that heeding the following five lessons could help propel many more districts toward the goal of having strong leadership in every school. The five lessons:

1. A more selective, probing process for choosing candidates for training is the essential first step in creating a more capable and diverse corps of future principals.
2. Aspiring principals need pre-service training that prepares them to lead improved instruction and school change, not just manage buildings.
3. Districts should do more to exercise their power to raise the quality of principal training, so that newly hired leaders better meet their needs.
4. States could make better use of their power to influence the quality of leadership training through standard-setting, program accreditation, principal certification and financial support for highly qualified candidates.

5. Especially in their first years on the job, principals need high quality mentoring and professional development tailored to individual and district needs (Mitgang, 2012. p. 2)

Summary

There is a plethora of research on the importance of staff development of a principal; however, the researcher was unable to link ISLLC standards to the professional development topics and school accreditation. There are common sense steps that must be taken by those responsible for developing instructional leaders. They include ensuring that admission to principal training programs for school leaders focus on improving classroom instruction and professional development is based on performance assessments that lead to school accreditation (Miller, 2013). The Wallace Foundation (2004) contends that effective principal preparation programs are essential to the overall success of the school leader. Today’s principals must know academic content, pedagogy and be able to advance the instructional skills of classroom teachers (Pope, 2010). The review of literature affirms that well-designed professional leadership development programs are essential in supporting school leaders in creating cultures that promote ongoing improvements in teaching and learning (Miller, 2013). The research supports the notion that principal professional development matters in the success of the school; therefore making this topic worthy of research.
Chapter 3
Methodology

Purpose of the Study

This chapter describes the methods used to investigate the research questions. It is organized into the following sections: Research Design/Methodology, Research Design Justification, Research Questions, Site/Sample Selection, Data Collection Procedures, Data Gathering Procedures, Instrument Design, Instrument Validation, Data Treatment, Data Management, Data Analysis Techniques, Time Lines, and Methodology Summary.

Research Design

During the course of this research study, an instrument, The PPDS Survey (see Appendix A), was constructed to identify topics of professional development and their link to ISLLC standards. The survey collected data to determine how the professional development was obtained, its delivery, its length and the perception of the principal as to whether the professional development supports the goal of making school accreditation. The study will use a quantitative research method and simple descriptive statistics. Quantitative research involves the use of numerical calculations to summarize, describe and explore relationships among traits (McMillian & Wergin, 2010).

Quantitative non-experimental research is conducted to describe phenomena or to investigate relationships among variables. Descriptive non-experimental research uses frequencies, percentages, averages, and other simple statistics to provide a description of the data collected. In a descriptive study the nature of the sample and instrumentation are key to understanding the results (McMillian & Wergin, 2010).

Research Design Justification

In 2005, Marzano and Waters claimed that the “leadership behavior of the principal can have a profound effect on student achievement” (p. 32). According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), quantitative research is utilized “to describe phenomena or to investigate relationships among variables. Descriptive non-experimental research uses frequencies, percentages, averages, and other simple statistics to provide a description of the data collected” (p. 14). This research design is based on Hunley-Stukes’ recommendation, “Examine the relationship among the relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for
principals and variables such as accreditation status and student achievement” (Hunley-Stukes, 2014, p. 91). Improving student achievement and ensuring excellent teaching is not just the principal’s job, but a shared responsibility among all school leaders.

Research Questions

In quantitative studies, research questions are used to shape and focus the purpose of the study (Creswell, 2014). The following research questions were developed to determine the types of professional development school divisions provide for their principals:

1. What type of professional development for principals was provided by each school division?
   1a. What topics were included in the division’s professional development for principals?
   1b. What topics was included in professional development from outside the school division?

2. How was the professional development aligned to the ISLLC Standards?

3. What was the length in hours of the professional development?

4. What was the delivery method of the professional development?

5. What were the principal’s perceptions of the professional development in support of the goal of achieving accreditation?

Setting and Participant Selection

The study includes the secondary schools in Region 2, which include the public school divisions in the counties, cities and towns of Virginia known as the Tidewater region (Virginia Department of Education, 2016). The secondary schools include 16 different school divisions consisting of 63 middle schools and 53 high schools (see Appendix B). The research did not include preschools, elementary or K-8 schools. No other school or district personnel, such as teachers, assistant principals, or other staff, were sought out for this study even though there may be other staff holding administrative endorsements. In order to describe phenomena, investigate relationships among variables, identify possible trends in professional development, and determine how the role of the principal had evolved in this geographic area, the researcher collected data from principals in Region 2.
Timeline

A Virginia Tech Institution Review Board (IRB) application was submitted after completion of the prospectus defense. The researcher received IRB training prior to submitting the IRB application (see Appendix C). Upon approval of the IRB application (see Appendix D), letters requesting permission from the Region 2 superintendents for their schools to participate in the survey were mailed. The timeframe for participation was a six-week window.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection instruments are increasingly designed through online surveys. Using products such as this, researchers can create their own surveys using custom templates and post them on websites or e-mail them for participants to complete (Creswell, 2014). A cover letter included an explanation of the research as well as an embedded web link through which the participant could access the actual survey instrument. The cover letter explained the rights of potential participants, including their right not to participate and that no negative impact would result from their withdrawal, that completing the survey would imply their consent to participate, and that the Virginia Tech IRB granted permission to conduct the study. After IRB approval, permission was requested from the superintendents asking permission to include the schools in their divisions or districts in the study. A copy of the cover letter is included in Appendix E. The cover letter and initial survey were sent via email. A second email was sent to participants who had not responded to the first request. A reminder should be mailed to potential participants who have many roles and responsibilities and may have simply placed the survey questionnaire at the bottom of their priority list (Creswell, 2014). The third email (see Appendix F) informed potential participants that this would be the final request for their participation. The requests were sent a week apart from each other; potential participants had four weeks in which to respond to the survey instrument. To avoid harassing potential participants, only three emails were sent.

