

Perceptions of the Supports and Professional Development for and needed by  
Novice School Administrators in Southwestern Virginia

Luke E. Boone

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M. David Alexander, Chair

Brad E. Bizzell

Glen I. Earthman

Richard G. Salmon

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to describe the perceptions of the support and professional development activities for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. A qualitative methods research design was used to collect and examine data. The researcher interviewed 22 NSAs from 11 different public school divisions in the Virginia Department of Education's (VDOE's) Regions 6 and 7 in southwestern Virginia. An interview protocol consisting of 15 questions was used to collect data on the perceptions of the NSAs. From the research collected, a list detailing the support and professional development (PD) activities for NSAs in southwestern Virginia was created. The support and PD activities were grouped into the categories of (a) support and PD activities provided for NSAs, (b) effective support and PD activities provided for NSAs, (c) support and PD areas of need for NSAs, (d) support and PD activities that the NSAs provided for themselves, (e) factors limiting the support and PD of NSAs. The data collected from this study were strategically placed into a design of seven NSA support and PD areas that school divisions could utilize to create a program, or further develop a program for NSAs. Those areas correlated with the study's primary research question and the five primary sub-questions of the study.

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**GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study was to describe the perceptions of the support and professional development (PD) activities for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. Twenty-two NSAs from 11 different public school divisions in southwestern Virginia were interviewed for the study. From the research collected, a list detailing the support and PD activities for NSAs in southwestern Virginia was created. The support and PD activities were grouped into the categories of effectiveness, and factors that limited the support and PD of NSAs. The data collected from this study were strategically placed into a design of seven NSA support and PD areas that school divisions could utilize to either create a program, or further develop a program for NSAs.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my wife Amber. If this is the only work I ever publish, please know your positivity, selflessness, and perpetual exuberance for life are a guide for our sons and me every day.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mom and Dad, thank you for allowing us a childhood where mistakes were welcomed, and we were not sheltered from the learning opportunities those mistakes provided. Dad, this past summer we had a conversation where you stated that completing a doctoral degree was a remarkable feat. I like to think that remarkable is going to work for a decade building homes on two severely arthritic hips. Mom, you are equally remarkable in my eyes for working 70-plus hours a week in a high-stress occupation. Mom and Dad, those endeavors while providing a stable home for three sons were remarkable.

To my brothers Aaron and Ben, as one may have a dissertation committee of experienced advisors during a doctoral degree, you two have been my advising committee throughout life.

To my sons Samuel and Joseph, I know the work put into this degree has taken me away at times, but the lessons I've learned through this journey will be lessons I can pass on to you. Let's go play!

## COMMITTEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Just as this study was centered on supports and professional development provided for NSAs, I'd like to thank my committee for being a model of support and professional development for me as I progressed through the dissertation process. In my mind, I often associated my committee with a football coaching staff. Thank you to my advisor, or "head coach" M. David Alexander. Your consummate guidance, support, and advice were essential in both the dissertation process and doctoral program. Thank you to Glenn Earthman, my "offensive coordinator". Your prompt feedback and encouragement, provided direction to keep me moving forward. Thank you to Brad Bizzell, my "quarterbacks coach". Your direction on the professional development of school administrators help provide the course for the study. Thank you to Richard D. Salmon, my "special teams coach". Your advice on financial indicators of the participating school divisions provided a crucial component of the study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>GENERAL AUDIENCE ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>COMMITTEE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Background .....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	5
Significance of the Study .....	8
Research Questions .....	8
Description of Key Terms.....	9
Delimitations.....	11
Limitations .....	11
Summary .....	11
<b>CHAPTER TWO REVIEW OF LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>12</b>
Introduction.....	12
The Transition and Preparation of Novice School Administrators .....	13
<i>The transition and preparation of the novice school principal.</i> .....	14
<i>The transition and preparation of the novice school assistant principal.</i> .....	16
Responsibilities and Roles of Novice School Administrators .....	19
Supports and Professional Development for Rural School Administrators .....	23
Mentoring and Coaching of Novice School Administrators .....	26
<b>CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Introduction.....	30
Research Design.....	30
Instrument Design and Validation .....	31
Research Questions .....	32
Population and Selection of Participants .....	34
Informed Signed Consent .....	34
Data Gathering .....	36
Data Analysis .....	37
Data Management .....	37
Summary .....	38
<b>CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY</b> .....	<b>39</b>
Introduction.....	39

Findings.....	42
Introduction/Demographics Survey Questions, Item 1:.....	42
Section 1 Interview Questions: Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs Interview Questions.....	45
Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia .....	71
<b>CHAPTER FIVE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH .....</b>	<b>89</b>
Summary of Findings and Conclusions .....	89
Summary of Findings/Conclusions on the Support Activities provided for NSAs .....	90
Summary of Findings/Conclusions on the Professional Development Activities for NSAs ...	90
Discussion of Results .....	91
Support and PD Activities to implement in a NSA Program.....	94
Study Concerns .....	98
Recommendations for Further Research/Study .....	98
Recommendations for Practice or Changes in Policy .....	100
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>APPENDIX A INTERVIEW PROTOCOL .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>APPENDIX B ALIGNMENT OF SUB-QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS. ....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>APPENDIX C EMAIL SCRIPT TO SUPERINTENDENTS FOR NSA CONTACT PERMISSION AND INFORMATION.....</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>APPENDIX D INTENT FORM EMAIL OR TELEPHONE SCRIPT TO NSAs IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA .....</b>	<b>121</b>
<b>APPENDIX E INFORMED CONSENT.....</b>	<b>123</b>
<b>APPENDIX F VDOE REGIONS SIX AND SEVEN WITH LOCAL COMPOSITE INDEX (LCI) PERCENTILE RANKINGS OUT OF 134 SCHOOL DIVISIONS IN VIRGINIA (I.E., THE 1ST PERCENTILE WOULD HAVE LOWEST LCI IN VIRGINIA).....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>APPENDIX G LIST OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS IN VDOE'S REGION 6 &amp; REGION 7. ....</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>APPENDIX H DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT FROM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS .....</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>APPENDIX I DATA SOURCE: VDOE LOCAL COMPOSITE INDEX.....</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>APPENDIX J VIRGINIA TECH IRB APPROVAL.....</b>	<b>132</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Novice school administrator support and PD activities variables. ....	4
Figure 2.1. Nature of support and PD impacts on NSAs in Southwestern Virginia. ....	13
Figure 3.1. VDOE superintendent's regions. ....	34

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1 Southwestern VA Localities' Local Composite Index Rankings .....	7
Table 3.1 Research Sub-Question/Interview Protocol Alignment Table .....	33
Table 4.1 Procedures to Acquire NSA Information from School Divisions .....	40
Table 4.2 Process to Acquire Profile of the Sample of NSAs .....	41
Table 4.3 Item 1: Participant Demographics .....	44
Table 4.4 Item 2, Section 1, Interview Question 1: NSA Comments on support activities to specifically address being a NSA.....	47
Table 4.5 Item 3, Section 1, Interview Question 2: NSA comments on the effectiveness of support activities as an NSA .....	50
Table 4.6 Item 4, Section 1, Interview Question 3: NSA comments on most effective support provided as a NSA .....	53
Table 4.7 Item 5, Section 1, Interview Question 4: NSA comments on support activities needed as a NSA.....	56
Table 4.8 Item 6, Section 1, Interview Question 5: NSA comments on supports activities provided by the NSAs themselves .....	60
Table 4.9 Item 7, Section 1, Interview Question 6: NSA comments on NSA support activities specifically needed as an individual.....	63
Table 4.10 Item 8, Section 1, Interview Question 7: NSA comments on factors that limit access to support activities as an NSA.....	66
Table 4.11 Item 9, Section 2, Interview Question 8: NSA comments on PD activities for NSAs in southwestern VA.....	69
Table 4.12 Item 10, Section 2, Interview Question 9: NSA comments on PD activities for NSAs in southwestern VA.....	72
Table 4.13 Item 11, Section 2, Interview Question 10: NSA comments on most effective PD activities provided as an NSA.....	75
Table 4.14 Item 12, Section 2, Interview Question 11 .....	77
Table 4.15 Item 13, Section 2, Interview Question 12: NSA comments on PD activities provided by the NSAs themselves .....	81
Table 4.16 Item 14, Section 2, Interview Question 13: NSA comments on NSA PD activities specifically needed as an individual.....	83
Table 4.17 Item 15, Section 2, Interview Question 14: NSA comments on factors that limit access to PD activities as an NSA.....	86
Table 5.1 Support and PD Activities to Implement in a NSA Program. ....	95

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background**

The number of Novice School Administrators (NSAs) (novice was defined as three years or less experience in the profession of school administration) across America has increased significantly in the last decade (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2018a), a decade marked by increased school accountability. From school calendar years 2011-12 to 2015-16, the number of NSAs increased from 29,000 to 35,000 in the United States (NCES, 2018b). They entered the profession of school administration during an era of increased school accountability and restructuring that began under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 and continues under Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA). For instance, performance indicators such as academic achievement, growth in reading and mathematics in elementary and middle schools, and high school graduation rates, continue under the federal mandates of ESSA (20 U.S.C § 6312).

The passage of ESSA eliminated many of the mandates in NCLB and provided states with increased flexibility and authority over their school systems. The increased autonomy for states also indicates added responsibility and uncertainty at the state level. (National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2017; Virginia Department of Education [VDOE], 2018; Weiss & McGuinn Weiss, 2017). Virginia's Standards of Accreditation have undergone significant revision since the implementation of ESSA (VDOE). When combined with the fact that only fifty percent of principals remain at a school longer than three years (NASSP; NCES, 2018b), it is evident that many NSAs are beginning their careers at a time of change and transition in their schools.

Along with transitioning into an era of accountability and reform, most NSAs begin their careers as assistant principals (APs). The novice AP (for purposes of this study, novice APs and novice principals will collectively be referred to NSAs) is often referenced as a stepping stone to the principal position (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012; Busch, MacNeil, & Baraniuk, 2012; Hunt, 2011; Madden, 2008; Marshall & Hooley, 2006; Maye, 2016; Militello, Fusarelli, Mattingly, & Warren, 2015; Morgan, 2018; Retelle, 2010;). The significance of the transition can be seen in a 2015 study (Rudnick, Edelman, Kharel & Lewis, 2015), in which 87% of the 1,800

principals surveyed indicated that they began their school administrative careers as APs.

The job description of the NSA typically includes such things as conferences with parents, supervising bus and lunch duties, handling student discipline, configuring the master schedule, regulating attendance, and working with parent and student activities (Barnett et al.; Gurley, Anasty-May, & Lee, 2015; Marshall & Davidson, 2016; Marshall & Hooley; Mitello et al., 2015; Searby, Browne-Ferrigno, & Wang, 2017). The responsibilities of an NSA has been described as ambiguous and conflicting (Armstrong, 2015; Barnett et al., 2012; Beam, Claxton, & Smith, 2016; Marshall & Davidson, 2016; Tredway, Bill, & Hernandez, 2007). For example, an NSA may be called upon to manage discipline situation where the best interests of the students, teacher, and classroom need to be balanced in the resolution (Tredway et al., 2007). Thus, NSAs may feel overwhelmed by or unprepared for their new role (Allen & Weaver, 2014; Armstrong, 2015; Kearney & Herrington, 2013; Marshall, 2006; Spillane, Harris, Jones, & Mertz, 2015)

Interestingly, with the complexities that comes with the transition into the NSA position, there is little research on the support and professional development (PD) activities provided for and needed by NSAs (Cohen & Schechter, 2019; Enomoto, 2012; Hausman, Nebeker, & McCreary, 2002; Hunt, 2011; Marshall & Davidson; Neumerski, 2012; Oliver, 2005; Searby et al., 2017; Wang, 2017). Organizational supports for school leaders have been defined as those things supporting the “Professional capacity of teachers and staff, the professional community in which they learn and work, family and community engagement, and effective, efficient management and operations of the school” (National Policy Board for Education Administration [NPBEA], 2015, p. 4). Therefore, lacking support areas for NSAs include task management, socialization into the position, unpredictability of the role, mentoring, stress management, and physical health (Armstrong, 2010; Craft, Liljenberg & Andersson, 2019; Malveaux, Lopez, & Combs, 2016; Spillane & Lee, 2014). For this study, support activities will be defined as activities in those lacking support areas that help build the professional capacity of NSAs as they are socialized into their new roles (see Figure 1.1 on p.6).

Hirsh (2019) defined professional development as those activities that:

Are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators...with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging state academic standards; and are

sustained...intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused.  
(para. 3).

Hirsh (2019) identified the following as possible professional development areas:

- a) Increase and improve teachers' knowledge of the academic subjects and how students learn.
- b) Advance teacher understanding of effective instructional strategies that are evidence-based and improve classroom management skills.
- c) Ability to analyze student work and achievement from multiple sources, and how to adjust instructional strategies based on such analysis.
- d) Allow personalized plans for each educator to address the educator's specific needs identified in observation or other feedback.
- e) Regularly evaluate impact on increased teacher effectiveness and student academic achievement. Use those findings to improve the quality of professional development.
- f) Are designed to give teachers of children with disabilities or children with developmental delays the knowledge to provide instruction and support to those children, including positive behavioral interventions and supports, multi-tier system of supports, and use of accommodations.
- g) Use of data and assessments to inform and instruct classroom practice.

A visual framework has been provided for specificity between the variables of support and professional development (PD) activities for the development of NSAs into effective school administrators. The framework diagrams the progression of the effects of providing support and PD activities for NSAs into effective school administrators. The progression outlined in the framework was grounded in the literature on NSAs entering the profession of school administrator.

The framework encompasses four levels of hierarchy. These levels include aspects encompassing support and PD activities, the support and PD activities for NSAs, NSAs' perceptions of their beginning school administration position, and the development of NSAs into effective school administrators. The framework has a hierarchical structure, since the aspects build upon one another. For example, the factors of mentorship and socialization contribute to describing support activities for NSAs, and those support activities contribute to the factors that help develop an effective NSA. NSAs may not have been properly prepared for the significant

number of tasks a school administrator is responsible for. Thus, the support of a mentor can help a NSA through such challenges and assist the NSA in becoming a more effective school administrator.

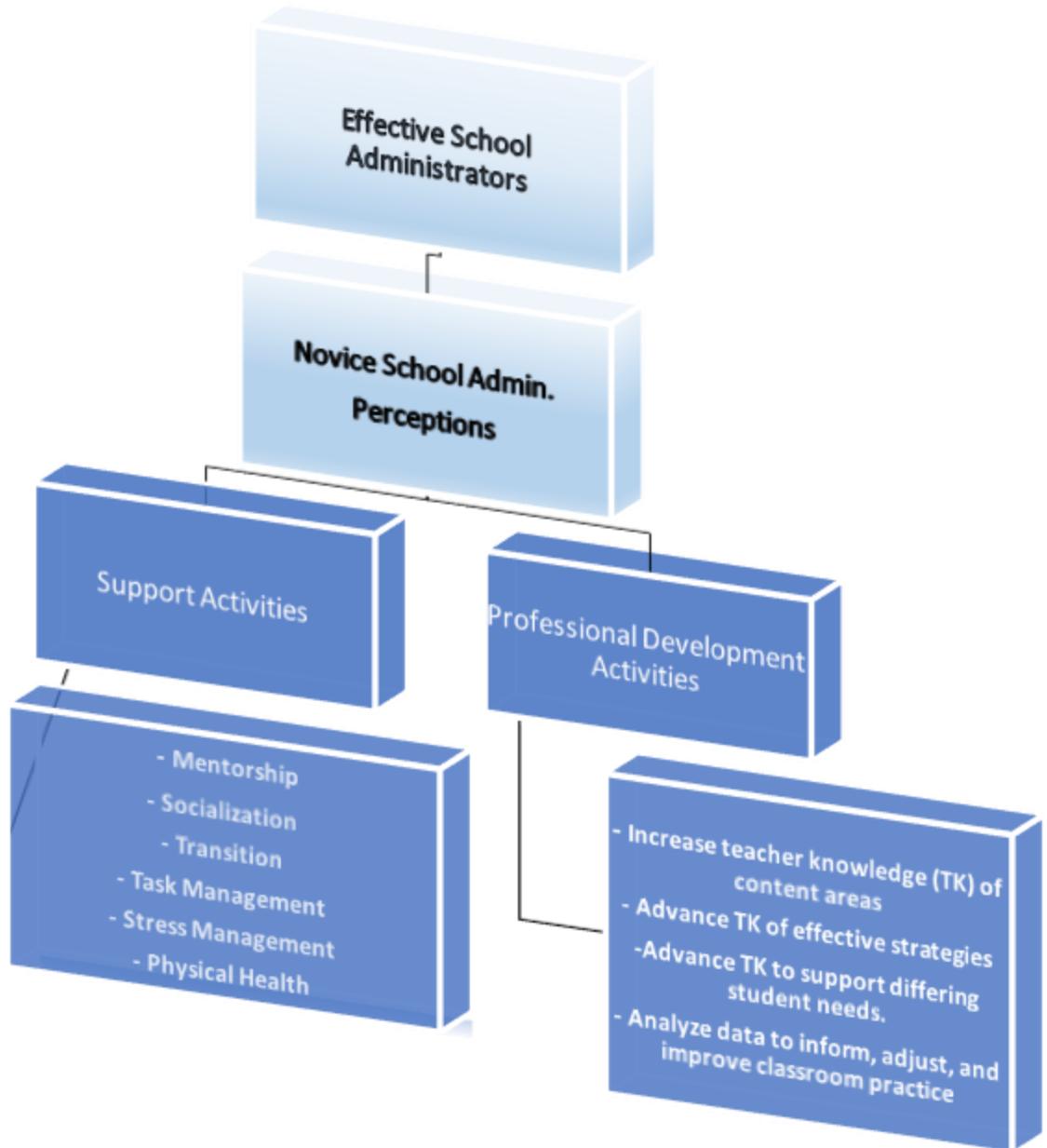


Figure 1.1. Novice school administrator support and PD activities variables.

The lack of supports and PD is further magnified when the NSA serves a school in a rural setting (Allen & Weaver, 2014; Ashton & Duncan, 2012; Duncan & Stock, 2010; Enomoto, 2012). Rural area NSAs may encounter such challenges as a lack of financial resources, the multiplicity of roles due to a lack of personnel, and increased community pressures. In Virginia, where 50% of school districts are considered rural, these challenges may often be present (NCES, 2014).

An increased focus on the support and PD needs of NSAs may contribute to improved school leadership in the following ways. The NSAs may take on more of a shared instructional leadership role in collaboration with their head principals. They may be better prepared for a head principalship. Furthermore, the retention of qualified individuals for school administrative positions, particularly in rural areas, may increase.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Realities such as increasingly rigorous accreditation standards, high-stakes standardized assessments, and school funding levels that are lower than the 2008 recession levels, may place substantial pressure on school leaders (Leachman, Materson & Figueroa, 2017; NPBEA, 2015). These pressures may make school principals feel obligated to take on more of the instructional leadership role and delegate other managerial responsibilities to the NSAs. The delegation of a substantial amount of the managerial responsibilities to the NSA position may create a lack of support and PD for the NSA in an area such as instructional leadership (Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012). The leadership role that many NSAs felt they were being prepared for in a university training program may not be the position for they are hired. Therefore, it is important that supports such as mentoring from experienced principals, PD geared towards their transition needs, and guidance in the socio-political dynamics of their school and district (Armstrong, 2014) are in place to help NSAs develop the necessary skills and knowledge. Providing support and PD activities to NSAs could help establish a solid foundation at a critical transition stage of many school administrators.

When a NSA enters the occupation, and recognizes their lack of instructional leadership development, their inability to accomplish the significant amount of building management responsibilities, and witness the high turnover rate of administrators, “professional shock” (Marshall, 2016; p. 272) or “reality shock” (Spillane & Lee, 2014; p. 451) may occur.

These challenges may also be magnified by the pressures NSAs have when working in rural areas of America. (Cray & Millen; 2010; Wieczorek & Manard, 2017). These challenges may include smaller applicant pools, geographic isolation, community expectations, and limited salary and budget (Hansen, 2018). Also, the sheer need for NSAs is magnified in rural areas because of the challenges of both recruitment and retention of school administrators that rural school divisions face (Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009). Due to the attrition, turnover, and mobility of school administrators in rural areas (Latterman & Steffes, 2017), NSAs are much more likely to be appointed to a head principalship quicker, than in urban areas. Also, a lack of resources in rural areas can create a need for individuals to be appointed directly from the classroom to the principalship.

In VDOE Regions 6 and 7, where this study has taken place, the lack of resources may also be signified by a locality's local composite index (LCI) of local ability to pay. A locality's ability to provide for its educational programming is often measured by its LCI. In Regions 6 and 7, 19 out of the 34 school divisions have LCIs in the bottom 25% of Virginia's 133 school divisions (see Table 1.1 below) (VDOE, 2019). The presence of these impediments, creates a need to analyze and examine the perceptions of NSAs on the supports and PD activities available for and needed by NSAs, specifically those in rural southwestern Virginia. By analyzing the insights from NSAs in both the novice principal and novice AP roles, a truer examination of the NSAs in southwestern Virginia was able to take place.

Table 1.1

*Southwestern VA Localities' Local Composite Index Rankings*

<b>REGION 6</b>	<b>LCI Rank</b>	<b>REGION 7</b>	<b>LCI Rank</b>
*Alleghany County	99	Bland County	90
Botetourt County	47	Buchanan County	88
Covington	93	*Bristol	98
Craig County	82	*Carroll County	107
*Danville	112	*Dickenson County	115
Floyd County	79	*Galax	110
Franklin County	41	*Giles County	105
*Henry County	125	Grayson County	74
*Martinsville	129	*Lee County	133
Montgomery County	43	*Norton	100
*Patrick County	121	Pulaski County	84
*Pittsylvania County	117	*Radford	120
Roanoke	78	*Russell County	123
Roanoke County	60	*Scott County	131
Salem	55	*Smyth County	127
		*Tazewell County	109
		Washington County	76
		*Wise County	114
		Wythe County	85

(Source: VDOE, 2019, [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school\\_finance/budget/compositeindex\\_local\\_abilitypay/](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/budget/compositeindex_local_abilitypay/))

*Asterisk (\*) indicates school divisions is in bottom 25% of localities in state*

## **Significance of the Study**

The significance of the study was to identify the perceptions of supports and PD available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The study centered on NSAs in the region, accounting for a) NSAs who went directly into a head principalship from teaching, b) NSAs who have entered the principalship in their first three years of school administration, and c) NSAs that are in the AP position. The data gathered contributes to the body of research that can help support and professionally develop NSAs in rural school settings. Also, the study examined what support and PD activities NSAs stated as most valuable in their development, and whether or not they received support and PD activities. The study included analysis on how improved support and PD activities for NSAs benefitted those individuals in their development as school leaders, the school stakeholders, with whom the NSAs interacted, and in preparing them for additional school leadership roles.

Researchers have noted that strong school leadership has a significant impact on student achievement (Boone, 2017; Leithwood & Louis 2012; Marzano, Walters, & McNulty, 2005; Pounder, 2011). However, there may be a gap between how school divisions envision their school principals leading schools, and how those school divisions support and develop them as NSAs to effectively lead schools. (Armstrong, 2015; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Turnbull, Anderson, Riley, MacFarlane, & Aladjem, 2016). In a Wallace Foundation study (Turnbull et al., 2016), approximately 1,700 NSAs perceptions of their districts' NSA initiatives or programs were researched. Data from the study (Turnbull et al., 2016) allowed the researchers to indicate that positive results in the support and development of NSAs could be achieved through formal district NSA programs. The data from this study will provide school division leaders with a collection of effective approaches for the supports and PD of NSAs that could be used in similar NSA supports and PD programs.

## **Research Questions**

This study was directed by the following primary research question: What is the nature of supports and professional development (PD) available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia? The primary research question was categorized by the following sub-questions to further clarify the "lived experiences" (Patton, 2015, p. 433) of the NSAs following the phenomenological approach of the study.

- 1) What professional development activities did the NSAs receive?
- 2) What support activities did the NSAs receive?
- 3) Did the NSAs think the activities effectively prepared them for their school administrator roles (principals or assistant principals)?
- 4) In what areas did the NSAs want and need to have increased support or professional development activities?
- 5) What are some perceived barriers to accessing support or professional development activities as a NSA in southwest Virginia?

In following the phenomenological approach of the study, data were gathered that thoroughly captured and described the experiences of the participants. To gather such data, in-depth interviews took place to accurately describe the experiences of NSAs and their perceptions toward the support and PD activities provided for and needed by them (Patton, 2015). The interview questions were developed directly from the research questions to analyze the insights, perceptions, and experiences of the NSAs in southwestern Virginia. Each interview question was developed to help determine the nature of the supports and PD provided for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

### **Description of Key Terms**

The definitions of key terms presented below have been included to provide a clear understanding of the terminology used throughout the research on the nature of the supports and professional development for NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

1. Novice School Administrator – Novice school administrators have been described in research as school administrators in their first three months, to their first three years in the profession. (Colina, & Boone, 2008; Nelson, Tredway, Brill, & Hernandez, 2007; Spillane & Lee, 2014). The present study will include NSAs (principals and assistant principals) in their first three years of school administration.
2. Assistant Principal – a school administrator that assist the principal in the daily operations of a school. Depending on the setting, region, or country, other terms that are frequently used in reference to a person fulfilling the role of assistant principal may be vice principal or associate principal. Thus, the term assistant principal in this study may be synonymous with those prior mentioned descriptions as well.

3. Mentoring – Daresh (2001) described mentoring as “The ongoing process in which individuals in an organization provide support and guidance to others who can become effective contributors to the goals of the organization.” (p. 3). In the mentoring process, a mentor does not have to be a person who provides all the answers, but one who has a multitude of experiences, and can craft their knowledge to assist his or her protégé in a particular situation.
4. Socialization – Armstrong (2010) defined socialization as “The process of learning and performing social roles, and it is the way in which individuals learn about and acquire the values, norms, and beliefs that are required to fulfill organizational roles” (p. 687). As NSAs are entering the profession, they may encounter the need to be socialized into the culture of the administration and school, thus crafting their personal strengths to meet the needs of the school (Marshall & Hooley, 2006).
5. Supports – Merriam-Webster (2016) defines support(s) as to promote the interests or cause of, or to uphold or defend as valid or right. The National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA) (2015) defines the organizational supports for educational leaders as, “the professional capacity of teachers and staff, the professional community in which they learn and work, family and community engagement, and effective, efficient management and operations of the school” (p. 4). Support areas needed for NSAs have included mentoring from experienced principals, time and task management training, professional development geared towards their transition needs, guidance in the socio-political dynamics of their school and district, and stress management (Armstrong, 2014; Craft, Malveaux, Lopez, & Combs, 2016; Liljenberg & Andersson, 2019; Spillane & Lee, 2014).
6. Professional Development – Goldring and Preston (2012) referred to professional development as the learning opportunities that occur once a leader is on the job. Professional development for NSAs may occur in varying methods. Hirsh (2019) defined professional development as activities that
  - Are an integral part of school and local educational agency strategies for providing educators ...with the knowledge and skills necessary to enable students to succeed in a well-rounded education and to meet the challenging state

academic standards; and are sustained...intensive, collaborative, job-embedded, data-driven, and classroom-focused (para. 3).

### **Delimitations**

1. This study will be conducted in public school divisions in southwest Virginia.
2. Novice principals and novice assistant principals in their first to third year of administrative experience will be interviewed for the collection of data.

### **Limitations**

This study will be limited to southwestern Virginia public school divisions in an effort to generalize findings for the supports and PD provided for NSAs in the region. Thus, findings may not be able to be generalized in other areas outside of the region identified.

### **Summary**

The study was centered on NSAs in southwestern Virginia, accounting for a) principals who went directly into a head principalship from teaching, b) NSAs who have entered the principalship in their first three years of school administration, and c) NSAs that are in the AP position. The data gathered will contribute to the body of research that can help support and professional develop NSAs in rural school settings. Also, the study will examine what support and PD activities NSAs stated as most valuable in their development, and whether or not they received it. The study included analysis on how improved support and PD activities for NSAs benefitted those individuals in their development as school leaders, the school stakeholders, with whom the NSAs interacted, and in preparing them for additional school leadership roles.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the nature of supports and professional development (PD) available to novice school administrators (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. With that purpose in mind, the study was conducted within the parameters of a conceptual framework created by the researcher (see Figure 2.1 on p. 17). The framework acknowledges the impact of the nature of the support and PD activities provided for NSAs. Also, it encompasses the impact of rural area challenges on providing these activities, and the direct impact rural area challenges have on NSAs. The review of literature that follows includes research that focuses on a) the transition and preparation of novice school administrators (novice principals and novice assistant principals), b) the supports and PD for rural school administrators, c) the perceptions of job responsibilities and roles of NSAs, and d) the mentoring and coaching of NSAs.

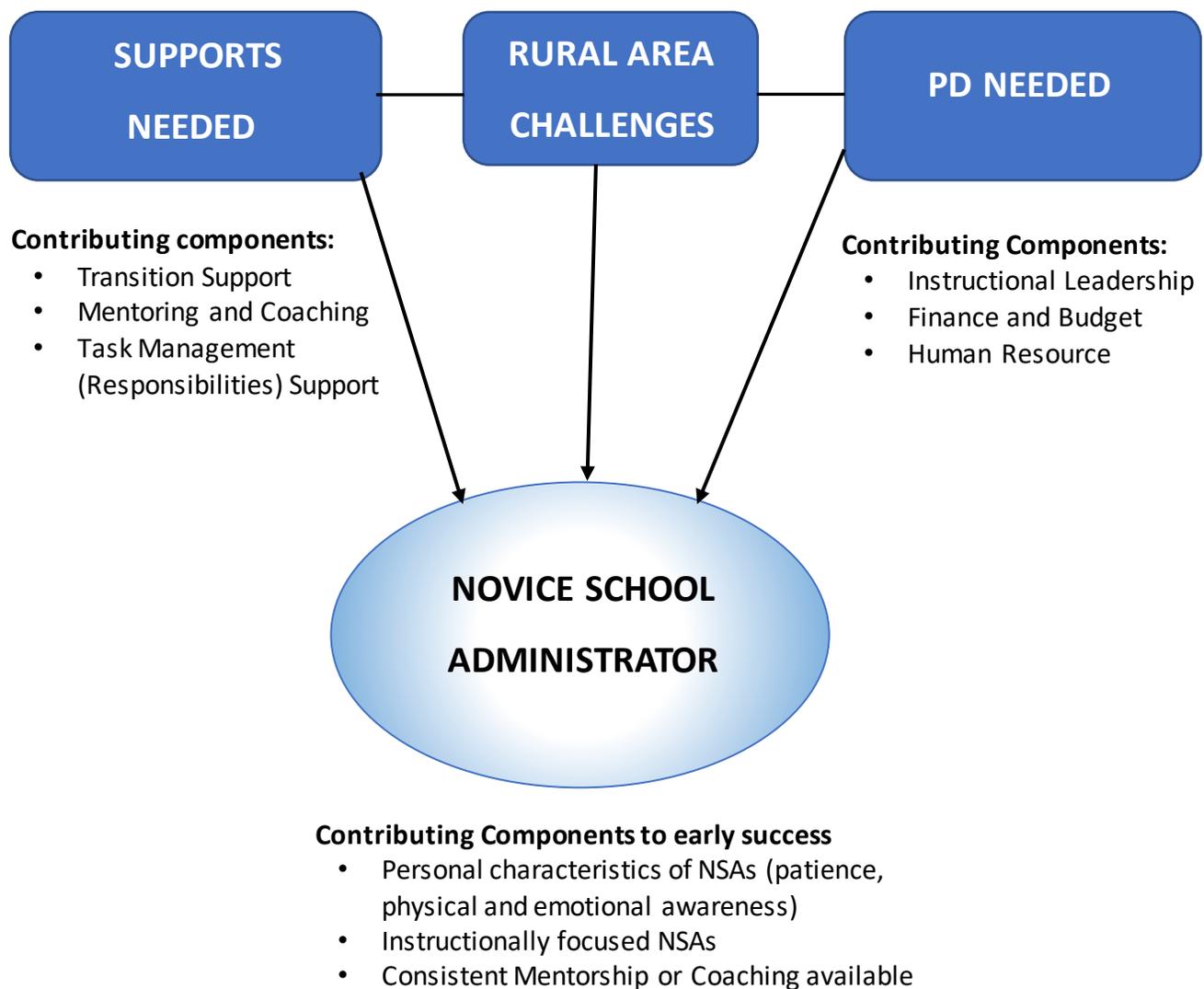


Figure 2.1. Nature of support and PD impacts on NSAs in Southwestern Virginia.

### The Transition and Preparation of Novice School Administrators

The transition from teacher to administrator can be an exciting milestone in an educator’s career due to the association with upward professional mobility and increased influence (Armstrong, 2015). The transition into administration also may bring with it ongoing and unforeseen challenges to those leaders as they adapt to their new positions (Armstrong 2015, 2014, Marshall & Hooley, 2006). These challenges may also be magnified by the pressures NSAs have when working in rural areas of America (Cray & Millen, 2010; Wieczorek & Manard, 2017); Stemming from challenges such as the recruitment, turnover, mobility of school

administrators, and lack of resources in rural areas, NSAs are much more likely to be appointed to a head principalship more quickly than in urban areas (Latterman & Steffes, 2017; Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady 2009). Therefore, the following sections' research will represent the transition and preparation of the novice principal and novice assistant principal in the novice school administrator (NSA) role.

**The transition and preparation of the novice school principal.** Spillane, Harris, Mertz, & Jones (2015) examined novice principals' perceptions about their new roles and how they are socialized into their new roles. The researchers studied the novice principals' understanding of certain tensions that were inherent in the position and were products of their individual choices. Spillane et al, 2015 stated, "Crossing over to the principal's office represents a shift in perspective, expectations and work as the newcomer assumes a multifaceted job that spans instructional, managerial and political realms" (p. 1069). The researchers noted that the transition to the novice principal position can involve shocks that may constrain or enable the novice principal's decision making process, notably whether they should make a singular or distributed leadership (plural) decisions (Spillane et al., 2015).

The researchers (Spillane et al., 2015) used a mixed-methods approach of surveys and interviews to collect data from the novice principals. Spillane et al., 2015 surveyed 115 novice principals and purposefully selected 35 of the participants to be interviewed. Participants were surveyed and interviewed the summer before their first year as a principal and the summer after their first year as a novice principal. The researchers found that challenges such as work volume and diversity encouraged a distributed leadership approach from the novice principals. However, an aspect such as ultimate responsibility encouraged a singular approach to leadership. Also, whereas volume, diversity, and responsibility were common, school context (i.e., poor student performance or declining student population) could change the intensity of those aspects dramatically (Spillane et al., 2015)

Spillane et al. (2015) concluded that novice principals experience differing stressors dependent on the school environment and school district they enter. The researchers suggested that principal preparation programs provide a multitude of experiences tailored to the needs of novices in particular contexts (Spillane et al., 2015) Also, the researchers argued that the school principal's work involves innate tensions that often necessitate for a singular leadership style. Therefore, policymakers arguing for school leaders to adopt a distributed leadership style should

explore ways in which the novice principal position can be restructured and supported to promote their current and future leadership (Spillane et al., 2015).

Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2015) examined perceptions of both new and experienced school leaders on the challenges faced during their first three years in leadership positions. Beam et al. (2015) noted that the challenges present novice school administrators (NSAs) face may be quite different from school administrators who may have been NSAs several years prior. The researchers (Beam et al., 2015) believed that understanding the challenges during NSAs' introduction phase may help to inform and update the curriculum and structure of NSA preparation. Thus, the researchers wanted to increase understanding of the challenges and expectations faced by NSAs and compare whether the perceptions of those challenges changed over time.

The population of the study consisted of candidates enrolled in a graduate program at a private university in Virginia. The study was conducted in a mixed-methods format. Research was conducted through surveys administered to 159 Virginia school leaders and focus-group interviews provided to 8 of the participants. Of those 159 school leaders, 53 were novice assistant principals or principals.

The participants of the study (Beam et al., 2015) were surveyed on which aspects of being a NSA they found most challenging. Results were divided into two sets: perceptions of present novice school leaders and perceptions of school leaders with three or more years' experience. Present NSAs in the study (Beam et al., 2015) noted discipline, paperwork, and time management as the most challenging aspects of their new positions. In contrast, the more experienced administrators specified aspects such as evaluations/ observations, school finance, and time management as most challenging in their NSA period.

Beam et al. (2015) indicated that although there were differences in the perceptions of challenges faced by NSAs, the prevailing thread throughout, however, was the need for support. The support from supervisors was routinely noted by the NSAs as a need. Interestingly, the NSAs voiced that their sources of support came more from informal sources than from formal sources, or as Beam et al. (2015) stated, "personal reflective processes than prescriptive procedures" (p. 160). Therefore, whether formal or informal, the NSAs (Beam et al., 2015) noted the importance of having someone they could go to for mentoring and insights.