Survey Design

As part of rigorous data collection, detailed information was provided about the actual survey instrument to be used in the research study. Creswell recommends that the survey instrument used to collect data be named (2014). The survey was named The Principal Professional Development Survey (PPDS). The research instrument began with an introductory cover letter including background information on the author of the study, an explanation of why
the study is being conducted, and information about the sample population and the framework of the survey questions. An explanation about the confidentiality of the participants will also be included. The PPDS pertained to the following school years: 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. The survey instrument was designed to measure participants’ perceptions of professional development offerings during those years.

The instrumentation used in this research study was a modified survey developed by Hunley-Stukes (2014). Hunley-Stukes granted permission to utilize a modified version of her instrument. The electronic email detailing permission is included in (see Appendix G). Creswell (2014) asserted that validity of the instrument is critical to deriving meaningful interpretation of the data obtained from one’s survey instrument. Hunley-Stukes’ instrument was validated in March 2014 by a group of professional educators that included current school division directors, building level administrators, an assistant superintendent, and a retired director of staff development. According to Creswell (2014), it is important to establish reliability by providing sample items from the proposed survey instrument to a sample group to measure internal consistency. For the purposes of this proposed study, to ensure reliability, principals enrolled in the Virginia Tech doctoral program who are familiar with Virginia accreditation standards reviewed the survey instrument and provided feedback.

**Data Management**

Data received from the survey instrument were gathered and maintained on an approved survey site (www.virginiatech.qualtrics.com). This site was designed and approved by the Virginia Tech Information Technology Department. The results from respondents were captured in an Excel format that allowed the data to be easily collected and manipulated. A password was assigned so that only the researcher had access to participant data, in order to analyze the results.

**Data Treatment**

Data, once analyzed, need to be kept for a reasonable time; the American Psychological Association (APA) recommends 5 years (APA, 2010). After this period, researchers should discard the data so they do not fall into the hands of other researchers who might misappropriate it (Creswell, 2014). The data will be stored in a locked file cabinet until five years have passed.
Data Analysis Procedures

Tables were created in an Excel spreadsheet format for analysis of the data. As the data were received, they were entered and summarized in an aggregate Excel secured format. Descriptive statistics was used to describe a phenomenon such as frequencies, percentages, averages, and sometimes a measure of variability, such as the range; with visual images. (McMillan & Wergin, 2010).

To verify accuracy in data entry, ensure consistency in coding, and validate the alignment of the professional development offerings with ISLLC standards, the researcher coded the data and placed the data in a matrix format. Statistical procedures were created by subcategories of the data.

Summary

A table-formatted survey instrument was created to gather information regarding the topics and characteristics of the professional development sessions offered in Region 2 secondary schools. The data were coded for alignment with ISLLC Standards. The resulting data were analyzed descriptively in aggregate form and subsequently disaggregated by the research questions. The results of the data analysis will be discussed in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4
Data Analysis

The purpose of the PPDS study was to analyze secondary middle and high principals’ professional development experiences and perceptions to achieve and/or maintain school accreditation in Region 2. Region 2 includes the public school divisions in the counties, cities and towns of Virginia known as the Tidewater region (Virginia Department of Education, 2016). The secondary schools include 16 different school divisions consisting of 63 middle schools and 53 high schools. McMillian and Wergin (2006) stated that quantitative non-experimental research is conducted to describe phenomena or to investigate relationship among variables. The PPDS non-experimental research study was conducted to describe phenomena and investigate relationship among variables using frequencies, percentages, averages, and other simple descriptive statistics of the data collected.

The research was based on the quantitative design. According to McMillan and Wergin (2010), quantitative research is utilized “to describe phenomena or to investigate relationships among variables. Descriptive non-experimental research uses frequencies, percentages, averages, and other simple statistics to provide a description of the data collected” (p. 14).

This investigation reviewed the professional development experiences of secondary school principals currently provided in or outside the school division. The study was a modified version of Hunley-Stukes’ (2014) recommendation, “Examine the relationship among the relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for principals and variables such as accreditation status and student achievement”.

The survey instrument measured principals’ perceptions of professional development offerings for the school years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. It was required that participating principals have been assigned to their current school for at least one school year. Participants were required to identify whether they were a middle or high school principal. They were asked about accreditation status to determine whether the participating principals were from a fully accredited school or a school with other state accreditation ratings.