**The transition and preparation of the novice school assistant principal.** The transition from teaching to administration, specifically the vice-principal (VP), was examined in Armstrong's (2015) study. Armstrong specified that although VPs represent a majority of administrators, their experiences are often marginalized in literature and in the field. The researcher aimed to address the personal and professional challenges VPs encounter in their early careers. These challenges included inadequate preparation in management, ambiguous duties, and inappropriate support while transitioning into the role. Armstrong added that external challenges, or challenges created by governmental bodies, such as increased accountabilities, redefinitions of administrative roles, and shifts in policy, added to the complexity of the transition process. Armstrong concluded that the combination of these challenges created layers in the transition process that are difficult for beginning administrators to foresee and address.

The population of the study (Armstrong, 2015) consisted of four VPs in their first through third years of experience in administration. Data for the study were gathered through interviews and analyzed through using constant comparative methods with interviews. Analysis of the interviews allowed the researcher to identify similarities, differences, and emerging patterns in the data. Armstrong (2015) was able to distinguish the themes of role dissonance and dislocation, work intensity and stress, and supports and relationships in the participants' responses about their challenges.

Armstrong (2015) identified the pattern of dissonance and dislocation when all participants of the study identified feelings of non-belonging when beginning their new roles. The participants expressed that these feelings were attributed to leaving the close and established relationships of a teacher, and entering an environment of new expectations, and attitudes that accompanied the supervisory position. The VPs, also identified ambiguities in their roles such as unclear timetables and definitions of duties. The participants conveyed their belief that the new position would bring greater power and autonomy, but, in reality, they had less power and independence than in their teaching roles (Armstrong).

The participants (Armstrong, 2015) expressed that the increased work intensity and daily work volume were major contributors to their feelings of dissonance in their new positions. The frontline demands of having to respond immediately and effectively to situations was vastly different from the predictable timelines of teaching. The VPs voiced that the stress of the constant demands and lack of training in basic administrative technical tasks were indicators of

how unprepared they were to fulfill their new roles.

Armstrong (2015) stated, “The vice-principals’ early experiences of isolation, loss, and overload and the ongoing negative interactions with others motivated them to seek out new avenues of support” (p. 116). The VPs expressed they would intentionally seek out support from a wide range of colleagues in their networks to help resolve their feelings of inadequacy. Working with their administrative teams who helped shaped their mistakes into learning opportunities was noted by the participants. All participants identified the support and mentoring of their building principal as the most important aspect in their professional growth and development (Armstrong).

Armstrong (2015) concluded that as participants became acclimated to their new roles, a new sense of purpose emerged. The VPs’ increased sense of connectedness and adequacy was noted as key in building positive relationships with all stakeholders of the school community. Armstrong noted that with the proper supports, the participants were able to develop perspectives that allowed them to manage the responsibilities of their new roles.

Busch, MacNeil, and Baraniuk (2012) found that preparing novice assistant principals (APs) requires a combination of factors that includes knowledge of instructional areas, behaviors or skills needed, and attributes that are vital to a successful beginning experience. The study (Busch et al., 2012) was formulated around one specific question to APs to gather advice to aspiring administrators going into the AP role. The question was, “There is probably a lot of advice you could give to someone preparing to become a school assistant principal: but if there was one single piece of advice you could give, what would you advise?” (p. 44). In total 361 APs from Texas participated in the survey, with their responses being groups into three “advice” categories of knowledge, skills, and attributes.

The first category (Busch et al., 2012) of knowledge (43% of responses) was comprised from responses mentioning curriculum, instruction, being a lifelong learner, and learning from more experienced administrators. Next, the category of skills (37% of responses) was centered on skills such as developing relationships, being professional, being consistent, and providing support. Lastly, the category of attributes (20% of responses) focused on the responses that advise to develop traits that exemplify positivity, patience, and trust (Busch et al., 2012). Busch et al. (2015) stated that the findings of the study suggested that leadership preparation programs could further focus on leadership teachings that emphasized knowledge, skills, and attributes

required of a successful administrator.

Kearney and Herrington conducted two studies (2012, 2013) that focused on the effectiveness of university-based principal preparation programs for novice administrators entering the AP role. The first study (2012) focused on what the participating APs believed their preparation program did well and what could be refined. The researchers (Kearney & Herrington, 2012) stated, "It is the quality of the progression from teacher to assistant principal that will shape the mindset and beliefs of the school administrator, including their ability to reflect, their attitudes toward key constituencies served" (p. 80). Kearney and Herrington believed that this initial period of an administrator's career was the most critical in shaping the success and outlook for the rest of their careers.

Data for the study (Kearney & Herrington, 2012) was collected through surveys given to five APs on the effectiveness of their university training program. The responses from the APs were focused around what their program did well, what could be better implemented, and what advice they would have for future novice assistant principals. The positive feedback from the participants (Kearney & Herrington, 2012) revolved around "what really works" in schools. Aspects of the preparation program such as hearing from experienced guest speakers, on-site seminars, and focus groups were noted as key in gaining first-hand experience with what successful schools do. The APs also noted that knowledge gained modeling after successful principals and the networking relationships formed during the program helped carry their success forward when the program was completed.

The study (Kearney & Herrington, 2012) also examined what the participants felt could be refined about their programs to better prepare the aspiring administrators. The participants believed that their programs needed more real-world experiences and opportunities. The APs stated that they realized that volunteering and being involved in as many school functions as possible helped them as they began their new role (Kearney & Herrington). Another area noted was making sure that personal traits and skills of the aspiring administrator, were a good fit for the school he or she were going to enter.

Kearney and Herrington (2013) continued their research on the graduates from the university principal preparation program in a separate study. The study took place one year later, and followed the same protocol as their previous study, except with the added benefit that participants had more experience to form their perceptions. The researchers also framed the

second study around the finding from the first study that indicated the preparation program needed to provide more “realistic job previews” (RJPs). The study surveyed the administrators again on what the program did well and how it could improve. To gather evidence on RJPs, the second study added a question stating, “Can you give examples of interactions you have experienced on campus during your first year as a school administrator that may be useful as a teaching tool within our program?” (p.73).

Kearney and Herrington (2013) found that there was an overlap between what the university had done well and what could be done better. For example, the participants cited how much they learned from experienced school leaders speaking on real-life job situations, and in return, the participants mentioned more of these opportunities were needed. The response to the third question provided the researchers (Kearney & Herrington) with the ability to formulate “Realistic Job Preview” (RJP) scenarios around the three themes interactions with parents, safety and student discipline, and supervision. Through both studies, Kearney and Herrington summarized that the use of RJP practices helped all the beginning APs to be more cognizant, aware, and resilient in their new roles and responsibilities.

Current literature has continued to build upon the research of what are the ideal supports needed for novice APs to transition effectively into their new roles. This initial transition has great influence on their perceptions of school leadership in general. Research has indicated that APs’ perceptions of their impact on school success and achievement in areas of needed focus (Houchens, Niu, Zhang, Miller, & Norman, 2018; Morgan, 2018) Further research is needed on the responsibilities and roles of APs and what effect it has on their persona as present leaders in their schools, and their development as future leaders.

### **Responsibilities and Roles of Novice School Administrators**

Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012) examined the perceptions of new and experienced assistant principals (APs) about their job realities. Barnett et al. (2012) defined the role of the assistant principal as “the person who serves directly underneath the principal” (p. 92). The researchers also used the term by Watson “Niche Assistant Headship”, referring to the assistant principal and the varying roles the position may resemble depending on the school and leadership. (Barnett et al., 2012; in Watson, 2005). The purpose of the study was to understand the challenges and roles of APs and see how APs perceptions of the role change with experience.

Barnett et al. (2012) conducted semi-structured interviews with 103 APs, organized into novice (n=37) and experienced (n=67) AP groupings. First, APs were questioned about their greatest challenges in their roles. Novice and experienced APs identified work and time management as the greatest challenge. Both groups of APs expressed frustration in balancing time between many tasks such as attending meetings, answering messages, and striving to meet deadlines (Barnett et al., 2012). Challenges expressed by both groups were quite similar. However, the researchers distinguished small differences in key areas. For example, a) a greater percentage of novice APs (57%) rated time management as their greatest challenge than experienced APs (43%), b) experienced principals (9%) expressed concern over instructional matters at a greater rate than novice principals (4%), and c) experienced APs expressed at a higher rate (12%) that the physical/emotional strain of the job was the greatest challenge than their novice counterparts did (3%). Barnett et al. (2012) concluded the extra instructional pressure felt by experienced APs came from time being involved with increased student accountability and achievement.

The APs (Barnett et al., 2012) were also surveyed on responsibilities for which they felt they were adequately prepared. Three themes emerged that included working with people, understanding the expectations of the AP's role, and having important skills to perform the job. Novice APs noted feeling more prepared to deal with various school stakeholders than experienced APs. Some of the novice APs attributed their feelings of preparedness to their years in the classroom establishing relationships (Barnett et al., 2012).

Barnett et al. (2012) noted some of the areas in which APs felt confident when beginning the position, such as working with people, were areas that changed to "least prepared for" when adding an aspect such as "dealing with conflict". This aspect was attributed to a lack of preparation in dealing with conflicts involving other adults. Thus, the simple alteration of adding "conflict" with working with people can help explain why the APs in the study reported feeling both adequately and inadequately prepared in some of the same areas. These areas included a) working with people, b) understanding the job expectations of overseeing instruction, and c) managing their time and organizing tasks (Barnett et al., 2012). Barnett et al. (2012). concluded that because of the constant priority and diligence that these three areas require, they are what defines an AP's role.

Barnett et al. (2012) asserted that with the high turnover of principals across the nation,

developing APs is imperative. The researchers addressed the three areas of principal preparation programs, head principals, and the personal and professional attributes of the APs themselves, as critical improvement areas for developing APs. First, principal preparation programs could provide more real world experiences for aspiring principals. Next, principals could provide more support through job-embedded professional development to build APs' skills and self-efficacy. Lastly, the researchers (Barnett et al., 2012) stated the personal and professional attributes of the APs themselves have great impact on their leadership capabilities. The participants expressed that personal characteristics such as patience, emotional intelligence, and physical and emotional stamina, were critical in their development. To conclude, Barnett et al. (2012) stated by not addressing the areas of concern, "we run the risk of not capitalizing on one of the greatest untapped leadership resources in our school systems" (p.123).

Hunt (2011) conducted a study to help define the present state of the AP in terms of professional advancement. The mixed methods study was executed through an online survey of questions that were both scaled and open-ended. The survey measured the attitudes and desires of 17 participating APs in southwest Illinois, to better determine issues affecting APs in terms of their professional advancement (Hunt).

Hunt (2011) indicated that the participating APs' responsibilities were focused supervising events, teacher evaluation, and student discipline. When queried about areas in which they felt least comfortable, the APs responded that they felt the least comfortable in dealing with building budgeting issues. Hunt noted that this aspect was not surprising as budgeting and finance are often areas for which little training is provided to principals. Other areas that principals expressed little preparation for were special education, athletics, and scheduling (Hunt).

Hunt concluded that the APs surveyed in the southwest region of Illinois had professional development (PD) available to them. Most PD opportunities targeted administrative responsibilities, but had little to do with the AP transitioning into the principal role. Hunt determined from responses in the surveys that mentoring could be a great opportunity to improve in the development of the APs. Hunt also stated that principal preparation programs should place more emphasis on the AP position, as this would be the position through which most aspiring administrators would enter the field.

Sun and Shoho (2017) conducted a quantitative study of 529 APs in Pennsylvania and

Texas to examine difference in value of 56 school activities rated by the APs. Notably, of the 529 participating APs, 371 were novice APs in between years 0-4 (Sun & Shoho). The researchers (Sun & Shoho) aimed to determine in what activities APs perceive they should be involved for school success, compared to the traditional managerial roles. Also, the researchers wanted to determine if there were significant differences in ratings for what APs deem as important for success when their gender, age, and experience level are factored in.

Sun and Shoho (2017) first examined what activities did the participating APs deemed important to teaching and learning, which was the overarching question to the study. The researchers found that instruction-related activities were rated the highest. Areas such as observing classroom teaching, reviewing teacher performance, and promoting a learning-centered environment were noted. Sun and Shoho stated that the result was not surprising as similar results had been found in prior research (Sun, 2011; Hunt, 2011; Reed, 2011). The researchers recommended that principals provide opportunities to allow APs to be more involved in instructional activities.

To answer the second and third research questions of the study, Sun & Shoho (2017) analyzed the effects of gender, age, and experience level in administration on the responses from the APs. The researchers found evidence that female AP participants valued instructional leadership at a higher rate than their male counterparts in the study. The researchers noted this result was found in another study on APs conducted by Hausman, Nebeker, and McCreary (2002). This result could be attributed to how duties are divided by the head principal among the school's APs. Age did have an overall significant impact on what the APs found as important. Responses to the third research question by the APs showed that the beginning APs valued instructionally-focused practices more so than other practices. The responses from the novice APs indicated that their principal preparation programs may have been more centered on instruction than previous generations (Sun & Shoho).

The goal of the study (Suh & Shoho, 2017) was to help determine if activities valued by APs for school success matched their responsibilities. The researchers also analyzed how age, gender, and experience, affected the APs' responses. Sun and Shoho concluded that the APs had a desire to be more involved in school activities, specifically those involving instructional leadership. The researchers also concluded that age, gender, and experience level did not have an effect on what the APs valued in their role.

The researchers in the previously mentioned studies (i.e., Barnett, Shoho, & Okilwa, 2017; Hunt, 2011; Sun & Shoho, 2017) analyzed the importance of the roles and responsibilities through perceptions of the APs. The studies did not touch upon the needs of the AP in rural areas. The following section will attempt to outline the literature on this topic.

### **Supports and Professional Development for Rural School Administrators**

The professional development of principals is a new and growing area of educational research. In a search engine using EBSCOhost with the key words “Professional Development” and “Principal”, 3024 results came up. When one narrows the focus to “professional development of assistant principals”, the number of results changes to 124. Further narrowing the focus to “the supports and professional development of novice assistant principals in rural areas” significantly reduces the amount of research available.

Wieczorek and Manard (2018) conducted a study of six novice, rural, public school principals and their experiences with instructional leadership in the context of leading rural schools. The researchers asserted that rural school principals are in unique positions that often serve multiple roles in the school and small community. They stated, “Due to these contextual attributes, rural school principal leadership is a unique challenge for all principals and can be especially challenging for novice principals.” (Wieczorek & Manard, p. 1). The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with participating principals about their personal histories, professional experiences, and perspectives on their present duties and job roles.

The researchers (Wieczorek & Manard, 2017) examined educational leadership challenges participants encountered in their transition to the principal position. The first challenge acknowledged was the added responsibility of increased visibility and stature of being a principal in a rural community. Wieczorek and Manard noted that principals are important members of all communities, but in rural areas, this connection is often more personal, multi-generational, and much less autonomous. For example, for rural school principals, a task such as going to the grocery store may mean having to answer multiple questions from parents. The participants of the study acknowledged that the increased pressure of being a rural school leader forced the principals to develop their leadership attributes in certain areas.

The second research question (Wieczorek & Manard, 2017) related to the principals’ responses to the challenges, and how they developed their practices as instructional leaders with

the context of a rural school setting. A common theme that emerged was that the principals were focused on building relationships and establishing trust with their teachers, staff, and greater school community. The researchers noted that the principals realized through building relationships and an environment of collaboration, a positive school culture could be established. Once that foundation was in place, other aspects of instructional leadership could be addressed (Wieczorek & Manard).

The principals participating in the study (Wieczorek & Manard, 2017) shared that economic and resource constraints are common challenges they all faced. The researchers stated that a challenge unique to rural schools is the aspect of building a positive image in the surrounding community with the goal being to recruit or retain students. The purpose behind the recruitment is that the more students a school has, the more money it will draw from the state. Finances for schools in various situations are tight, but this aspect is magnified when applied to rural school settings (Wieczorek & Manard).

The researchers (Wieczorek & Manard, 2017) noted that an impact of “stretched” resources was a single school leader having to fulfill multiple roles traditionally filled by multiple people or positions. Principals in the study shared having multiple roles such as being their district’s Title I coordinator or director of special education. (Wieczorek & Manard).

Wieczorek and Manard (2017) concluded that principals may not be prepared for the unique tasks and high community expectations that leading a rural school presents. The researchers recommended significant shifts in the preparation, recruitment, and development of rural school leaders. These recommendations were directed at district school boards, state policy makers, and higher education principal preparation programs (Wieczorek & Manard).

Enomoto’s (2012) qualitative study on rural school assistant principals (APs) described a professional development (PD) program developed through a university and school district partnership to prepare newly appointed APs for their work. Enomoto collected data for the study through a participant-observer method in a year-long program. Through this research method, Enomoto was directly involved in all aspects of the professional development delivered to the new APs.

Enomoto’s (2012) objective was to detail how a rural school district in Hawaii provided PD to socialize the newly appointed APs into the aspects of being a rural school administrator. To document the socialization process, data was collected through observations, interviews,

meeting transcripts, and documents related to the school and school district. The researcher (Enomoto) also conducted meetings with the superintendent and the mentor consultant to discuss the research data for the program, to protect against research bias.

The PD program was developed and delivered focusing on a) content knowledge, b) application to school standards and systems, c) networking and conversations with peers, teachers, and principals, and d) reflections for continuous learning (Enomoto, 2012). These aspects were discussed at monthly meetings for the program. The researcher documented how these aspects were able and not able to be addressed throughout the program. For example, reflections were supposed to be a routine part of the AP meetings, but at the end of a long day, the participants were eager to go home thus, the APs kept their responses brief. Also, because of urgent happenings at school, some of the APs or other members of leadership were not able to attend the meetings (Enomoto)

Enomoto (2012) observed that interruptions and AP responses to the PD program had a great impact on the program. Interruptions to the program's meeting schedule became a norm during the duration of the program. Participants of the program such as district leaders, presenters, and the APs, were all absent from various meetings due to other responsibilities and priorities (Enomoto).

The APs responses to the PD was also noted in the study (Enomoto, 2012). The program attempted to teach several aspects however, the individual response from the APs in the program differed. To follow up on the PD training, the APs were supposed to complete ten observations a month however, most did not complete this objective, choosing to complete other administrative duties instead. By the end of the program, this important component had been removed because of time constraints created by the APs' other responsibilities (Enomoto). The extent of the interruptions can be understood through Enomoto's statement, "Despite the planning and commitment to professional development, the interruptions and modifications to the schedule ruled the day" (p.272).