Participants were asked to list the names of the professional development experiences for each of the years that they were assigned as the principal of the current school. The researcher looked at the key terms within the name of the professional development experience and matched each professional development experience with one or more of the ISLLC standards.
The delivery method and the length of the professional development experience were also analyzed. Finally, the researcher examined trends of the secondary principal perceptions of whether the professional development supported their goal of achieving/maintaining school accreditation.

Survey Response Rate

The data collection process for this research study involved principals in secondary schools of Virginia’s Region 2. The PPDS was completed using Virginia Tech Qualtrics software. The total number of principals that qualified as research subjects was 116. Forty-four principals from various school divisions were not included in the study. One division (16 principals) declined to allow participation because the goals of the study did not align with their school systems’ strategic goals. Another division (24 principals) refused permission because the timeframe for authorization and participation was outside the timeframe of their approval of research studies. Four school principals were not included because their email addresses were non-deliverable. Of the 72 remaining eligible participants, 36 participated in the study, a participation rate of 50%. This sample size is aligned with sample size criteria recommended by Creswell (2014).

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to determine the types of professional development school divisions provide for their principals:

1. What professional development for principals was currently provided by each school division?
   1a. What topics were included in the division professional development for principals?
   1b. What topics were included in professional development outside the school division?

2. How was the professional development aligned to the ISLLC Standards?

3. What was the length in hours of the professional development?

4. What was the delivery method of the professional development?

5. What were the perceptions of the professional development in support of the goal of making accreditation?
Study Results

The survey instrument was divided into three sections. The first section included demographic data questions that solicited information regarding the principal and his or her school. The second section of the survey asked questions regarding professional development experiences. The third section asked principals how professional development had supported their goal of making school accreditation. The respondents were required to list each professional development experience for the school years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. The respondent was required to state the type of delivery, location, and length of the session. Delivery types were online or face-to-face; location examples were in-district or out-of-district and the time length was requested to be measured in hours.

Demographic Data

Survey question one: Were you assigned as the principal at your current school for the 2013-14 school year; 2014-15 school year and the 2015-16 school year?

For the 2015-16 school year, 25 (69%) of the 36 answered yes and 11 (31%) respondents answered no. The 11 were first-year principals who were not eligible to complete the survey, which required participants have been a principal for at least one year. For the 2014-15 school year, 14 (56%) of the 25 respondents answered yes and 11 (44%) of the respondents answered no. The 11 principals were not assigned as the principal of the school for more than one year. For the 2013-14 school year, 10 (71%) of the 14 respondents answered yes and 4 (29%) answered no. The four principals were not assigned as the principal of the school for more than two years.

Survey question two: What type of accreditation rating did your school have for the following; 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years?

For the 2015-16 school year, seven (50%) middle school principals responded fully accredited, two (14%) responded accredited with warning and five (36%) responded conditionally accredited-reconstituted. Seven (64%) high school principals responded fully accredited, three (27%) accredited with warning and one (9%) responded conditionally accredited-reconstituted. For the 2014-15 school year, four (67%) middle schools were fully accredited and two (33%) were accredited with warning; seven (88%) high schools were fully accredited and one (12%) responded accredited with warning. For the 2013-14 school year, six (60%) middle schools were accredited with warning and four (40%) high schools were fully
The data related to the assignment of the principals, the schools’ grade level and the ratings of accreditation of the school are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1
Principal Participants and Accreditation Ratings of Region 2 Secondary Schools

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<td>MP13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP15</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP16</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td></td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP17</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP19</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td></td>
<td>AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CAR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP22</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP23</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>AW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MP – middle school participant; HP – high school participant; FA – fully accredited; AW – accredited with warning; CAR – conditionally accredited reconstituted

For the 2013-2016 school years, seven high schools responded 39 (23.3%) professional development experiences. Six middle schools responded 128 (76.6%) professional development experiences. The data related to school accreditation ratings and number of professional development experiences are displayed in Table 2.
Table 2

Number of Participants, Accreditation Ratings and Number of Professional Development Experiences (2013-16 School Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Accreditation Rating</th>
<th># of PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HP15</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP17</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP19</td>
<td>FA (1) to AW (3)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP20</td>
<td>AW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP22</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP23</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HP24</td>
<td>AW</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(HP) Participant High School Total 39 (23.3%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Accreditation Rating</th>
<th># of PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MP4</td>
<td>AW (3) to CAR(2)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP5</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP6</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP7</td>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP8</td>
<td>FA</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP9</td>
<td>AW (16) to FA (37)</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(MP) Participant Middle School Total 128 (76.6%)

MP – middle school participant; HP – high school participant; FA – fully accredited; AW – accredited with warning; CAR – conditionally accredited reconstituted

For the 2013-2016 school years, 28 (16.7%) professional development experiences were recorded by schools rated accredited with warning. 48 (28.7%) professional development experiences were by schools rated conditionally accredited reconstituted and 91 (54.5%) were recorded by schools rated fully accredited. The data related to professional development experiences by accreditation status are displayed in Table 3.
Table 3

Number of professional development experiences by accreditation status (2013-16 school years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accreditation Status</th>
<th>Number of Professional Development</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AW</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>28.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>54.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>167</strong></td>
<td><strong>99.9%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FA – fully accredited; AW – accredited with warning; CAR – conditionally accredited reconstituted