As a result of the study, Enomoto (2012) made recommendations that included increased efforts to maintain program consistency and better communication with central office in program delivery. The researcher (Enomoto) also discussed that PD for the APs may need to be considered over the long term rather than just a year-long intervention. Implications for research included a continued focus on methods of socialization for beginning APs, and further research

into the role district school offices, universities, and agencies take on in creating an environment to socialize novice APs into their roles.

### **Mentoring and Coaching of Novice School Administrators**

The importance of mentorships in school administration cannot be understated. Principals often cite how crucial the mentorship from other school leaders was when beginning their careers as building administrators (Barnett, Shoho, & Okilwa, 2017; Daresh, 2004, 2007; Malone, 2001; Marshall & Hooley, 2016; Mullins & Cairns, 2001). However, with the time-consuming daily tasks that most administrators face, seeking mentoring or providing guidance as a mentor is often not a priority (Barnett et al., 2017; Malone, 2002; Petrides, Jimes, & Karaglani, 2014).

Researchers have noted that, given the future leadership roles of NSAs, their mentoring and development is critical (Armstrong 2014; Barnett et al., 2017; Malone, 2002; Petrides et al., 2017). It can be argued that the mentoring of NSAs is more important currently than in previous generations (Daresh, 2007; Duncan & Stock, 2012; Liang & Shaw, 2016; Malone, 2002). In his study Daresh stated, “Principals of today face many new challenges that their predecessors did not... Community demands for involvement... Societal changes... Above all, the expectation that principals focus nearly all of their attention on improving student learning and achievement” (p. 22).

The NSA can encounter challenges brought upon by inexperience and lack of knowledge of what to do in situational dilemmas (Liang & Shaw, 2016; Sciarappa & Mason, 2014). NSAs can quickly realize that what they learned in principal preparation programs is only the beginning of what they will need to know in order to become successful school leaders (Liang & Shaw, 2016). Liang and Shaw argued that mentors can provide an important link between the general responsibilities of an NSA and how those practices will provide understanding into future leadership responsibilities. Mentors providing this link to NSAs to support their leadership development can be vital to the socialization of the NSA (Sciarappa & Mason, 2014).

Mentor selection and preparation has proven to be an integral part of the mentoring process for NSAs. In their study, Liang and Shaw interviewed mentors from the Kansas Education Leadership Institute (KELI) program. The KELI was a collaborative partnership between multiple state universities, governmental agencies, and professional organizations within Kansas. KELI provided mentoring to new school building leaders. Mentors and protégés

for the KELI program were selected by their district superintendents. Chosen mentors received training on mentoring and coaching practices to enhance skills in listening, communicating positive intent, and establishing safe environments to provide reflective feedback in a safe environment to the protégé (Liang & Shaw, 2016).

In Daresh's (2007) study, mentors were selected from retired principals who were known as leaders with experience and as leaders of effective schools. Mentors were not given any training concerning the developmental needs of their mentees. Mentors specified that a preliminary understanding of the mentee's needs would have been helpful in the initial relationship and would have quickened the socialization of the novice administrator into his or her new role.

As part of Daresh's (2007) research, the mentors stated that instructional leadership was a must for present day leaders. The mentors made it a priority to spend as much time as possible focusing on instructional leadership with the mentees. At the same time, the study indicated that the new administrators needed to know how to be building managers first, before they could be stabilized in an instructional leadership role. Mentors also recommended that districts develop plans where the initial selection of administrators would put selecting instructional leaders at the forefront of selecting candidates (Daresh). Daresh noted that transitioning the mindset of new principals from building manager to instructional leader was not a simple task. Daresh offered the following statement from a principal in the study as an example: "You can't lead instruction if you don't have a job...Be a good manager, and then you can afford to be a great leader" (p. 25).

In balancing the various duties of a school principal, NSAs greatly value the insights of an experienced mentor (Duncan & Stock, 2012; Liang & Shaw, 2016; Sciarappa & Mason, 2014; Southern Regional Education Board, 2007). In Duncan and Stock's (2012) study on the mentoring and coaching of rural school leaders in Wyoming, principals of varying experience levels were surveyed about their perceptions of mentoring and coaching. Of the 28 beginning school leaders surveyed, 97% indicated that mentoring was important.

In Duncan and Stock's (2012) study, principals surveyed were grouped into four ranges of administrator experience levels, including beginning (1-3 years), intermediate (4-7 years), experienced (8-15 years), and very experienced (16-35 years). Principals were surveyed about their perceptions of supports received in the two areas of professional socialization and

organizational socialization. In the area of professional socialization, Duncan and Stock found significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the means of perceptions of the importance of mentoring between the beginning principal group and other experience groups. Professional socialization included using data to drive decisions, legal issues, and school budget and finance (Duncan & Stock).

Duncan and Stock (2012) also found significant differences between the groups in the support areas of organizational socialization. Significant differences were found in areas such as working with the school board, working with the community, and working with difficult staff. Beginning principals rated the value of mentoring significantly higher than seasoned principals (> 7 years' experience). Interestingly, experienced principals in the study rated the importance of mentoring higher than the beginning group in the areas of instructional leadership and creating a collegial environment. To emphasize the importance of mentoring to all groups, Duncan and Stock noted that there was much commonality in the areas that the varying groups considered important. Mentoring in areas such as working with difficult faculty members and data-driven decision-making were rated high by all experience groups (Duncan & Stock).

Sciarappa and Mason (2014) conducted a study on a national mentoring program for new principals to evaluate the perceived efficacy of the program. The principal mentoring program conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), provided support services to varying groups of school leaders such as assistant principals and aspiring principals. The mentoring program was "designed to ensure that highly trained mentors work with novice school administrators to develop job-embedded skills, strengthen competencies, and build leadership capacity" (p. 55). The researchers were motivated to conduct this study because the shortages created for qualified principal candidates by retirement and attrition of principals, and the need to provide quality training to the novice administrators as they begin their career.

Sciarappa and Mason (2014) collected data through anonymous surveys collected from 54 participating novice principals. As part of the findings, the researchers were able to note that of the protégés, 78% were very satisfied with the mentoring they received, and 18% were somewhat satisfied. As part of their findings, Sciarappa and Mason were able to conclude that a great majority of the protégés (68%) felt the mentoring they received in instructional leadership was most important. The participants in the study indicated the most important improvement to mentoring of beginning school leaders would be to ensure all the beginning leaders did receive

mentoring. Sciarappa and Mason explained how the participating novice school leaders believed their mentoring was important to their school leadership development and felt the mentoring program was effective.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to describe the nature of support and professional development activities (PD) available for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. The study defined NSAs as novice principals or novice assistant principals in their first, second, or third year of school administration. Southwestern Virginia was defined as the 25 counties and 9 cities and or towns labeled as Region 6 and Region 7 by the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE, 2018). Also see Appendix G for a listing of the 34 school divisions in VDOE's Region 6 and 7.

This chapter describes the methodology that was used in the study. The chapter contains the following aspects of the study: research design, instrumentation design and validation, population and selection of participants, informed signed consent, research questions, data gathering, and data analysis.

#### **Research Design**

The design of the study was a qualitative study of perceptions of the support and PD activities available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The study focused on the qualitative data to describe the unique nature of the "phenomenon" being researched. Giorgi, Giorgi, and Morley (2017) defined the descriptive phenomenological approach in qualitative research as "describing the experiences being lived through...then to consider what is given not as actually existing but merely as something present to consciousness" (p. 180). Therefore, the qualitative research in this study was developed from the perceptions presented by the participants on their experiences as NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The research design for this study allowed for data to be collected through the analysis of those perceptions of the NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

The significance of the phenomenological approach was explained by Marshall and Rossman (2016) as "the central assumption that there is an *essence* to an experience that is shared with others who have also had that experience." (p.18). For this study, the "essence" or core meaning (Patton, 2015) was examined from the experiences of the participating NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The researcher examined the participants' experiences as unique, then

compared their experiences to identify patterns about the support and PD activities available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

Utilizing the phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews were conducted to research the “individual lived experiences” (Marshall & Rossman, 2016, p. 17) of NSAs in the southwestern Virginia. Through these experiences, the researcher examined the participants’ perceptions of the supports and professional development available for and needed by NSAs on “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Marshall & Rossman; Patton, 2002, p. 104). Data were examined to determine if there were what Longhofer and Floresh (2013) described as “phenomenological practice gaps” (p. 21) or said another way, if there was a gap between the knowledge of the supports and PD for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia, and the actual practice of it.

### **Instrument Design and Validation**

The instrument design was developed by the researcher using an interview protocol to collect data (see Appendix A). Information were collected through a qualitative design with qualitative data collection on the perceptions of the supports and PD available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The first question of the interview protocol was an introductory question acquiring background information. The following fifteen questions were the central focus of the study. The interview protocol instrument began with an introductory question, with the following 14 questions separated into two sections focusing on the nature of support and PD activities available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

The first question of the interview protocol was an introductory question acquiring background information about the participant. The remaining interview questions were separated into two sections. Section One included seven questions centered on the supports available for and needed by NSAs in southwest Virginia. Section Two included seven questions focused on the PD available for and needed by NSAs in southwest Virginia. Two of the seven interview questions in the professional development (PD) section were adapted from an interview protocol instrument used in a similar study (Bizzell, 2011) on the nature of PD for principals in the Appalachian region of Virginia. For this study, a table was developed linking interview questions with the study’s research sub-questions (see Table 3.1 on p.33 & Appendix B). The 14 interview

questions from the two sections on support and PD activities were aligned with one of the sub-questions to confirm the practicality of the interview questions in the study.

The interview instrument for this study was tested for ease of understanding, presence of bias, and time considerations. The interview instrument was presented to individuals with prior NSA experiences such as practicing principals and school central office personnel, none of whom are included in the study population. The practice interviews took place by phone, while being timed, to test for time considerations. Also, while giving the practice interviews, it was determined that the sequential order of questions needed to be rearranged to allow for a better transition of conversation and answers. Feedback provided resulted in a revision and edit of how the questions were presented.

### **Research Questions**

This study was directed by the following primary research question: What is the nature of supports and professional development available for and needed by novice principals (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia? The primary research question was categorized by the following sub-questions to further clarify the “lived experiences” (Patton, 2015, p. 433) of the NSAs, following the phenomenological approach of the study.

- 1) What support activities did these NSAs receive?
- 2) What professional development activities did these NSAs receive?
- 3) Did the NSAs think these activities effectively prepared them for their school administrator roles (principals or assistant principals)?
- 4) In what areas did the NSAs want and need to have increased support or professional development activities?
- 5) What are some perceived barriers to accessing support or professional development activities as a NSA in southwest Virginia?

In following the phenomenological approach of the study, data needed to be gathered that thoroughly captured and described the experiences of the participants. To gather such data, in-depth interviews took place to accurately describe the experiences of NSAs and their perceptions toward the supports and PD provided for and needed by them (Patton, 2015). The interview questions were developed directly from the research questions to analyze the insights, perceptions, and experiences of the NSAs in southwest Virginia. Each interview question was

developed to determine the nature of the supports and PD provided for and needed by NSAs in southwest Virginia. Qualitative data were collected from the interviews to analyze perceptions about the supports and PD activities provided, and which activities were deemed most effective by the NSAs in their development.

Table 3.1

*Research Sub-Question/Interview Protocol Alignment Table*

<b>Research Sub-Questions</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
What support activities did the NSAs receive?	Will be answered in interview questions 1 and 5.
What professional development activities did the NSAs receive?	Will be answered in interview questions 8 and 12.
Did the NSAs think these activities effectively prepared them for their school administrator roles (principals or assistant principals)?	Will be answered in interview questions 2, 3, 9, and 10.
In what areas did the NSAs want and need to have increased support or professional development activities?	Will be answered in interview questions 4, 6, 11, and 13.
What are some perceived barriers to accessing support or professional development activities as a NSA in southwest Virginia?	Will be answered in interview questions 7 and 14.

## Population and Selection of Participants

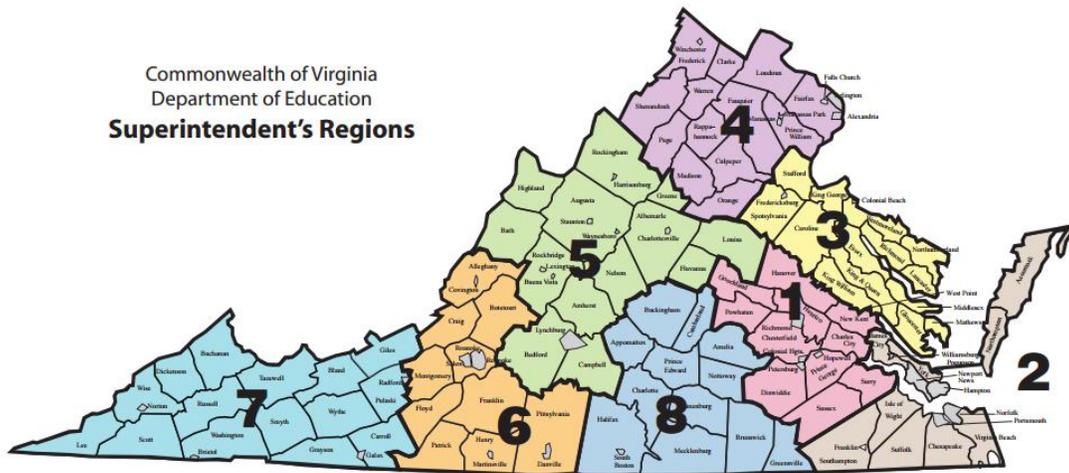


Figure 3.1. VDOE superintendent's regions. (Southwest Virginia represented by Region 6 and Region 7) (Source: [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/directories/va\\_region\\_map.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/directories/va_region_map.pdf))

Novice principals and novice assistant principals (NSAs) at public schools in southwest Virginia were chosen for this study to focus on the supports and professional development (PD) provided for and needed by NSAs to help them transition into their new roles and become better school leaders. NSAs have been described in research as school administrators with no school administration experience to their first three years in the profession. (Nelson, Colina, & Boone, 2008; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Tredway, Brill, & Hernandez, 2007). The present study included NSAs in their first three years of school administration. The participants were NSAs in one of the 34 school divisions included in the study's defined area of VDOE's Regions 6 and 7 in southwestern Virginia.

### Informed Signed Consent

The study protocol was approved by the researcher's dissertation committee at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech). The study protocol was then submitted to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Virginia Tech for approval. Approval was received by the IRB of Virginia Tech on May 1, 2019 (see Appendix J). Emails were then sent to each superintendent (see Appendix C) in the VDOE's Regions 6 and 7 school divisions (34 school divisions). The emails requested information about who were NSAs in their school divisions as well as permissions to contact the NSAs.

Once permission from school division superintendents to contact the NSAs, and the number of potential candidates for the study were known, a goal of 20 participating NSAs was set. From the potential candidate list, the NSAs were randomly selected to participate in the study. Separate emails containing the participant intent form (see Appendix D) were sent to the NSAs to obtain their agreement to participate in the study. The participant intent form (see Appendix D) contained the purpose of the study, a section explaining the confidentiality of their responses, time considerations, directions on how to follow up with the researcher if they wished to participate, and acknowledgements of their consideration to participate in the study.

The informed consent form (see Appendix E) was also attached in the email sent to all prospective participants. The informed consent form contained the purpose of the study, procedures of the interview, the interview protocol, and a section explaining confidentiality of their responses and the study. NSAs who were willing to participate were asked to return the signed consent form, or were allowed to give verbal consent through a phone conversation that had taken place between the researcher and the participant. NSAs were given one week for response. If there was not a response, the researcher sent a follow-up email to the possible candidates. If a response was not received from the NSAs, the researcher attempted to contact possible participants by phone. If an NSA refused to participate in the study or could not be contacted, another drawing from the originally unchosen candidates occurred to select another participant. After agreement from the NSAs indicated by verbal consent to the informed consent form (see Appendix E) was acquired, then an interview time by phone was established between the researcher and the participant.

To ensure legitimacy of the study, NSAs participating in the study needed to agree to the following criteria: a) participants were willing to participate in an individual interview lasting no longer than one hour, b) participants were willing to sign an informed consent indicating their honesty in answering questions, c) participants having the interview recorded, and d) participants understood they would not receive compensation for participating in the study. Public school novice administrators were chosen as the population for the study to further ensure demographics are comparable for participants of the study adding reliability to the results. All preceding criteria were used to analyze the participants' perceptions regarding the supports and professional development provided for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

## Data Gathering

The primary objective of this study was to gather data on the nature of supports and professional development (PD) available for and needed by novice school principals (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. Once permissions were granted by the researcher's dissertation committee and the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Virginia Tech, participants were contacted by email or phone to establish interview dates to complete the interviews.

Qualitative data were collected through an interview protocol instrument. The interview instrument consisted of one introductory question, seven questions examining the support activities for and needed by NSAs, and seven questions analyzing the PD activities for and needed by NSAs (see Appendix A). Interviews were conducted by phone, with randomly selected NSAs to collect close insight and qualitative data on their perceptions. Interviews were conducted in semi-structured and open-ended fashion. The semi-structured prompts were aligned to gather specific data typical of semi-structured interviews. The open-ended prompts allowed for more flexibility and exploratory responses and insights from both the participants and researcher (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The interview prompts were sent to the participants one week prior to the interviews, allowing for efficiency and quality of responses (Marshall & Rossman, 2016) The interview prompts were structured in the following format:

- The introduction question gathered data on participants' background in education, in administration, their first administrative position, their current administrative position, and their connections to their present school's community.
- Seven questions gathered data through participants' perceptions of the support available for and needed by NSAs. These interview questions focused on a) support activities provided for NSAs, b) supports needed as a NSA, c) things done to support oneself as a NSA, and d) factors limiting access to supports as a NSA. (Qualitative Data)
- Seven questions gathered data through participants' perceptions on the professional development available for and needed by NSAs. These interview questions focused on a) professional development activities provided for NSAs, b) professional development activities needed as a NSA, c) things done to develop oneself

professionally as a NSA, d) factors limiting access to professional development as a NSA. (Qualitative Data)

The interview format was appropriate to the study because the interviews allowed for such benefits as a) inquiry or follow-up questions on unforeseen insights presented by the participants, b) observations by the researcher (in this study through hearing) allowed further understanding of significance of perceptions by the participants, and c) significant data was gained through the use of interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2016).