Survey Results

Survey question three: *What professional development for principals was currently provided by each school division?*

Data were analyzed to determine the topics involved in the professional development experiences provided for principals. The 167 professional development topics were categorized into 18 themes: administrative 55 (33%), this is further broken down by; challenging learners 10 (6%), English education 3 (2%), keynote speakers 2 (1%), math education 8 (5%), positive behavior intervention supports (PBIS) 4 (2%), school improvement 4 (2%), science education 1 (1%), social studies education 3 (2%), special education 7 (4%), standards of learning 2 (1%), teaching and learning 35 (21%), technology 23 (14%) and the Virginia Department of Education 10 (6%). Table 4 is an analysis of the themes of professional development for the 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 school years.
Table 4

Analysis of the Themes of Professional Development for the 2013-16 School Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Themes</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Culture</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Data Analyzing</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Instructional</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Technology</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging Learners</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keynote Speakers</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math Education</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention Supports)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Improvement</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies Education</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards of Learning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Department of Education</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research questions 1a and 1b. What topics were included in the division professional development for principals? What topics were included in professional development outside the school division?

In the 2013-2014 school year, 29 (21%) of the professional development experiences were held inside the school divisions. In the 2014-15 school year, 32 (23%) of the professional development experiences were held inside the school divisions. In the 2015-16 school year, 77 (56%) of the professional development experiences were held inside the school divisions. Table 5 shows an analysis of the data determining the location of the professional development experiences for the 2013-16 school years.
Table 5

Analysis of the Location of the Professional Development Experiences (2013-16 School Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inside the district</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Outside the district</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14 school year</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15 school year</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 school year</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for 3 years</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 2. How was the professional development aligned to the ISLLC Standards?

The survey revealed that 100% of the professional development experiences aligned with one or more of the ISLLC standards. Table 6 is an analysis of the professional development experiences and their alignment to each ISLLC standard for the 2013-16 school years: standard one – 19 (5%); standard two – eight (2%); standard three – 27 (7%); standard four – 83 (22%); standard five – 12 (3%); standard six – 100 (27%); standard seven – 26 (7%); standard eight – 7 (2%); standard nine – 42 (11%); standard ten – 47 (13%).
Table 6  
*Professional Development Experiences Aligned to ISLLC Standards (2013-2016 School Years)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ISLLC Standards</th>
<th>Keywords/Phrases</th>
<th>Alignment to Standards</th>
<th>Percentage Aligned to Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard 1</td>
<td>Articulation of shared vision; school improvement</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 2</td>
<td>Instructional leadership; technology; curricular</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 3</td>
<td>Management; safe, efficient and effective learning environment</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 4</td>
<td>Collaboration: data analysis</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 5</td>
<td>Legal/ethical matters; acting with integrity</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 6</td>
<td>Understanding, responding to and influencing political matters</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 7</td>
<td>Professional community promoting student’s success</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 8</td>
<td>Engaging families and community</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 9</td>
<td>Operations and resources</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard 10</td>
<td>School Improvement</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research question 3. What was the length in hours of the professional development?**

The hours spent in professional development totaled 1,030 over the three-year period. During the 2013-14 school year, there were 184 (18%) hours of professional development. During the 2014-15 school year, there were 235 (23%) hours. During the 2015-16 school year there were 611 (59%) hours. Table 7 is an analysis of the hours spent in professional development experiences over the 2013-16 school years.
Table 7
*Analysis of the Number of Hours Spent in Professional Development Experiences (2013-16 School Years)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Number of Hours</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14 school year</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15 school year</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 school year</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total three years</td>
<td>1030</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 4. What was the delivery method of the professional development?

The survey identified two choices: online or face-to-face. The secondary school principals identified two (.01%) online professional development experiences in the 2014-15 school year and two (.01%) online professional development experience in the 2015-16 school year. There were 30 (18%) face-to-face professional development experiences in the 2013-14 school year, 33 (20%) for the 2014-15 school year and 100 (61%) for the 2015-16 school year. Table 8 is an analysis of online and face-to-face professional development experiences for the 2013-16 school years.
Table 8

Analysis of the Number of Online and Face-to-Face Professional Development Experiences
(2013-16 School Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Online Experiences</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Face-to-Face Experiences</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2013-14 school year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014-15 school year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-16 school year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.01%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.02%</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>99%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research question 5. What were the perceptions of professional development in support of the goal of making accreditation?

There were 31 responses to the question. The data were analyzed and categorized into the following themes: leadership, instruction, continuous improvement and goal setting. Table 9 has examples of the qualitative responses that were coded.
### Analyzed Summary of the Perception Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Response Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Leadership                 | Foundation to move the school and district  
PD has helped with building capacity  
Tools to assist teachers in effective instructional delivery  
Somewhat strengthening my area of instructional leadership |
| Continuous improvement     | Common data to drive our improvement efforts  
Professional learning is directly aligned with our plan for Continuous improvement (PCI)  
They use the right strategy with the student who needs help.  
Focused in on the power of collaboration and using PLC's to Drive school improvement.  
Activities outlined in the PCI dictates what teachers will do Throughout the year |
| Instruction                | Strengthening my area of instructional leadership  
PD is great to help teachers with learning new strategies  
Learned in sessions is transferred into instructional practices.  
PD opportunities have enabled our staff members to Participate in activities directly related to school |
| Goal Setting               | Focusing on the priorities that have the greatest effect on student learning.  
PD has supported our goal of making accreditation  
Professional development offers a refresher for the Administrators and the teachers.  
Learned in sessions is transferred into instructional practices. |

The analyzed data reflect the following results: leadership 9 (29%), instruction 6 (19%), continuous improvement 11 (35%), and goal setting 5 (16%). Table 10 is an analysis of the participants’ responses to the survey question.
Table 10

Analysis of the Categories of the Principals’ Perceptions of Professional Development Experiences Supporting the Goal of Making Accreditation. (2013-16 School Years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instruction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal setting</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

The preceding information provides the reader with analytical and summary data of the PPDS study. The study collected data from principals of the same region to determine the types of professional development school divisions provide for their principals.

The study collected data from 36 principal participants; 11 of the 36 were not eligible to participate in the survey after answering question one because they were not assigned as the principal of their current school the previous year. Twenty five principals qualified to complete the survey beyond question one. The principal participation were as follows; 11 high school and 14 middle school principals for the 2015-16 school year; 14 principal participants; eight high school and six middle school for the 2014-15 school year. Ten principal participants; four high school and six middle school for the 2013-14 school year. The average high school participants for the 2013-14 was seven; averaging 39 (23.3%) professional development experiences for the 2013-16 school year. The average middle school participants were six; with 128 (76.6%) of the total number of professional development experiences. Ninety one (54.5%) of the experiences were from fully accredited high schools. The data reflect 138 (83.6%) of the professional development experiences were held inside the school districts. 100% of the professional development experiences were aligned with one or more of the ISLLC standards. The average number of hours for the total professional development experience was 6.16 hours across three years. Only four professional development experiences were identified as online. 51% of the principals perceive professional development experiences in the area of continuous improvement and goal setting as supporting the goal of achieving and/or maintaining accreditation.
Chapter 5
Findings, Implementation, and Recommendations

This chapter begins by providing a review of the purpose of the study and the methodology, and proceeds with a discussion of the research findings. Implications for practice and recommendations for future studies follow. The chapter concludes with reflections from the researcher on the experience of developing and conducting this study.

The purpose of the Principal Professional Development Survey (PPDS) study was to examine secondary principals’ perceptions of professional development to achieve and/or maintain school accreditation. The study was a quantitative research method using simple descriptive statistics based on a modification of Hunley-Stukes (2014) recommendation number 5; “Examine the relationship among the relevance, quality, duration, format and differentiation of professional development for principals and variables such as accreditation status and student achievement” in her dissertation “Professional Development Offerings for Principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia: A Survey”(Hunley-Stukes, 2014, P 91). The survey instrument measured principals’ perceptions of professional development experiences for the following school years; 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16. The participating secondary principals must have been assigned to their current school for at least one year. The researcher looked at key terms within the names of the professional development and matched each professional development activity with one or more of the ISSLC standards.

Finding 1. Professional development experiences for secondary school principals in Region 2 were grouped under the following: administrative themes, culture, data analyzing, instruction, and technology. Most (n=137, 82%) of the professional development experiences were based on administrative, instruction and technology themes, with 21% of all Professional Development targeting teaching and learning. This finding aligns with research by Portin (2004) that suggests effective principal preparation is essential to the overall success of the principal. 127 (76%) of the professional development experiences were based on instructional professional development linked to success of students. The research further aligns this finding to the research that school leaders are expected to articulate a clear vision for bringing about school change and provide students with an instructional program that promotes optimal learning (ISLLC, 2015).
Finding 2. Professional development experiences for secondary school principals in Region 2 were primarily face-to-face. There were only four online professional development experiences but the face-to-face experiences made up 99% of the professional development offerings. The three-year total represented 99% of the professional development offerings were presented face-to-face. One principal stated that participating in the same professional development as their teachers allowed that individual to have firsthand knowledge of what his teachers were being training to do, and how. Several principals felt professional development should be job-embedded and presented during the workday. According to Schlechty (2002), in order to create a system that is flexible and open to change, professional development for principals must be job-embedded. Job-embedded professional development helps principals understand the expectations and how they support the vision and mission and builds the capacity of the administrator (Schlechty, 2002).

Finding 3. Professional development experiences for secondary school principals in Region 2 were aligned with one or more of the ten national ISLLC standards.

167 (100%) of the professional development experiences were aligned to one or more of the ISLLC standards. Almost half of the professional development experiences were aligned to Standard 6 - Understanding, responding to and influencing political matters (n=100, 27%) or Standard 4 – Collaboration: data analysis (n=83, 22%).

Guskey and Yoon (2009) state that the school division’s focus should be on creating and maintaining school leaders who create cultures for success through participation in active learning experiences. The Wahstrom and Louis (2010) study of leadership presented a key finding that student achievement is higher in schools where principals participate in leadership training with teachers and the community.