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using an interview protocol instrument created by the researcher. Merriam and Tisdale (2016) stated the process of data analysis is “making sense” (p. 221) out of the data. The qualitative nature of the study was to help “make sense” of the data through an inductive and deductive data analysis.

Inductive data analysis secures an important part of qualitative data analysis, or as Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated, “The search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes” (p. 214). The inductive data analysis took place through a thorough review of interview transcripts that were recorded and transcribed verbatim. In-vivo coding was used to elicit the “real-life” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 218) and unique experiences of the participants. Emerging themes and patterns relevant to the research question was documented by analytic memos and sub-coding. Analytic memos and sub-coding allowed for identifying gaps and linkages in the data (Marshall & Rossman).

The deductive data analysis has been described as identifying themes and patterns “according to an existing framework” (Patton, 2002, p. 453). The semi-structured interview format helped to produce responses from the participants that are easily coded due to their comparability and organization. The nature of the study allowed for patterns to emerge and reflect the participants’ experiences unique to NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The coded responses were categorized for greater insight into the experiences of the participants.

### **Data Management**

The qualitative data from the interviews were taken through a recording device. The data were saved and secured in multiple locations. These data were saved and secured using Google Drive, the researcher’s laptop computer, and USB drives. Collective data of the study were only

accessible to the researcher. Invitations were extended to all participants to examine the written transcript concerning accuracy of their individual interviews. Electronic folders on the researcher's laptop computer, and in Google Drive were developed to help manage and secure data. Spreadsheets were created using Google Sheets through Google Drive to store and manage statistical data. The researcher was able to identify themes and patterns in the data by analyzing and categorizing the data for each interview question.

### **Summary**

The focus of the study was on the nature of supports and professional development provided for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. Interviews were conducted using an interview protocol developed by the researcher. A qualitative design was used to gather data to examine and identify supports and PD activities provided for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. By conducting in-depth interviews, the researcher was able to determine which specific supports and PD activities were provided more frequently among the participating NSAs. Conclusions were drawn about which support and PD activities the participants perceived as being most effective in their development as NSAs. Through inductive data analysis, the qualitative data were coded to find emerging themes, patterns, and practice gaps in the nature of the supports and professional development activities provided for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

#### **Introduction**

The findings of the study are described in this chapter. The objective of the study was to identify the perceptions of support and professional development (PD) activities available for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. To complete this objective, 22 NSAs were identified from VDOE's Regions Six and Seven in southwestern Virginia (see Appendix G). The NSAs were then interviewed to obtain their perceptions of the support and PD activities available for and needed by them as NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The following procedures were used to acquire NSA information from school divisions in southwestern Virginia (also described in *Table 4.1* on pg. 40).

The 34 school superintendents of Regions Six and Seven were asked, in an email, to identify the NSAs in their divisions (see Appendix C). If superintendents did not reply to the first email, a follow up email was sent to the superintendents seeking NSA information again. If superintendents responded to one of the emails and identified NSAs, a request for permission to contact the NSAs was in the same email. Sixteen of the thirty-four superintendents (47% participation rate) emailed back permission, specific names, and contact information of the NSAs in their school divisions. Three of the sixteen school divisions indicated there were no NSAs in their school division eligible to participate in the study. One of the sixteen school divisions sent NSA information past the deadline for submission. Therefore, twelve school divisions in southwestern Virginia provided NSA names and contact information.

From the twelve school divisions that provided information, the researcher was able to contact an NSA from 11 of those school divisions. The one remaining school division indicated there was one NSA available to participate. In the course of the study, information was provided that the NSA in that division had lost an immediate family member. Therefore, efforts to contact that NSA were stopped by the researcher. In total, 11 school divisions of southwestern Virginia had NSAs participate in the study.

Table 4.1

*Procedures to Acquire NSA Information from School Divisions*

<b>Public School Divisions of Southwest Virginia (n = 34)</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
Region 6 (R6) School Divisions	15	44
Region 7 (R7) School Divisions	19	56
<b>Adjustments to number of School Divisions (n = 16)</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
R6 Public School Divisions	15	100
<b>R6 School Divisions that returned NSA information</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>67</b>
R6 School Divisions that did not return NSA information	6	33
R7 Public School Divisions	19	100
<b>R7 School Divisions that returned NSA information</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>37</b>
R7 School Divisions that did not return NSA information	12	63
<b>School Divisions with NSAs Participating (n = 11)</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
R6 School Divisions who returned NSA information	9	100
<b>R6 School Divisions that had NSAs participate in the study</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>67</b>
R6 school division that had no NSAs	2	22
R6 school division NSA information came in after deadline	1	11
R7 School Divisions who returned NSA information	7	100
<b>R7 School Divisions that had NSAs participate in the study</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>71</b>
R7 school division NSA could not be reached	1	14
R7 school division that had no NSAs	1	14

The following section details the procedures used to create the sample of NSAs that participated in the study and are detailed in *Table 4.2* on page 41. From the 34 school divisions in southwestern Virginia, 12 school divisions provided information about NSAs that could be possible participants. A total of 48 eligible NSAs were identified from those 12 school divisions. If a division had more than one eligible NSA (i.e., five NSAs in a school division), the NSA's name for that school division was randomly selected. An NSA from 11 of the 12 school divisions that provided possible participant information was interviewed for the study.

The study took place during the summer of 2019. Therefore, some of the NSAs were on vacation or out of the building when an attempted contact was made. However, many of the NSAs that participated expressed that it was easier for them to be part of the study because of the summer period. The researcher began the study by attempting to acquire each NSA’s agreement to participate through email. After not getting a response from the first 9 NSAs emailed, the researcher decided to contact the eligible NSAs by phone. Through contacting the NSAs by phone, a greater participation rate from the NSAs was obtained. If an NSA participated by phone, a formal email was still sent to the NSAs for documentation purposes.

As was noted previously, 48 NSAs were identified as eligible to participate in the study from the 48 NSAs, at least one NSA was randomly selected and interviewed from each of the 11 school divisions. Another 11 NSAs were able to be randomly selected and interviewed from the remaining NSAs. Therefore, a total sample of 22 NSAs from southwestern Virginia were selected and participated in the study. Table 4.2 below outlines the process and procedures used to develop the sample of participants for this study.

Table 4.2

*Process to Acquire Profile of the Sample of NSAs*

<b>NSA information from Region 6 &amp; 7 of Virginia (n = 48)</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
Region 6 (R6) NSAs identified as eligible	34	74
Region 7 (R7) NSAs identified as eligible	14	26
<b>Adjustments to NSA Population (n = 22)</b>	<b><u>n</u></b>	<b>%</b>
R6 NSAs identified as eligible	34	100
<b>R6 NSAs that participated in the study</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>47</b>
R6 NSAs that could not be contacted	18	53
R7 NSAs identified as eligible	14	100
<b>R7 NSAs that participated in the study</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>43</b>
R7 NSAs that could not be contacted	8	57

At the beginning of the interview process, permission to record the interviews for transcription was obtained from the participants. Interviews were recorded and transcribed by utilizing the online transcription service of www.temi.com. The transcriptions were then listened

to while being read to check for accuracy of the data. The transcribed interviews were copied and pasted (one through twenty-two) into one Word document to allow for easier search and identification of themes and patterns. Themes and patterns could be identified through an inductive data analysis. The inductive data analysis took place through a search for general statements that identified relationships and patterns (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). For example, the theme of having a mentor as a support was identified in Interview Question 1. The pattern was identified through documenting how often this support was noted in Interview Question 1 throughout the Word document containing the interviews (see Appendix H). Characters such as mentors, principal, networking and finance were used as searches in the Word document to collect data throughout the coding process. The data were then collected and recorded into a Microsoft Excel document for organized reference. The data were utilized to respond to the major research questions listed below.

- 1) What professional development activities did the NSAs receive?
- 2) What support activities did the NSAs receive?
- 3) Did the NSAs think the activities effectively prepared them for their school administrator roles (principals or assistant principals)?
- 4) In what areas did the NSAs want and need to have increased support or professional development activities?
- 5) What are some perceived barriers to accessing support or professional development activities as a NSA in southwest Virginia?

The remainder of this chapter will report the findings from the interviews conducted. For each interview question, a table specifying key points from each NSA response has been provided as an abbreviated response.

## **Findings**

### **Introduction/Demographics Survey Questions, Item 1:**

*Tell me a little about yourself in the following demographics question. A) How long have you been in education? B) How long have you been in school administration? C) What was your first school administrative position? D) What is your current school administrative position?*

As noted in Table 4.3 on page 44, the NSAs interviewed averaged 1.8 years in school administration and an average of 15 years in education. Throughout the interviews, many of the

NSAs stated that their overall experience in education benefitted them as new school administrators. NSA 16 stated his time as a school counselor helped him communicate with students and parents about difficult situations. NSA 5 reported her time as an instructional coordinator created opportunities for her to provide instructional leadership to teachers before her time as an NSA.

Sixteen of the twenty-two NSAs were presently assistant principals (APs). Six of the NSAs were principals at the time of the study. Twenty-one of the twenty-two NSAs began school administration as APs. One NSA began school administration directly in the head principal role. Sixteen of the NSAs participating were from VDOE's Region Six, while six of the NSAs were from Region Seven. The participants were NSAs in 11 different school divisions in southwestern Virginia, as represented by the column *Division Study* in *Table 4.3* below. In the table below, two columns contain the acronym LCI. LCI represents a Virginia locality's *local composite index*, or measure of wealth. The locality's ability to provide for its educational programming is often measured by its local composite index. Hence, the lower the LCI, the poorer the school division. The column *LCI Rank in VA* below (see *Table 4.3*) represents that school division's overall local composite index rank out of 134 school divisions in Virginia. Twenty of the twenty-two participants were NSAs in school divisions that rank in or below the 42nd percentile for total LCI among Virginia school divisions. (see Appendix I for complete listings of VDOE school division LCIs)

Appendix F contains specific Region 6 and 7 school division names and the school divisions' LCI percentile in Virginia. Also, Appendix F contains the average daily membership (ADM) count of each school division in VDOE Region 6 and Region 7. ADM is determined by dividing the total student daily membership by the number of days school was in session (VDOE, 2019b). A size of a school division is often measured by its ADM. Therefore, the lower the ADM, the smaller the school division.

Table 4.3

*Item 1: Participant Demographics*

Description	VDOE Region	Division Study	LCI Rank in VA	LCI	First Pos.	Current Pos.	Years in Adm.	Years in Educ.
NSA 1	6	1	99	0.2423	AP	Prin	1	29
NSA 2	6	2	124	0.2253	AP	Prin	2	13
NSA 3	6	2	124	0.2253	AP	AP	2.5	14
NSA 4	6	2	124	0.2253	AP	Prin	3	17
NSA 5	6	3	129	0.2135	Prin	Prin	2	12
NSA 6	6	3	129	0.2135	AP	AP	1	18
NSA 7	6	3	129	0.2135	AP	AP	2	17
NSA 8	6	4	43	0.392	AP	AP	2	13
NSA 9	6	4	43	0.392	AP	Prin	2	9
NSA 10	6	5	117	0.2443	AP	AP	1	10
NSA 11	6	5	117	0.2443	AP	AP	.5	11
NSA 12	6	6	78	0.362	AP	AP	2	8
NSA 13	6	6	78	0.362	AP	AP	1	16
NSA 14	6	6	78	0.362	AP	AP	3	18
NSA 15	6	6	78	0.362	AP	AP	1	9
NSA 16	6	6	78	0.362	AP	AP	2	11
NSA 17	7	7	98	0.2922	AP	AP	1	14
NSA 18	7	8	84	0.3192	AP	Prin	3	20
NSA 19	7	9	123	0.2322	AP	AP	2	14
NSA 20	7	10	127	0.2174	AP	AP	2	23
NSA 21	7	11	109	0.2624	AP	AP	2	22
NSA 22	7	11	109	0.2624	AP	AP	1	20

## **Section 1 Interview Questions: Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs Interview Questions**

*(Support activities will refer to activities that could be considered mentoring, coaching, shadowing, task management, or transition support.)*

***Item 2, Section 1, Interview Question 1: In your first administrative position, were there any division or other support activities or programs to specifically address aspects of being a novice school administrator?***

As noted in Table 4.4 on page 47, seventeen of the twenty-two NSAs interviewed expressed that they had some form of support activity or program as an NSA. Twenty-three percent of the NSAs conveyed that they had not received a formal support activity or program as an NSA. Fifteen out of sixteen NSAs from Region 6 reported having a support activity provided. The Region 6 NSAs reported having support activities such as having a formal mentor, working with their principal and administrative team, and attending leadership development programs. Four out of six NSAs in VDOE's Region 7 reported not having a support activity provided as an NSA.

The 22 NSAs reported a broad range of support activities they had received. Thirteen of the NSAs (59%) indicated that support from mentors was the key support activity provided to them as NSAs, making it the most common support provided. Many of the NSAs noted mentoring came from both formal and informal mentoring of colleagues. Nine of the NSAs noted the significance of their principals being a mentor. NSA 2 stated, "The principal really took me under her wing and showed me the road." NSA 21 reported that being able to ask the principal questions about a situation, and then hearing the principal's thought processes, was a great value. NSA 22 reported the "on the job training "with the principal, and lessons provided during that time, as the key support received as an NSA.

Nine of the NSAs reported attending the Recently Appointed Administrators (RAA) program through Virginia Tech. The RAA program is a cohort program provided for newly appointed school administrators from all over Virginia. The RAA program is taught in four multi-day cohort sessions over the year. The RAA program provides sessions in expanding leadership and decision-making skills for newly appointed school administrators (<http://www.cpe.vt.edu/sli/raa/index.html>). Eight of the 16 NSAs interviewed from VDOE

Region Six attended the RAA. One of the six NSAs interviewed from VDOE Region Seven attended the RAA. All nine NSAs who attended the RAA program were able to attend because of funding provided by their school divisions.

NSAs 2, 3, and 6 reported that the RAA program provided opportunities to talk to other administrators that were going through similar situations. NSA 5 conveyed that the RAA program provided insights that were specifically applicable to her NSA position. NSA 8 reported that having sessions in areas such as budgeting and legal issues, was beneficial as a NSA with limited experience in those areas. The NSAs also noted the benefit of hearing the other administrators' stories and the advice they had from encountering some of the same issues. NSA 5 stated,

I believe that the biggest part of the RAA was creating a network of support. We were all new administrators. So just being able to have someone I could call on the outside for ideas or just to get opinions and see what else they were doing.

NSAs 20, and 21, noted that the Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) in southwest Virginia played a significant role in their development as NSAs. The CIP is a consortium of public school divisions in southwestern Virginia. The CIP school divisions collaborate to improve student achievement through activities and professional development that are highly aligned to Virginia's Standards of Learning (<http://www.cip.education>). NSA 20 reported that the CIP program provided opportunities to network and listen to speakers in various areas of school administration.

Central office or division supports were also important in addressing the needs of NSAs as indicated by NSAs 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, and 16. NSA 16 specified that the relationship with central office personnel was one of openness, collaboration, and consulting. The NSA explained how central office personnel would entertain questions from a non-judgmental viewpoint, and that strengthened their relationship. NSA 15 described feeling very supported because of the speed in which central office would get back to him with an answer if he had a question. NSA 1 reported that the superintendent provided support through weekly meetings with him and his team of all new school administrators to answer any questions they may have had.

Table 4.4

*Item 2, Section 1, Interview Question 1: NSA comments on support activities to specifically address being a NSA.*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Yes	Prin	My school division sent me to the RAA program.
NSA 2	Yes	Prin	My first principal was a mentor to me. Also, I attended the RAA program.
NSA 3	Yes	AP	I was fortunate that my principal was my mentor. She coached me along. Also, I attended the RAA program.
NSA 4	Yes	Prin	My school division had a boot camp for new administrators. I also had an assigned mentor. I attended RAA program.
NSA 5	Yes	Prin	Attended RAA. Most beneficial being an admin intern. I received on the job training through that position.
NSA 6	Yes	AP	I attended RAA. I was an instruction coordinator before. I did a lot that trickled into administration. My admin team supported me.
NSA 7	Yes	AP	Speaking with colleagues at the RAA program helped as a NSA.
NSA 8	Yes	AP	I attended the RAA through VA Tech.
NSA 9	Yes	AP	Had great mentor in my principal. Everything was always 100% teamwork.
NSA 10	Yes	AP	There's a network of division support. They give us full support.
NSA 11	No	AP	I haven't received training yet.
NSA 12	Yes	AP	I was assigned a mentor. The mentor was a retired administrator that came back in a mentorship role with all new admin.

(continued)

Table 4.4 (cont.)

NSA	Yes/ No	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 13	Yes	AP	A formal mentor was provided. Came once a month.
NSA 14	Yes	AP	I received mentoring. My principal and other AP provided support.
NSA 15	Yes	AP	I had a coach. She met with me once a month.
NSA 16	Yes	AP	My principal has been tremendous. In shadowing, mentoring, etc. My prior position as school counselor also helped.
NSA 17	Yes	AP	My mentor was the other AP. In my CTE administrative position, there were multiple training meetings.
NSA 18	No	Prin	Central office personnel were available if I needed something. I started as AP and really had to navigate by asking questions.
NSA 19	Yes	AP	Shadowed in previous role of admin. assistant. I also went to the RAA through Virginia Tech.
NSA 20	No	AP	The CIP group provided time, networking, and ability listen speakers in various areas of school administration.
NSA 21	No	AP	My school principal was an informal mentor to me. I attended CIP.
NSA 22	No	AP	On the job training with the principal. My principal was great mentor.

### Section 1: Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs Interview Questions

***Item 3, Section 1, Interview Question 2: In your opinion, were these support activities effective in supporting you in your first administrative position?***

As noted in Table 4.5 on page 50, sixty-eight percent of the NSAs reported that the support activities they received as NSAs were effective in supporting them in their first administrative position. NSA 20 stated:

They were effective, but of course there's always more questions. One thing my division does well is you can always call somebody up and ask them what they did when they were in this position. If they have any ideas on what to do, and what not to do.

NSA 9 reported how valuable division assistant principal meetings were in helping her network with a close group of colleagues she could reach out to. The NSA specified that because of the close network of division colleagues, her NSA experience was one of collaboration and not isolation.