Finding 4. Professional development experiences for secondary principals ranged between one and eight hours. The total hours of professional development was 1,030 for the three-year period (Table 5). The data reflect for the 2013-14 school year the total hours of professional development was 184 (18%) hours. The data reflect for the 2014-15 school year the total hours of professional development was 235 (23%) hours. The data reflect for the 2015-16 school year the total hours of professional development was 611 (59%) hours. The data reflect most of the sessions lasted one day, while a limited number were conducted over a two- or three-day period. Hirsh and Killion (2009) noted that solid professional development fosters collective
responsibility for improved student achievement and ongoing improvements in teaching and student learning. Professional development advocates have long lamented the lack of sufficient time for staff to engage in high-quality professional learning. An analysis by Kennedy (1998) showed that differences in the time spent in professional development activities were unrelated to improvements in student outcomes. It thus seems clear that effective professional development requires considerable time, however, that time must be well organized, carefully structured, purposefully directed, and focused on content, pedagogy or both (Birman et al., 2000; Garet et al., 2001; Guskey, 1999).

Finding 5. Secondary school principals in Region 2 perceived that professional development supports the goal of making school accreditation. The data were analyzed and categorized into the following themes: leadership, instruction, continuous improvement and goal setting. Table 7 has examples of the qualitative responses that were coded. The analyzed data reflect the following results: leadership 9 (29%), instruction 6 (19%), continuous improvement 11 (35%), and goal setting 5 (16%). For the three years 2013-16, 54.5% of the professional development experiences were by principals assigned to high schools rated fully accredited. High school principals assigned to fully accredited schools experienced 29 of the professional development experiences, while middle school principals assigned to fully accredited schools experienced 19 professional development experiences. Miller (2013) states school leaders who focus on professional development, attend training, and performance based learning leads to school accreditation.

Summary of the Findings

The results of this study produced several findings that were supported by the literature. The following questions guided the direction of this research study.

1. What professional development for principals is currently provided by each school division?

   1a. What topics were included in the division professional development for principals?

   1b. What topics were included in professional development outside the school division?

2. How was the professional development aligned to the ISLLC Standards?
3. What was the length in hours of the professional development?
4. What was the delivery method of the professional development?
5. What were the principal perceptions of the professional development in support of the goal of achieving and/or maintaining school accreditation?

**Implications for Practice**

Many careers require participation in ongoing learning approved by the profession, sometimes as a requirement for maintaining employment. In education, research has shown that school leadership is one of the most important factors in the success of the schools. Professional development is the only strategy school systems have to strengthen the educational leader’s performance levels. The implications found by this study are based on the findings of the research and should be considered for improving the work of principals in secondary schools.

**Implication 1. Schools and school divisions should be purposeful in their selection of topics for professional Development.** No improvement effort has ever succeeded in the absence of thoughtfully planned and well-implemented professional development. This means that specific goals of professional development, what evidence best reflects the achievement of those goals, and how that evidence can be gathered in meaningful and scientifically defensible ways must become the starting point for all planning activities (Guskey, 2000; 2001). This implication is associated with Finding 1, which noted that professional development experiences for secondary school principals in Region 2 were related to culture, data analyzing, instruction, and technology. Topics of professional development must be clear, concise, and purposeful so that principals have the updated training and skills they need to grow in their roles.

**Implication 2. School division leaders should invest their funds in professional development opportunities that utilize technology and online resources.** This implication is associated with Finding 2, professional development experiences for secondary school principals in Region 2 were primarily face-to-face experiences. The data reflect that 99% of the time face-to-face was used as the method for receiving professional development. School divisions should explore opportunities to use technology and more online based professional development to save time and money. The use of on-line professional development could also expand the opportunity for school leaders to interact with leaders from other locations.

**Implication 3. School divisions should ensure that professional development for principals is relevant and aligned with national standards.** This implication is associated
with Finding 3. The research reflects that professional development for principals should be ongoing, relevant and job-embedded in order for principals to effectively lead schools to excellence. Principals must remain current with instructional strategies, leadership pedagogy and assessments. The data reflect principal participation in professional development of instructional strategies, lesson planning, and technology and data interpretation in order to be able to monitor instruction and direct principals in improving academics.

Implication 4. School divisions should provide principals with extended time to participate in professional development. This implication is associated with Finding 4. Finding 4 revealed principals only spent 6.1 hours of professional development over three years, 2013-16. Principal’s time is best spent participating in professional development that meets the goals and vision of the school. Because a principal’s time is in high demand, clear, concise, goal-based professional development makes for the most effective use of time.

Implication 5. School divisions should make an effort to provide targeted professional development for administrators. One focus could be on professional learning communities so that principals are able to select their area of need and support each other within an administrative level group. Principals assigned to low preforming schools may need a more direct approach to professional development in the instructional area. More experienced principals may need to only focus on leadership and not the instructional teaching areas of leadership. This implication is associated with Finding 5.

Suggestions for Future Research

The role of the principal and need for professional development is expressed throughout the literature. Considering the findings and implications of this study, it would be beneficial to conduct research in the following areas:

1. How principals use professional development to support their instructional responsibilities. This research could assist new principals in time management and setting priorities in planning the vision and mission for a school. Research could be based on core area departments versus non-core areas. Qualitative research could identify perceptions of what professional development principals feel are important in order for them to successful. It could also provide district level administrators with data to make adjustments on future professional development planning.