The most common effective support reported was the support provided from principals as indicated by 15 (68%) of the NSAs. NSA 12 reported being able to go to his principal and administrative team and use them as a “sounding board” was a great support. NSA 15 stated, “The other assistant principals have been in education and administration for a long time. So, it was nice having them at my fingertips...we had a nice team.” NSA 16 also reported the significance of a collaborative administrative team led by the head principal. The NSA stated, “We collaborate so we can establish consistency with our practices in the school...Also, the training the principal gave us is aligned with the procedures that are the best practices.”

Seven of the twenty-two NSAs indicated that the activities were not effective or expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the support activities provided. Some of the NSAs reported feeling prepared in some areas of school administration but not prepared in other areas. NSA 4 discussed having a unique set of duties in her first role as an NSA. The NSA reported having all instructional duties, but no discipline or other administrative duties, because of the particular situation of the school. The NSA specified, “I felt like I was clueless for an entire year about finance...That was a scary way to feel.” NSA 13 reported that meeting with a mentor once a month was not as effective as speaking with the principal of the school. The NSA stated, “I’m here with my principal, so she was the one that was my go-to person.” NSA 22 reported that although there was not a formal support activity provided, she considered the training from her principal an effective support.

NSA 14 reported coming into a situation where she was only trained in the responsibilities she was going to be responsible for as an AP. The NSA reported the administrators of the school would split responsibilities such as building maintenance, athletics, and academic technologies. She stated if one of the other administrators was missing, she felt inept in completing her duties. NSA 14 recommended an NSA handbook to help new administrators coming into the position because of her experiences.

Table 4.5

*Item 3, Section 1, Interview Question 2: NSA comments on the effectiveness of support activities as an NSA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Yes/ No</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Yes	Prin	Superintendent and HR have been supportive with a lot of advice. They have been visible, checking in on things.
NSA 2	Yes	Prin	RAA programs were good for information and helped me know I wasn't by myself. My admin team really helped me as well.
NSA 3	Yes	AP	I believe that the biggest part of the RAA program was creating a network of support.
NSA 4	Yes/No	Prin	I felt I was clueless for an entire year about finance, to be honest. That was a scary way to feel.
NSA 5	Yes	Prin	I was provided opportunities as an admin intern that allowed me to do things that I would see as an administrator
NSA 6	Yes/No	AP	Only the RAA was an effective support.
NSA 7	Yes	AP	Yes, the RAA most definitely effective
NSA 8	Yes	AP	The relationships I have with other admin have been key. Also, the internships as well as the RAA program were very helpful.
NSA 9	Yes	Prin	My network of admin has developed resources together that we've shared. My county does a really good job of finding people who are going to be your mentor and guide you.
NSA 10	Yes	AP	Absolutely, the division network I could contact was effective.
NSA 11	No	AP	I have not had any NSA training.
NSA 12	Yes	AP	I appreciated the perspective of my mentor, and I felt supported by my head principal and the other AP.

(continued)

Table 4.5 (cont.)

NSA	Yes/ No	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 13	No	AP	Not having the assigned mentor here at the school made it seem disjointed. Immediate answers came from the principal. She was my go-to person. It wasn't the mentor who was assigned to me that just showed up once a month.
NSA 14	Yes/ No	AP	I made it through, so I guess it was. I would personally recommend some kind of handbook for a new administrator.
NSA 15	Yes	AP	My principal has an open door policy to where I can shoot her a text and say, "What would you do in this case?" Although I had an outside mentor, the rest of my admin team at school were my real mentors. We have a great team.
NSA 16	Yes	AP	My principal was a great mentor.
NSA 17	Yes/No	AP	The mentor was great to help let me know daily policies and procedures. If I had a deeper insight questions, no they were not effective.
NSA 18	No	Prin	The timing of my hiring made it not so effective. Not through fault of the school division, just the timing of my hiring.
NSA 19	Yes	AP	As an admin assistant I was able to shadow and be mentored by the school administrators. The RAA was a great asset as well.
NSA 20	Yes	AP	This is a great division where you can always call somebody up and ask their advice.
NSA 21	Yes	AP	My school principal was my mentor.
NSA 22	Yes	AP	Absolutely. I think on the job training is the best type of training you can get.

### **Section1: Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs Interview Questions**

***Item 4, Section 1, Interview Question 3: In your opinion, what has been the most effective support activity in which you have engaged as a NSA, and who or what organization provided that experience?***

As noted in Table 4.6 on page 53, forty-five percent of the NSAs reported that leadership groups or cohorts provided by organizations outside of their division were the most effective support activity they received. The RAA program through Virginia Tech was an effective support as indicated by NSAs 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 19. NSA 6 stated, “The RAA was extremely effective...You got to talk to other administrators that were struggling and just hearing some of their stories and then the advice they gave has helped me in my role.” NSAs 12, 18, 20, and 21, noted that other outside organizations, such as the Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) in southwest Virginia and the Statewide Communities of Practice for Excellence (SCOPE) leadership development program through the University of Virginia, have played significant roles in their development as NSAs. NSA 21 reported that the networking and connections developed with other administrators through participating in the CIP were essential. NSA 12 stated about the SCOPE program, “It has been a great experience as far as expanding my understanding of the roles of the principal, in having a broader perspective through talking with other administrators across the state.” SCOPE is a leadership development program for emerging school leaders across Virginia. The program focuses on “Leading People” and “Leading Learning” by providing school-based leaders with experiences designed to enhance their effectiveness (<https://curry.virginia.edu/services-outreach/uva-k-12-advisory-council/scope>).

Seven of the NSAs explained that the guidance from their administrative team, principal, and central office staff was the most effective support received. NSA 15 reported feeling very supported because of his administrative team’s openness towards answering any question or helping with any decision. NSA 9 reported the most effective support was a clear list of duties and responsibilities explained by the principal. NSA 9 specified the principal put together a binder with all the resources needed to be able to complete all of the duties outlined. NSA 1 reported that he and his administrative team met with the school division superintendent weekly. NSA 1 explained that he and the two assistant principals were in their first year as school administrators. The NSA discussed how the weekly meetings with the superintendent were invaluable in his first year as a school administrator.

Three of the NSAs reported that “on the job” experience had been the most effective or only support provided thus far as an NSA. NSA 13 explained the “on the job, trial by fire” experience with her principal being there along the way was the most effective. NSAs 11 and 22 reported that they had only received “on the job” support as an NSA and no other forms of

support. NSAs 7, 17, 18 noted that the most effective supports they received as NSAs were initiated by the NSAs themselves.

Formal mentor programs established by the school division were also significant as indicated by NSAs 4, 5, 9, 16, and 21. NSA 5 reported her assigned mentor was diligent and loyal. Although the mentor was reassigned to a new position during the mentoring process, she still made it a priority to provide support for NSA 5. NSA 4 expressed that the formal mentor was the “go-to” anytime the NSA had a question because the NSA knew the mentor had experienced something similar.

Table 4.6

*Item 4, Section 1, Interview Question 3: NSA comments on most effective support provided as a NSA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	The superintendent meeting with us regularly was beneficial. Having that access has been helpful and the biggest thing.
NSA 2	Prin	The RAA was a good program to have that support as a NSA.
NSA 3	AP	The RAA program created a network of support.
NSA 4	Prin	I like having the assigned mentor and unofficial mentors too.
NSA 5	Prin	The principal I worked with was phenomenal. The RAA was also very in depth and applicable to things needed right then.
NSA 6	AP	The RAA was the only organized support that I received. It was extremely effective. Talking to other admin that were struggling. Hearing their stories has helped me in my role.
NSA 7	AP	I read a lot of leadership books.

(continued)

Table 4.6 (cont.)

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 8	AP	I'd say the most effective support is just the relationships with other administrators.
NSA 9	Prin	My principal sat down with a division of duties and responsibilities. The principal put together a binder with all the resources I needed to be able to do all of the duties outlined.
NSA 10	AP	Workshops and networking. The division-wide principals and AP meetings.
NSA 11	AP	It has been hit the ground running. I have been to various trainings, however none are support activities.
NSA 12	AP	The county has given me the opportunity to participate in SCOPE through UVA. It has been a great experience for me as far as expanding my understanding of the roles of the principal in the building.
NSA 13	AP	It's been the on the job, trial by fire, kind of experience with my principal being there, always with the open door, where I can ask questions.
NSA 14	AP	The support that I got from the rest of the administrative team.
NSA 15	AP	The two admin in our building have been the most beneficial. I have a question, or I need help with something, they're willing to help. Central office staff has been really good too.
NSA 16	AP	Mentoring as a building level principal.
NSA 17	AP	I have not had any supports that I felt helped me with ongoing development as an NSA. As far as the AP position, I have to go search for it.
NSA 18	Prin	The most effective support was through my colleagues and other principals. Our monthly leadership meetings helped. Relationships built through our county and the consortium (CIP) my county is a part of.
NSA 19	AP	The RAA program through Virginia Tech was the most effective.

(continued)

Table 4.6 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 20	AP	Having the CIP and having administrators outside your school district that you can network with and share things.
NSA 21	AP	Mentoring program through division, also the CIP Consortium that Region 7 participates in. I was able to make connections and network.
NSA 22	AP	My principal provided the experience. On the job training.

### Section 1: Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs Interview Questions

#### *Item 5, Section 1, Interview Question 4: What support activities do you believe were needed in your first administrative position?*

As noted in Table 4.7 on page 56, the NSAs expressed a variety of support activities they believed were needed in their first administrative position. Four of the NSAs reported they believed they needed more support with student discipline matters. NSA 15 indicated the task of how to properly handle each individual discipline situation was a challenge. NSA 15 stated, “Trying to figure out with every discipline situation what do I do as far as the discipline? Is there a need for formal discipline or is it just a conversation with the student?” NSA 12 reported being prepared for the instructional side of being an NSA, but discipline was a new concept. NSA 1 discussed that support with dealing with things such as discipline hearings, manifestation determinations, and long-term suspensions, would be beneficial to a NSA.

Along with support in student discipline procedures, the need for consistent division expectations and practices was reported by NSAs 12, 16, and 20. NSA 20 indicated that clear expectations from the division on how to deal with disruptive behaviors would make the process much simpler for a NSA. NSA 14 expressed a belief that clearer expectations could be communicated through an NSA handbook. NSA 14 specified that assistant principals have primary responsibilities such as facilities and maintenance and that a handbook would help in their primary duties and the administrative duties they are not responsible for. NSA 4 reported a lack of finance training in her first administrative position. The NSA specified that she felt unprepared to manage finance matters in the principal role.

Three of the NSAs described evaluations of other staff as being a difficult task in their new roles. NSA 15 reported that finding the time to consistently evaluate teachers was a

substantial challenge. The NSA specified that evaluating a teacher that has much more experience in education can be an intimidating task for a new administrator. NSA 8 reiterated that perception by stating,

I would say one of the more difficult parts was building relationships with staff through evaluation. As coming in as a new administrator. I'm relatively young, there are some teachers that have been teaching for longer than I've been alive. And being able to come in and do observations and evaluations can be difficult as a new administrator.

Four of the NSAs explained that challenging situations with adults are an area of school administration in which they would welcome support. NSAs 7 and 12 expressed that coaching or mentoring on how to deal with difficult parents would be very beneficial to NSAs. NSAs 11 and 17 reported they would have benefitted from more training in procedures and legalities of human resource management in their first administrative position. NSA 17 described feeling unprepared to advise a teacher who was in a compromising situation, and as the teacher was concerned if it would affect his or her employment.

Two of the NSAs indicated they needed time management support in their first school administrative positions. NSA 11 described having difficulty comprehending that the planned tasks of the day may be uncompleted due to the unexpected happenings of a school day. Two of the NSAs stated that they could not think of any support activities that were needed in their first administrative position. NSA 2 clarified that his prior experiences in education helped tremendously when he became a school administrator.

Table 4.7

*Item 5, Section 1, Interview Question 4: NSA comments on support activities needed as a NSA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	The principalship, there's a lot of stuff going on as far as what to do, and how to do it. Just the support a principal would need from things like discipline hearings, manifestations, long term suspensions.
NSA 2	Prin	I can't think of anything specific.
NSA 3	AP	A bimonthly meeting for all administrators.
NSA 4	Prin	Training in finance because in my AP role, I didn't have that.

(continued)

Table 4.7 (cont.)

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 5	Prin	Ongoing support in the most effective instructional practices.
NSA 6	AP	I think a mentor would always help. To have somebody who really talked to you and like to run things by to make sure that you handle things correctly. I think that would've helped me to have like a formal mentor that wasn't my evaluator.
NSA 7	AP	Dealing with parents.
NSA 8	AP	Some teachers that have been teaching longer than I've been alive. And being able to come in and do observations and evaluations can be difficult as a new administrator.
NSA 9	Prin	I taught in this county, so I knew a lot of the policies and curriculum. I felt the only thing that I could've used more of was just more time with assistant principals. Right out of the gate.
NSA 10	AP	Can't think of anything right now.
NSA 11	AP	I believe something in time management and something to do with teacher relationships would be beneficial.
NSA 12	AP	More concrete practice in handling different discipline issues. Also, practice with how to handle difficult parent situations.
NSA 13	AP	I think a little bit more support would have been very helpful with some of the online tools that we use.
NSA 14	AP	I believe that a handbook for new administrators would be very helpful.
NSA 15	AP	I would say discipline and evaluations. Trying to figure out every unique situation and address it with the proper discipline. How do I evaluate somebody that's been teaching for almost as long as I've been alive?
NSA 16	AP	Consistent and common practices across the division. Something like student searches. From a district level more standard protocol would be helpful.
NSA 17	AP	More PD on human resources or how to deal with a situation with a teacher.

(continued)

Table 4.7 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 18	Prin	A more formalized mentor program would be helpful.
NSA 19	AP	I think a big thing is time management. Being able to work the software we have for attendance. Also, a mentor and how to network.
NSA 20	AP	Behavior management with kids. What's the expectations from county level?
NSA 21	AP	The mentoring relationship. The leadership academy was the most beneficial as far as connecting to similar colleagues. I would like to have had more time to communicate with those admin. There's not a lot of new admin in our county.
NSA 22	AP	Legal activities and court case documents. Also, IEPs, anything on that legal end.

### Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia

#### *Item 6, Section 1, Interview Question 5: What things do you currently do to support yourself as a NSA (i.e., consult a mentor, stress management support, emotional support, or physical health support)?*

As noted in Table 4.8 on page 60, the NSAs reported a wide range of activities they did to support themselves as NSAs. The most common response from the NSAs was that they would often seek the help of a mentor in supporting themselves. Fifty percent of the NSAs stated the consultation of a mentor provided a crucial aspect of the support the NSAs provided for themselves. NSAs 3 and 10 reported working with mentors outside of their school buildings as personal support. NSA 3 discussed the significance of having mentors outside the building, speaking specifically about Facebook groups. She stated, “I know it sounds crazy, but I have found a lot of support through reading what other people across the country who are in newly appointed administrative position, and finding out they are dealing with similar situations I am dealing with.”

The importance of being able to freely communicate with a mentor was reported by NSAs 4, 14, 19, and 20. NSA 4 explained that mentors were important due to the daily guidance they provided. NSAs 14, 19, and 20 indicated that being able to discuss ideas and work through

situations with a mentor was an intricate support to them as NSAs. NSA 20 indicated that having an experienced administrator as a mentor was comforting, knowing the mentor had been through similar situations.

Two of the NSAs reported that being active in their church has been an important emotional support in their NSA period. NSA 6 reported her religious faith is a critical support in her role as an NSA. The NSA explained how she had other forms of support, but when they were not available, her spiritual faith was there as a support. NSA 21 discussed how attending church helped manage the stress she experienced as an NSA. The NSA specified that being involved in various church groups helped support her as an NSA. NSAs 3 and 18 reported the use Facebook groups as NSAs, where they would communicate with school administrators from other divisions on the Facebook website.

NSAs 1, 11, and 16 noted that the collaboration of their administrative teams was an essential support to them as NSAs. NSA 1 specified that the responsibilities were spread evenly amongst his school's administrators, and their collaboration was a key contributor to the administrative team. NSA 16 reported that a key support in his professional growth was the consultations between him and his administrative team.

Five of the NSAs reported maintaining good physical health through diet and exercise is a key support to themselves as NSAs. NSA 18 stated:

For me being well-rounded is important. I'm very much into emotional health and fitness, and that's something that I carried into the position, which I think has helped because you have to know how to maintain stress through proper diet and exercise. That piece has helped keep me grounded and the stress at a minimum. I'll often say that I'm up by 5:00 A.M. exercising because it makes me a nicer person.

Correspondingly, NSAs 11 and 15 noted that they make it a priority to exercise daily for stress relief and maintenance.

The proper balance between family and work was a key support factor as indicated by NSAs 2, 5, 16, 17, and 22. NSA 2 stated, "The biggest thing that has helped me was to turn off the email notifications on my phone...I'm trying to spend time with my family, and responding to emails is stripping my family of that time." Similarly, NSA 16 reported that separating work and family was an important support factor for him. The NSA explained that he needed to be "present" with his family while at home, and that allowed him to be his best while at work.

Table 4.8

*Item 6, Section 1, Interview Question 5: NSA comments on supports activities provided by the NSAs themselves*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	Experience has helped me with the balance part. We have a great team here. We all pitch in and make sure no one person is overburdened.
NSA 2	Prin	The biggest thing that I did was to turn off my email notifications on my phone when I'm spending time with my family. That was the biggest thing.
NSA 3	AP	I do have mentors outside of my building. I'm trying to get more into like Facebook groups. I have found a lot of support through them.
NSA 4	Prin	I consult mentors on a daily basis. The stress management? I need some advice on how to do that because I'm not accomplishing that very well.
NSA 5	Prin	Still consult my mentor. Have emotional support through husband and talking with him. Also, through conversations with AP.
NSA 6	AP	I'm very active in my church. I'm a strong believer that my faith, it helps me with what I do.
NSA 7	AP	I read a lot of leadership books.
NSA 8	AP	I would say that a mentorship relationship is very key
NSA 9	Prin	We tried to practice as a staff mental health care for our students, so doing the same things for ourselves so that we don't get burnt out.
NSA 10	AP	I usually consult a mentor and then networking with other assistant principals and principals in the school division as well as outside sources.
NSA 11	AP	I talk with my principal and with other administrators. I make it a point to find time to work out every day.

(continued)

Table 4.8 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 12	AP	I'm trying to do a better job of taking care of myself. I want to lower the stress level and be better prepared for the day to day activities. I enjoy reading about new developments in education. Any PD opportunity or conferences presented to me.
NSA 13	AP	I have found useful to just ask the sources what to do in this particular situation. I do some reading in leadership approaches. That helps with stress support because it helps me see I'm going in the right direction.
NSA 14	AP	I'd probably say mentor. I have another colleague I know really well that we bounce ideas off each other.
NSA 15	AP	I try to stay physically active fit, get any stress out. I consult with a mentor. I'll just walk down the hall and ask the other principals.
NSA 16	AP	The collaboration amongst our admin team. The principal will share and discuss new pieces of information with us. I also try to be present with my family.
NSA 17	AP	My personal family comes first, school family comes second, and I come down somewhere third or fourth. That can wear you out, and it can cause a lot of stress. I'm currently trying to take better care of myself. Also, I'm going through a doctorate program right now and there's not a lot of time.
NSA 18	Prin	I'm very much into emotional health and fitness, which has helped maintain stress through proper diet and exercise. Through monthly leadership meetings and Facebook I stay in close communication with colleagues and other principals.
NSA 19	AP	I have another colleague, like a mentor, I know really well that we bounce ideas off each other and they have been an administrator for a while.
NSA 20	AP	An administrator in a prior school system that I contact and digest things and get pointers from that.
NSA 21	AP	I still consult with my mentor. Attending church helps with the stress and emotional support. I have a small group of peers that I speak to regularly.

(continued)

Table 4.8 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 22	AP	My husband, who is also a school administrator, and I will often hash out the day. I exercise for physical support as well.

### Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia

#### *Item 7, Section 1, Interview Question 6: What support activity do you believe you need specifically as an individual from your experience as a NSA?*

As noted in Table 4.9 on page 63, the NSAs interviewed reported a broad range of support activities they needed as individuals. Altogether, fifty-nine percent of the NSAs interviewed reported needing support in specific areas of administration such as instruction, attendance, finance, discipline, special education, and legal issues. NSAs 2 and 6 indicated having minimal knowledge about how to deal with discipline issues when they began as school administrators. NSA 2 stated, “Having to help manage other teachers’ classrooms is quite different from managing your own. There were a lot of questions I had to kind of work through, and I had to work through those on my own.”

NSAs 8 and 20 stated they needed more support in special education procedures. NSA 13 reported that she would benefit from a tutorial in the online programs the division uses. She explained that she is unfamiliar with the online programs because she is an NSA in a division different from the one she taught in. The NSA also discussed that an administrator handbook would be a valuable support for NSAs.

NSA 8 stated that he thought an academy to provide training in these specific areas would be a great support to NSAs. The NSA stated, “Honestly, if I had not gone to the RAA academy, I think that I would have had a lot more questions.” NSAs 1, 17, and 18 stated they needed continued support and communication from central office staff. NSA 18 explained that the central office’s continued communication of trends and expectations to administration will help her support her students.

Six of the NSAs reported they needed support in learning how to balance the various responsibilities of a school administrator. NSA 11 stated that training on what should be prioritized and what can wait would be a beneficial support. NSA 4 stated that she could use

“something to tell me how to manage all of this in a timely, efficient manner, without spending my entire life doing paperwork.” NSA 7 reported that she is making it point not to take things so personally, and keep things in perspective.

Table 4.9

*Item 7, Section 1, Interview Question 6: NSA comments on NSA support activities specifically needed as an individual*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	The continued support, from central office, to help work through varying situations, whether they were handled 100% correct, or if there were areas for growth.
NSA 2	Prin	Support on dealing with dealing with discipline issues. There were a lot of questions I had to kind of work through.
NSA 3	AP	It would be nice to get periodic feedback throughout the school year, rather than just at the end of the year.
NSA 4	Prin	Something to tell me how to manage all of this in an efficient manner, without spending my entire life doing paperwork.
NSA 5	Prin	Continue to keep myself abreast of the most effective instructional practice, just like the teachers need to utilize them, being the lead instructional person in the building.
NSA 6	AP	I have no training and no background in discipline, so I would need help with. Also, help with stress management. Also, how to balance the demands of a high school administration.
NSA 7	AP	I need to remember to quit taking things personally.
NSA 8	AP	Introducing new administrators to specific areas. Having SPED law and budgeting.
NSA 9	Prin	I think just continuing to learn more about their profession.
NSA 10	AP	I think I could have benefitted with more support in finance and budgeting.
NSA 11	AP	Something that involves identifying what can be put off and what has to be done immediately.

(continued)

Table 4.9 (cont.)

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 12	AP	I think it's just the sort of the day-to-day and being in the building and encountering different situations that's prepared me.
NSA 13	AP	The online programs that we use. I came from another county right into an admin position here in this division. I'm sure it's impossible to come up with checklist of everything you want people to know about when they come into this position.
NSA 14	AP	I think that you definitely need a strong administrative team to help a new administrator be successful.
NSA 15	AP	I think the evaluation piece is the one that I still want to improve on the most.
NSA 16	AP	To make sure that communication continues so we're current with instruction and information. I think instructional committees are helpful for a new administrator.
NSA 17	AP	I think you've got to find your support team. Who in the central office can give you information.
NSA 18	Prin	The continued support from the central office. Support needs to be the continued communication in trends and expectations.
NSA 19	AP	How to handle everything thrown your way like we have attendance and discipline. How to manage everything out and make sure you have time to get everything done.
NSA 20	AP	More on our special education processes.
NSA 21	AP	I think having that mentor close is good. Seeing how an effective administrator handles different situations that come up. A transition program would have been beneficial.
NSA 22	AP	How to deal with the legal aspects of things. Anything to do with custody or reading court documents.

## **Support Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

### ***Item 8, Section 1, Interview Question 7: What factors in your current role as a NSA do you believe limit your access to support activities?***

As noted in Table 4.10 on page 66, fifty percent of the NSAs interviewed indicated that a lack of time was a key factor limiting their access to support activities. Accordingly, six more NSAs noted that the demands of the job kept them from accessing the support activities they would like. In total, 77 percent of the NSAs reported that a lack of time, or the demands of the job, were factors that limited their access to support activities. NSA 4 stated about the demands of the job, “The sheer amount of paperwork on a daily, monthly, and weekly basis is entirely overwhelming. I feel like that’s all I do.” NSA 13 said, “There’s so many fires you have to put out. I don’t have a quick-help button”, regarding completing the many tasks the NSA may face on a daily basis.

Three of the NSAs specified that the demands of the building created a time constraint that limited their access to support activities. NSA 3 reported that while the principal was at a meeting, it was her responsibility as an assistant principal to manage the demands of the building. NSA 18 reported that since she was at a smaller school, there were fewer people to shoulder the responsibilities if she was out. She indicated that made her cautious about leaving the building to access a support or professional development activity.

Seven of the NSAs indicated that a lack of resources or geographic area of the school were key factors limiting their access to support activities. NSA 7 reported that a lack of community resources was magnified by the aspect that she was new to the school community. NSA 21 discussed that a lack of division financial resources contributed to her hiring as an AP at the end of the school year. She explained that she was hired and “hit the ground running” as far as making decisions. NSA 17 reported that a combination of a lack of time, resources, and the area of the division limited access support as an NSA. The NSA explained that because of a lack of resources, her school had a lack of personnel. Thus, because of the lack of personnel, NSA 17 often had to perform secretarial duties. NSA 17 stated the factors not only limited her ability to accessing support, but they limited her ability to establish relationships with the school’s students.

NSAs 9 and 12 both stated that they did not perceive limitations to accessing support. NSA 9 reported that if there was a training she wanted to attend, the division would make it happen, or there was a local organization that provided grants for such things.

Table 4.10

*Item 8, Section 1, Interview Question 7: NSA comments on factors that limit access to support activities as an NSA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	Not knowing what to ask. You don't know what you don't know.
NSA 2	Prin	Just the demands of the job.
NSA 3	AP	I'm usually the one who has to stay here and manage the building.
NSA 4	Prin	The sheer amount of paperwork on a daily, monthly, weekly basis is entirely overwhelming. I feel like that's all I do.
NSA 5	Prin	All the other things that can go on that the principal has to handle from budget, financial, discipline, to just the day-to-day operations of the building.
NSA 6	AP	Time is the number one thing, In our area, there are not a lot of resources for us in terms of support for administrators.
NSA 7	AP	I'm not from around here. The lack of community resources that are available.
NSA 8	AP	I would say that geography and finding time. I'm more on an outskirts of the county. There's only one AP in this building.
NSA 9	Prin	I don't feel like I'm limited. If there's a conference I want to go to, they work and make it happen. We have a great organization locally that we can apply for grants.
NSA 10	AP	Conflicts with schedules, like I may say I'll be there at this time, and something comes up, and I cannot be there.
NSA 11	AP	The lack of time created by the position and the location of my school.

(continued)

Table 4.10 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 12	AP	I don't think there is anything. I feel like if there is something that I want to do to further myself, my building-level principal and central office will make it happen.
NSA 13	AP	Time. There's only so much time in the day, and there's so many fires you have to put out. I don't have a "quick-help" button.
NSA 14	AP	Not having the time to be able to access those supports. A lot of times, you don't have a lot of time to consult with anyone else.
NSA 15	AP	We had quite a bit of discipline that went on this year, so it made it really tough to get into the classroom.
NSA 16	AP	Time
NSA 17	AP	Time, area, and resources.
NSA 18	Prin	I'm in a very small school; it is only me here. The greater the limitation in just being out of the building because it's only me. The area definitely contributes to that.
NSA 19	AP	We're at school all the time, a lot more than we are anywhere else. It's time to do those activities would be the biggest hindrance.
NSA 20	AP	There's not enough time in the day.
NSA 21	AP	The time and the pace of administration, it doesn't allow for much else other than just completing your tasks throughout each day. I was hired at the end of the school year and I had to start making decisions. The budget for resources, as well, is a constraint.
NSA 22	AP	Time constraints. You are always busy. By the time you work late and get in. Also, it's hard to get away from the building.

**Section 2: Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

*Item 9, Section 2, Interview Question 8: In your first administrative position, were there any division or other professional development activities (i.e., instructional leadership, curriculum*

***development, finance management, human resource management) to specifically address aspects of being a novice school administrator (NSA)?***

As noted in Table 4.11 on page 69, interview question 8 (item 9) began section 2 of the study that researched professional development (PD) activities for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. Sixty-three percent of the NSAs reported that they had not received PD activities to specifically address aspects of being an NSA. NSA 3 reported that her school division used to have AP meetings where many of the NSAs' questions or concerns would be addressed. NSA 3 reported that those meetings no longer take place. Four of the NSAs reported having PD as an AP or school administrator, but it was not geared toward being an NSA. NSA 5 indicated a significant need to have PD in certain areas. NSA 15 stated,

The one thing I need more of is understanding of the budget. You talk about it a little in your classes. It's nothing like the hands-on real thing. I talk to a budget person who deals with budget all day long, and I'm like I don't understand what you're saying. I need you to break it down for me because I'm not in that world all day.

All six of the NSAs from VDOE's Region 7 of the study reported that they had not received PD specifically related to being an NSA. NSA 17 stated she believed because of the small size of her school division, and her being the only NSA, it would not be financially beneficial for her school division to provide PD only to her. NSA 22 reported that much of her PD was during her teaching experience. NSA 22 said, "For instructional leadership, I think really you follow your principal, and how they would like to handle things."

Four of the NSAs responded that they had attended the RAA program. Two of those NSAs expressed concern about classifying that as PD for an NSA, and two noted that they would consider the activities presented in the RAA as PD for an NSA. NSA 4 explained she went to the RAA and attends monthly principals meetings, but did not believe the information is presented from a NSA's view point. NSA 4 said, "It's kind of the assumption that you already are familiar with a lot of things, that maybe you may or may not be familiar with." NSAs 2 and 7 indicated they received PD on a broad range of school administration topics at the RAA.

Thirty-seven percent of the NSAs reported they had received PD activities. NSA 15 emphasized that he benefited from monthly PD on data management as an NSA. NSA 15 reported that the information presented in PD were key points to focus on and things to prepare for later in the year. He emphasized that the monthly meetings helped him to establish

relationships with colleagues he could seek advice from. NSA 1 reported that the school division was sending him to various conferences this summer where he would have access to various PD activities.

Table 4.11

*Item 9 Section 2, Interview Question 8: NSA comments on PD activities for NSAs in southwestern VA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Yes	Prin	This summer I'm am going PBIS. I'm going to middle school principals conference. Then effective classroom training.
NSA 2	Yes	Prin	Back to the RAA program. We covered lots of different topics in areas in terms of school administration, from curriculum to finance and dealing with the media.
NSA 3	No	AP	We used to have AP meetings but not anymore.
NSA 4	Yes & No	Prin	I went to the RAA program. We have the monthly principal meetings. But I don't think it's from a brand new principal standpoint either. There is an assumption that you already are familiar with a lot, but you may or may not be.
NSA 5	No	Prin	Budget process is my weakest area, and I feel like I haven't been prepared enough for that.
NSA 6	No	AP	No. No. Nothing specifically for being an NSA.
NSA 7	Yes	AP	The RAA provided many PD activities for a NSA.
NSA 8	Yes & No	AP	The RAA, nothing was offered through the division. I was able to get those through the RAA.
NSA 9	Yes & No	Prin	Not so much being a NSA. I felt like everyone just embraced me as a principal and as an instructional leader.
NSA 10	Yes	AP	The division does an excellent job of PD for new administrators, and they're always there to answer questions that arise.
NSA 11	No	AP	I have not had in PD as an NSA as of yet.

(continued)

Table 4.11 (cont.)

NSA	Yes/No	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 12	No	AP	None are coming to mind.
NSA 13	No	AP	No
NSA 14	No	AP	Not specifically for NSAs. We did have PD for assistant principals.
NSA 15	Yes	AP	One thing that I did like is that we met as a group with the database administrator probably every other month. He would cover a lot of the key points that we needed to be focusing on in the year.
NSA 16	No	AP	I believe PD in the human resource aspects would be helpful as an NSA. Particularly as one person transitions from one role to the other, there are things they need to be made aware of.
NSA 17	No	AP	Unfortunately, not. I'm the only novice administrator here. That would not be very financially sound for our district to offer me PD.
NSA 18	No	Prin	So, I think that they recognize that, we've got a lot of turnover. We need to meet with these guys, give them a day of PD. But that was something I did experience. But I think it's something that they used to do.
NSA 19	No	AP	Not really. Not really that, no, there wasn't really a lot of those, um, activities to handle that other than like I said, the leadership, what they would take it.
NSA 20	No	AP	The ones I attended were more curriculum-based. I would look for new strategies to come back and share with the classroom teachers.
NSA 21	Yes & No	AP	We did discuss some of these topics at the leadership conference at the end of the year. Nothing to address finance or HR management. I did attend a math conference it was still through the CIP program.
NSA 22	No	AP	Not specific. Instructional leadership, I think really you just kind of follow your principal, and how they'd like to handle things.

## **Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

### ***Item 10, Section 2, Interview Question 9: In your opinion, were these professional development activities effective in preparing you for your first administrative position?***

As noted in Table 4.12 on page 72, forty-one percent of the NSAs interviewed reported that the PD activities they received were not effective in preparing them for their first administrative position. NSA 6 believed that her school division had general meetings for all school administrators explaining the task but not a lot of support with how to carry it out. NSA 13 described a similar perception. The NSA recounted that her school division had a leadership meeting during the summer but no PD for administrators throughout the school year. NSA 14 noted that his PD activities were not as effective as the support of his administrative team.

Twenty-three percent of the NSAs reported that in some aspects the PD activities provided were effective, but in other aspects the PD activities were not effective in preparing them for their first administrative position. NSA 3 said, “We often get our information second-hand...Sometimes when information from a 4-hour meeting gets condensed to 30 minutes, things can get a little distorted.” NSA 5 indicated that although she had not received PD specifically towards being an NSA, her prior experiences prepared her for being a school administrator. NSA 8 discussed that he felt prepared for instructional leadership, but human resources and budgeting were facets of school administration he was unfamiliar with.

Thirty-six percent of the NSAs interviewed reported that the PD activities they received were effective in preparing them for their first administrative position. NSA 1 noted the effectiveness of going through the RAA program and being able to network with colleagues. NSA 2 also discussed the RAA program and the relevant information it provided. In total, six of the NSAs reported the effectiveness of new leadership programs including the RAA program through Virginia Tech and SCOPE through the University of Virginia.

Table 4.12

*Item 10, Section 2, Interview Question 9: NSA comments on PD activities for NSAs in southwestern VA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Yes	Prin	The RAA was really good. Being around people who are kind of in the same boat.
NSA 2	Yes	Prin	New administrators' boot camp and the RAA program were good and gave great information that I used, and helped me do my job.
NSA 3	Yes & No	AP	We get our information second hand, so sometimes things can get a little distorted.
NSA 4	Yes & No	Prin	To some degree, yes. It was all stuff that I needed to know and was relevant to my position. But there were things that I was unsure about what was being said or how I needed to go about doing it because I had never experienced that task.
NSA 5	Yes & No	Prin	I felt like my prior experiences in education as a whole, I was well prepared to take on the day to day operations of the building.
NSA 6	No	AP	No. Most of what we had were general meetings for all administrators where you get your task of what to do, not a whole lot of support with how you're going to do that.
NSA 7	No	AP	I would like to have done more with budgeting.
NSA 8	Yes & No	AP	In division no. I feel like the RAA was extremely helpful
NSA 9	Yes	Prin	Yes, the PD activities provided by the division were effective.
NSA 10	Yes	AP	Very helpful
NSA 11	No	AP	I have not had PD activities provided by the division yet.
NSA 12	Yes	AP	Yearly leadership conferences at the beginning of the year and during the summer. The SCOPE program through UVA.

*(continued)*

Table 4.12 (cont.)

NSA	Yes/No	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 13	No	AP	No, I did not have any.
NSA 14	No	AP	No, I don't think the PD activities were. I think the most effective thing was having an administrative team.
NSA 15	Yes	AP	The data and assessments coordinator meetings were effective.
NSA 16	No	AP	Not effective in the human resources component.
NSA 17	No	AP	No, I was thrown in, and was...what you'd call "baptized by fire."
NSA 18	No	Prin	No, the PD activities were not effective.
NSA 19	No	AP	Other than the ones at VA Tech, I think to shadow someone that's doing the job would be a bigger benefit than any kind of PD.
NSA 20	Yes	AP	Yes, the curriculum-based conferences through the CIP.
NSA 21	Yes	AP	Yes, definitely the topics discussed at the leadership conference...It was extremely helpful in preparing to meet the demands of everything. But it's been changing, but everything is just...kind of brief.
NSA 22	Yes & No	AP	When I was teaching I received PD for the classes I was teaching at the time. I feel like that lends to my PD for administrative position.