2. How school board members perceive principal professional development and its
impact on the professional development budget allocation of a school. This qualitative research could assist school divisions and principals in budget planning and determining whether professional development is a priority of the school board. Qualitative research could identify areas of focus for school board members as well as district level administrators.

3. How principals perceive their participation in online professional development opportunities. Conducting a qualitative research study could explore online professional development opportunities for principals to complete at a more convenient time during the instructional day when school leadership issues are not prevalent. Qualitative research could focus on the perceptions of principal’s willingness to participate in online professional development versus face-to-face professional development.

**Personal Reflections**

The completion of my Prospectus examination left me enthusiastic about beginning my research and exploring the professional development principals were experiencing in Region 2. I was excited to learn more about the names and types of professional development secondary principals were using to improve or maintain accreditation in schools. I initially thought the research collection would not be difficult. After all, whenever I receive a survey request from a student completing research, I immediately complete the survey instrument and return it to the researcher. I thought everyone felt the immediate need to support a researcher by adhering to their survey request. I was amazed concerning the slow responses. I would recommend that future researchers consider the timeframe for beginning a survey. The survey instrument should be short and allow the participant to complete the survey without having to conduct research to answer the survey questions.
References


Hirsh, S. & Killion, J. (2009). When educators learn, students learn: eight principals of professional learning: consistent and powerful beliefs that underlie actions are essential to sustained system and school improvement. *Phi Delta Kappan, 90*(7), 464-469.


Marzano, R. J., Waters, T., & McNulty, B. A. (2005). *School leadership that works: From research to results.* ASCD.


Southern Regional Education Board (2007). *Schools need good leaders now: State progress in creating a learning-centered school leadership system, challenge to lead series*.


### Appendix A

**State of Virginia Region 2 Secondary Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of City/County</th>
<th>Number of Middle Schools</th>
<th>Number of High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accomack</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chesapeake</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Franklin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampton</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isle of Wright</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport News</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northampton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poquoson</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portsmouth</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suffolk</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Beach</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Williamsburg (James City)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>York</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Totals**  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Middle Schools</th>
<th>Number of High Schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B
The Principal Professional Development Survey

Q1  Directions: Completing and submitting this survey assumes your voluntary informed consent to use the data in the dissertation research study. Please answer the survey questions based on your current principal assignment for the past three years. The information you provide in this section will assist with making group comparison analysis and determining the alignment to the ISSLC standards. Complete data for each of the following school years; 2013-14; 2014-15; and 2015-16.

Q2. Were you assigned as the principal at your current school for the 2015-16 school-year?
- Yes, go to question 3 (1)
- No, please close survey window (2)

Q3. Secondary School level
- High (1)
- Middle (2)

Q4. What type of accreditation rating did your school have for the 2015-16 school year?
- Fully Accredited (1)
- Accredited with Warning (2)
- Provisionally Accredited - Graduation Rate (3)
- Conditionally Accredited - New School (4)
- Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted (5)
- Accreditation Denied (6)

Q5. How many professional development experiences did you have during 2015-16 school-year?
- 1 - 5 (1)
- 6 - 10 (2)
- 11 - 15 (3)
- 16 - 20 (4)
Q6. List each professional development experience for the 2015-16 school-year. Please state the type of delivery, location, and length of the session. Please see examples below improving instruction using technology. (Online); (in district); (4 hours) How to conduct a Classroom Walk-through. (Face-to-face); (out of district); (2 hours)

Q7. Were you assigned as the principal at your current school for the 2014-15 school-year?
   - Yes, go to question 8 (1)
   - No, Go the Question 17 (2)

Q8. Secondary School level
   - High (1)
   - Middle (2)

Q9. What type of accreditation rating did your school have for the 2014-15 school year?
   - Fully Accredited (1)
   - Accredited with Warning (2)
   - Provisionally Accredited - Graduation Rate (3)
   - Conditionally Accredited - New School (4)
   - Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted (5)
   - Accreditation Denied (6)

Q10. How many professional development experiences did you have during 2014-15 school-year?
   - 1 - 5 (1)
   - 6 - 10 (2)
   - 11 - 15 (3)
   - 16 - 20 (4)

Q11. List each professional development experience for the 2014-15 school-year. Please state the type of delivery, location, and length of the session. Please see examples below improving instruction using technology. (Online); (in district); (4 hours) How to conduct a Classroom Walk-through. (Face-to-face); (out of district); (2 hours)
Q12. Were you assigned as the principal at your current school for the 2013-14 school-year?
- Yes, go to question 13 (1)
- No, Go to Question 17. (2)

Q13. Secondary School level
- High (1)
- Middle (2)

Q14. What type of accreditation rating did your school have for the 2013-14 school year?
- Fully Accredited (1)
- Accredited with Warning (2)
- Provisionally Accredited - Graduation Rate (3)
- Conditionally Accredited - New School (4)
- Conditionally Accredited – Reconstituted (5)
- Accreditation Denied (6)

Q15. How many professional development experiences did you have during 2013-14 school-year?
- 1 - 5 (1)
- 6 - 10 (2)
- 11 - 15 (3)
- 16 - 20 (4)

Q16. List each professional development experience for the 2013-14 school-year. Please state the type of delivery, location, and length of the session. Please see examples below.
- improving instruction using technology. (Online); (in district); (4 hours) How to conduct a Classroom Walk-through. (Face-to-face); (out of district); (2 hours)

Q17. How has professional development supported the goal of making accreditation?
Appendix C

Cover Letter to Superintendents

December 1, 2016

I am a doctoral student within the Education Leadership and Policy Studies Program of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: otherwise known as Virginia Tech. I am currently undertaking a dissertation study entitled: “Relationship between Professional Development for Secondary School Principals and School Accreditation Status”. The purpose of the study is to examine the relationship between professional development and school accreditation status.

I am requesting the participation of secondary middle and high school principals in your division in my dissertational study. I would like to send the survey instrument by email directly to them pending your approval. The survey instrument may be completed on-line through Qualtrics (an approved Virginia Tech on-line survey instrument host).

The principals will be informed that all identifying information such as name, school, school division, etc., will be withheld. The principals will be informed that participation in the study is indeed voluntary. Further, all subjects will be informed that any decision not to participate in the study has no bearing on his/her employment status with your school division.

I am confident that the conclusions and recommendations from the study will be beneficial to me as well as to school divisions and principal preparation programs around the state and perhaps across the nation. As a principal myself, I understand your time and time of the principals is exceedingly valuable. I highly appreciate your consideration regarding the participation of the principals in your district in this study. You may respond to directly to me by email at timoej4@vt.edu or by phone at [redacted]. Should you have any questions or concerns about the study conduct or your rights as a research subject, you may contact the VT IRB Chair, Dr. David M. Moore at moored@vt.edu or (540) 231-4991.

If I do not hear from you within two weeks of receiving this correspondence, I will assume that you are comfortable with your secondary middle and high school principals participating in this dissertational study.

Respectfully,

Timothy Erskine Johnson
Doctoral Candidate, Virginia Tech
Appendix D
IRB Approval Letter

"Timothy Erskine Johnson" <timoej4@vt.edu>, "Michael D Kelly" <michk66@vt.edu>

Dear Researcher:

The VT IRB has approved the IRB application referenced in the attached approval letter for the protocol titled "Relationship between Professional Development for Secondary School Principals and School Accreditation Status". Read the approval letter carefully as it contains IRB-related requirements and retain a copy for your records.


Visit the following link to request an amendment to approve IRB application materials, and to report unanticipated problems: https://secure.research.vt.edu/irb/

The IRB wishes you success with your research.

IRB office

we’d greatly appreciate your feedback with regard to your experience related to your recent IRB protocol submission. Please consider completing our short (under 10 questions) "Protocol-specific feedback" survey: https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1374611725348
Appendix E

Cover Letter to Survey

My name is Timothy Erskine Johnson, I am a high school principal for Portsmouth City Schools in Portsmouth, VA. Additionally, I am a Doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University aka (Virginia Tech). I am conducting a research study to analyze professional development of principals as it relate to school accreditation. The title of my study is "Relationship between Professional Development for Secondary School Principals and School Accreditation Status".

I am requesting your participation in my dissertation study. This study involves a survey of 17 questions. The survey instrument may be completed on-line through Qualtrics (an approved Virginia Tech on-line survey instrument host) and will take about 15 minutes to complete. You will need a list of your professional development training for the past three years while you have been assigned to your current school.

There are no more than minimum risk to participate in this study. Records of information that you provide for the research study and your personal identifying information (name or characteristics) will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

Follow this link to the Survey:
Take the survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://virginiatech.qualtrics.com/SE?SID=SV_0w7mhvD2Nc9GQMI&Q_CHL=preview&Preview=Survey

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at my number (757) 373-7654. This research has been approved by The Institutional Review Board of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact Dr. David M. Moore, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, (540) 231-4991. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Timothy Erskine Johnson
Doctoral Candidate
Appendix F

Final Email to Participants

I would like to thank everyone who has already submitted the survey. This is my final request. The survey closes on January 17, 2017; if you have not completed the survey, please do so today. It is very important that I receive your input.

My name is Timothy Erskine Johnson, I am a high school principal for Portsmouth City Schools in Portsmouth, VA. Additionally, I am a Doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University aka (Virginia Tech). I am conducting a research study to analyze professional development of principals as it relate to school accreditation. The title of my study is "Relationship between Professional Development for Secondary School Principals and School Accreditation Status". I am requesting your participation in my dissertation study. This study involves a survey of 17 questions. The survey instrument may be completed on-line through Qualtrics (an approved Virginia Tech on-line survey instrument host) and will take about 15 minutes to complete. You will need a list of your professional development training for the past three years while you have been assigned to your current school.

There are no more than minimum risk to participate in this study. Records of information that you provide for the research study and your personal identifying information (name or characteristics) will not be linked in any way. It will not be possible to identify you as the person who provided any specific information for the study.

If you have any questions concerning this research study, please call me at my number (757) 373-7654. This research has been approved by The Institutional Review Board of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact Dr. David M. Moore, the Chair of the Institutional Review Board, (540) 231-4991. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Timothy Erskine Johnson
Doctoral Candidate