### **Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

***Item 11, Section 2, Interview Question 10: In your opinion, what has been the most effective professional development activity in which you have engaged as a NSA, and who or what organization provided that experience?***

As noted in Table 4.13 on page 75, the majority of NSAs interviewed reported their most effective PD came from an organization outside of their school division. Seven of the NSAs stated that the RAA program was the most effective PD activity they received as a NSA. NSA 2

explained that the RAA program was a valuable program for an NSA. NSA 6 stated, “Nothing from the division, just the Recently Appointed Administrators program.”

The Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) of southwestern Virginia was described as a beneficial PD program for NSAs, as indicated by NSAs 20 and 21. Both NSAs explained the CIP also helped them receive PD by allowing them to network with other administrators. NSA 18 reported a similar experience with conferences set up by the Western Virginia Public Education Consortium. The NSA discussed that the WVPEC would cover many aspects of administration. The WVPEC helped keep them acquainted with policy changes from the VDOE and effective strategies outside of their school division. NSA 4 noted the benefits of participating in the Initiative One Leadership Institute Program. The Initiative One Leadership Institute (Initiative One) is a leadership development organization based out of Green Bay, Wisconsin. Initiative One works with organizations’ leadership groups through a cohort process led by Initiative One’s highly-skilled facilitators. Through a nine week process, participants are exposed to best practice methodology that can be directly applied to their own specific leadership situations. NSA 4 discussed the relationships formed through the cohort and hearing how other school administrators were experiencing similar situations were valuable.

Three of the NSAs noted that their most effective PD resulted from the aspects learned while working with an effective administrative team. NSA 12 also noted the benefits of a team mentality but related it to his school division’s PD activities. NSA 12 stated, “My division as a whole does a great job in the day to day support...everyone having a team mentality...That meant the most to me during my first year as an administrator.”

Five of the NSAs described activities their school division provided as the most effective PD they received. NSA 15 reported a division PD activity regarding entire school safety was effective. The NSA noted the PD had specific benefit to an NSA because it helped her transition from thinking of the safety of one classroom to the entire school. NSAs 10 and 11 noted programs they attended in their school division in analyzing data and Title Nine guidance as the most effective PD activities they’ve received.

Table 4.13

*Item 11, Section 2, Interview Question 10: NSA comments on most effective PD activities provided as an NSA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	I'm attending a middle school principal conference and PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) conference this summer.
NSA 2	Prin	The RAA was a good program to have that support as a first year administrator.
NSA 3	AP	I would say it was the RAA. We got the support there by creating a network.
NSA 4	Prin	The Recently Appointed Administrators' program. I thought the Initiative One Leadership program was really helpful as well.
NSA 5	Prin	The Recently Appointed Administrators program.
NSA 6	AP	The Recently Appointed Administrator training.
NSA 7	AP	I wouldn't say it was a PD. I believe PD didn't prepare me as much as actually doing it.
NSA 8	AP	The RAA program through Virginia Tech.
NSA 9	Prin	A literacy conference that I went to. The program was specifically designed for administrators. It was put on by scholastic.
NSA 10	AP	Analyzing Data and Performance Matters. And this was provided by the division.
NSA 11	AP	Title 9 training. It was put on by the school division.
NSA 12	AP	My division does a great job in the day-to-day-support. Everyone having a team mentality.
NSA 13	AP	We have a leadership retreat for two days during the summer. That was helpful in that it gave me a sense of what the overall goal of the county was. We did a book study, but that wasn't effective.
NSA 14	AP	The administrative team and their help guiding me with the processes.

(continued)

Table 4.13 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 15	AP	A PD my division provided regarding school safety. It was good for me to see from the whole school aspect.
NSA 16	AP	The PD collaboration with my building level principal and the other AP here. They just cover the gamut which I think was effective.
NSA 17	AP	My CTE provider provided excellent new administrative development.
NSA 18	Prin	The consortium (Western Virginia Public Education Consortium) put on by Radford University. The conference was titled “Hot Topics and Education”. It covered the whole gamut and kept us apprised of the changes statewide. Speaking with people from other divisions, and seeing what they did well, and sharing what we did well.
NSA 19	AP	The RAA program through Virginia Tech.
NSA 20	AP	The CIP, having the option to network with other principals.
NSA 21	AP	Southwest Virginia School Leaders Academy...offered through the Comprehensive Instruction Program (CIP). It gave me information that I found very useful in my job. It also allowed me to make some connections as well.
NSA 22	AP	A two-day family engagement meeting. The meeting was a real eye opener. It really showed you how most families feel like they're engaged.

**Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

***Item 12, Section 2, Interview Question 11: What professional development activities do you believe were needed in your first administrative position?***

As noted in Table 4.14 on page 78, the NSAs had a wide-range of responses to interview question 11. Twenty-seven percent of the NSAs reported they needed more PD in matters involving staff such as human resources and evaluations. NSA 2 stated, “I think administrators probably need a little bit more support in evaluation...because it's not anything that's really familiar to anything that you've done as a classroom teacher.” NSA 12 indicated that he believed PD on conflict resolution with staff and adults could be critical to an NSA. The NSA said,

“They're going to be times when you and a parent or another stakeholder disagree on something. Knowing how to keep those conversations civil and still productive would have been useful to me.”

Four of the NSAs reported they needed more PD in school finance and budgeting in their roles as NSAs. NSA 9 reported that having little training or education in finance created an intimidating situation when having to manage a school budget. NSA 4 stated about finance, “It was one part of my job that could send me to jail. And that's one aspect I did not feel that I was prepared for.”

The ability to access guidance from other administrators was an essential PD activity, as noted by NSAs 3, 14, 18, and 21. NSA 14 noted that “executive admin meetings” that took place every week were very important in her preparation as an NSA. NSA 21 discussed that a transition program that allowed her to connect with other administrators would have been beneficial as an NSA. NSA 18 expressed a similar perception about providing a mentoring program for NSAs. The NSA reported that having someone just to process things with, and the value of that person being in a non-evaluative position, would assist NSAs in transitioning successfully.

Table 4.14

*Item 12, Section 2, Interview Question 11: NSA comments on PD activities needed in first administrative position*

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 1	Prin	I could have used more in instructional leadership.
NSA 2	Prin	Administrators probably need more support in evaluation. It's not familiar to anything that you've done as a classroom teacher.
NSA 3	AP	I would say a program like the RAA program. We got the support there by creating a network.
NSA 4	Prin	Finance. That is one part of my job that could send me to jail if handled improperly. And that's the one I believe that I was least prepared for.
NSA 5	Prin	I would say HR and teacher evaluations would be good ones to focus on. And, also the budgetary process.

(continued)

Table 4.14 (cont.)

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 6	AP	Definitely help with the human resource issue. For me specifically, how to deal with the discipline.
NSA 7	AP	Dealing with your first angry phone call.
NSA 8	AP	I don't know what I don't know. So, the things that we covered at RAA, such as SPED law and data analysis, were extremely helpful.
NSA 9	Prin	As a principal, I feel like I am in the dark sometimes when it comes to finance and budgeting. I've never had a finance class. So, I think for me, that is one thing that scares me.
NSA 10	AP	School finance and budgeting.
NSA 11	AP	Bullying, suicide/mental health, relationships, time management, and finance.
NSA 12	AP	Having hard conversations with faculty. Resolution or conflict resolution training would be beneficial as well.
NSA 13	AP	As an AP, we deal with a lot of discipline. How to deal with discipline recommendations and the discipline trajectory.
NSA 14	AP	My first year we had executive admin meetings every week. This was a time where we were together just as an administrative team.
NSA 15	AP	Something with evaluation and the school safety was really necessary.
NSA 16	AP	More PD in the human resources aspects.
NSA 17	AP	I do believe that that's very important is to be members of your professional organization.
NSA 18	Prin	A more formalized mentor program would be beneficial. Having someone just to process things with would be helpful.
NSA 19	AP	Chronic absenteeism.
NSA 20	AP	Behavior management.
NSA 21	AP	I would have like to have had more like a transition program.
NSA 22	AP	Any kind of legal or IEP training.



## **Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

### ***Item 13, Section 2, Interview Question 12: What things do you currently do to professionally develop yourself as a NSA (i.e., workshops, conferences, online modules, coursework, reading literature, attending administrative or teacher PD)?***

As noted in Table 4.15 on page 80, fifty percent of the NSAs stated they attended conferences and workshops to professionally develop themselves. NSA 1 explained that he felt a need to keep learning himself, being in the role of principal. NSA 16 discussed how each member of her administrative team tried to attend varying conferences to stay informed on different areas of education.

Fifty-five percent of the NSAs interviewed also reported that reading literature encompassed a significant portion of the PD they provided for themselves, making it the most common response. NSA 15 noted appreciation he had for his principal for recommending much of the literature he reads. NSA 2 explained, “The biggest thing right now is reading literature. Those things continue to help me answer specific questions, and continue to learn. I try to see what other books and people in the profession are saying.” NSA 3 reported that she personally attains PD through the use of podcasts. The NSA spoke of the convenience of being able to listen to educational podcasts while being in the car.

Seven NSAs reported that they attend available teacher PD activities to professionally develop themselves. NSA 6 stated, “I try to participate in all of the teacher PD so that I can be familiar with what the teachers are learning, so that I can support and look for that.” NSA 9 expressed a similar perception of attending teacher PD. The NSA reported going to a number of PDs last year to lead by example. NSA 9 said, “We have strong PD opportunities for our teachers and if we encourage them to go, then we (school administrators) should too.” Similarly, NSA 5 reported she attended the teacher PD and believed in learning the strategies the same way the teachers learned them. NSA 5 stated, “I’m right there doing it with them too. I’m learning along the way, because I certainly can’t provide feedback to them if I’m not engrossed in it myself.”

Table 4.15

*Item 13, Section 2, Interview Question 12: NSA comments on PD activities provided by the NSAs themselves*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	I'm going to AMLE Conference and PBIS conference. As the principal, I need to learn as much as possible.
NSA 2	Prin	The biggest thing right now is the literature. Those things continue to help me answer specific questions and continue to learn.
NSA 3	AP	Currently I try to attend any teacher PD that we have. I also do a lot of reading of educational literature. I'm starting to get into podcasts.
NSA 4	Prin	We usually try to attend whatever the county offers as far as teacher or administrative PD. I also receive the ASCD magazine.
NSA 5	Prin	I attend any PD here that's offered for teachers or admin. I'm attending a ELA workshop next week in Roanoke. This past year, we did a book study that focused on math. We are going to do one from the same series focused on English this year.
NSA 6	AP	I try to participate in the teacher PD so that I can be familiar with what they are learning and provide support. I have continued my coursework to try to stay fresh in the area
NSA 7	AP	I read literature, attend workshops, conferences, complete coursework and attend administrator and teacher PD.
NSA 8	AP	PD and conferences.
NSA 9	Prin	I try to lead by example. So, if we have strong PD opportunities for our teachers and we encourage them to go, then we should too. So, I've done a little bit of everything.
NSA 10	AP	A lot of workshops and conferences. A lot of reading. I attend administrator and teacher PD workshops.
NSA 11	AP	I read, attend PD, and seek advice from experienced administrators.
NSA 12	AP	I try to take advantage of any conferences that I can. I have been able to see some innovative instructional strategies by attending the National Middle School Association Conference.

(continued)

Table 4.15 (cont.)

NSA 13	AP	I read books on my own. I am a member of the ASCD, so I do spend a lot of time looking through articles and things of that nature. I have gone to a couple of workshops.
NSA 14	AP	I have attended several conferences. Also, I'm in a doctoral program right now.
NSA 15	AP	We have the administrative PD, I go to things provided in the county for different initiatives. My principal will walk down our hallway and often toss a book our way.
NSA 16	AP	I attend outside PD opportunities. Also, any in-house workshops we do. Our administrative team tries to equally attend PD, and be aware of who is out of the building.
NSA 17	AP	I read things from Education Weekly every day. I recently just finished my doctorate, so I was definitely provided PD for myself through that.
NSA 18	Prin	Attending different local and state conferences to keep myself apprised of trends in education
NSA 19	AP	I would say I read up on a lot of different things. I have did some online modules, went to conferences, and attended teacher PD.
NSA 20	AP	I have to been to several administrators' PD through CFP. I have been to reading, math, and trauma conferences. I have also done some on webinars.
NSA 21	AP	I attend workshops and conferences on a variety of topics. I keep abreast of the VDOE superintendent's memos. I also try to read literature related to some of the issues we face in education.
NSA 22	AP	Professional development in elementary topics. Such things as family engagement, class evaluations.

**Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

***Item 14, Section 2, Interview Question 13: What professional development activity do you believe you need specifically as an individual, from your experience as a NSA?***

As noted in Table 4.16 on page 82, thirty-two percent of the NSAs stated they specifically needed more PD in instructional leadership or related matters such as curriculum and

evaluations, making it the most common response for interview question 13. NSA 5 reported that she focuses her personal PD around what the school’s data indicates is an area of need. NSA 15 reported needing more PD on the evaluation piece a more effective experience for all parties involved in the evaluation.

Six of the NSAs reported specifically needing more PD in the area of finance and budgeting. NSAs 2, 3, and 21 explained that in their roles as APs, there are few opportunities to work in the areas of school finance and budgeting. NSA 4 explained that her personal need for PD in finance was magnified by a transition of finance personnel within her own school and at the district level. The NSA indicated that her lack of experience was magnified by school personnel transitions out of her control.

Three of the NSAs reported needing more PD in the time management aspects of the position. NSA 19 stated, “I mean you just got so much going on...to manage everything between what you're doing at work and home can be tough.” NSA 11 indicated a desire for PD in time management to complete tasks in a more efficient manner. The NSA stated, “I need to work on putting things off until tomorrow. In administration something will always come up.”

NSAs also reported a need for PD in legal issues they may face being a school administrator, as indicated by NSAs 6, 17, and 21. NSA 17 discussed how the legal aspects of education consistently change. NSA 22 expressed a desire for more PD in the matters of legalities of custody issues. The NSA indicated custody disputes can be sensitive and delicate matters. Regarding custody disputes the NSA stated, “You just want to make sure all your bases are covered.”

Table 4.16

*Item 14, Section 2, Interview Question 13: NSA comments on NSA PD activities specifically needed as an individual*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	I could benefit from more PD in instructional leadership.
NSA 2	Prin	I think in my role as an AP, one thing that I feel like I haven't gotten a lot of experience in is finance. In that area I do feel a little lacking.

(continued)

Table 4.16 (cont.)

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 3	AP	Finance is what I need specifically as an NSA.
NSA 4	Prin	Again, I think it would be finance.
NSA 5	Prin	Whatever my data shows we need to work on as a school. So obviously that would vary, um, throughout the year from year to year. So, um, you know, this year would be focused probably more on English
NSA 6	AP	Human resource and the legal issues with human resources. I don't have a strong background in that. I have a lot of questions. Also, effective school discipline.
NSA 7	AP	I would still like to do more on financials, budget, things of that nature.
NSA 8	AP	Curriculum would be something that I need an extra area of growth in as well as evaluation.
NSA 9	Prin	Finance
NSA 10	AP	Probably balancing work and life and time management.
NSA 11	AP	I need to work on putting things off until tomorrow. In administration something will always come up.
NSA 12	AP	After two years of being in a school building, I feel pretty well prepared to handle any kind of situation that comes at me at this point.
NSA 13	AP	The online programs that we're supposed to use or access. Also, more PD in behavior management would be useful.
NSA 14	AP	Instruction, instructional strategies, and discipline.
NSA 15	AP	The evaluation pieces that professional development, I think I could use the most just how to handle those and just more experience.
NSA 16	AP	Curriculum and instruction.
NSA 17	AP	Professional development on legal issues in education.

(continued)

Table 4.16 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 18	Prin	Instruction, instructional strategies, and discipline. Those are types of things to stay on top of.
NSA 19	AP	Time management. You've got so much going on. You have to manage everything between what you're doing at work and home. That can be tough, especially when you've got so many afterschool activities with sports and things like that.
NSA 20	AP	Behavioral management. We are seeing many different types of behaviors in our pre-school and kindergarten students.
NSA 21	AP	Chronic absenteeism and truancy. That's one of my responsibilities as an assistant principal. Also, before moving into a principal position, the school finance aspect, because that's something that I don't do a lot with.
NSA 22	AP	Legal custody matters. The back and forth of custody legal issues can be daunting sometimes. You just want to make sure all your bases are covered.

### **Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs in Southwestern Virginia**

#### ***Item 15, Section 2, Interview Question 14: What factors in your current role as a NSA do you believe limit your access to professional development activities?***

As noted in Table 4.17 on page 85, seventy-three percent of the NSAs interviewed reported a lack of time was a factor that limited their access to PD activities and opportunities. NSA 5 reported the responsibilities of a school administrator may pull an NSA away from a PD activity. She explained there may be an urgent situation that has to be handled and cannot be postponed. NSA 17 reported her multiple job assignments were a limiting factor in her acquiring PD activities. She stated, "It's the nature of the beast, and in southwest Virginia, many administrators have multiple jobs."

NSAs 4 and 16 stated that professional and personal obligations limit the amount of time one can dedicate to obtaining PD. NSA 4 specified, "It's hard to find time...Especially if it's during the school year, and you've got to leave your building. Then if it's an out of town trip, you're taken time away from family." NSA 20 stated about her schedule, "Things are just a whirlwind some days."

Six of the NSAs reported that limited access and cost were factors that reduced their ability to acquire PD. NSA 18 reported that geography limited her ability to attain PD. The NSA stated, “A lot of things happen on the eastern part of the state, and when you're here in southwest Virginia, you're locked into the opportunities that are brought your direction.” Similarly, NSA 1 reported he would have to travel 2 ½ hours to get to the nearest upcoming PD opportunity. NSA 13 reported that PD funds for a school can be limited. The NSA explained that she preferred to use the limited funds on PD activities for teachers rather than administrators.

NSA 3 stated that in her role as an AP, there were no meetings in her school division to deliver information or PD activities to the APs. The NSA explained that it was often difficult to find time to meet with the principal and access the information the principals had received from their monthly meetings. Relatedly, NSA 6 indicated that there were few PD activities specifically geared towards administrators in her school division.

NSAs 7, 9, and 12 reported they did not believe that there were any factors limiting their access to professional development. NSA 12 stated that having three school administrators in one school helped in acquiring PD. He indicated that if one of them needed to go to a PD training, the other two administrators would be able to manage the school. NSA 12 stated that he could foresee where having only one or two administrators in a school would make it difficult for those administrators to acquire PD.

Table 4.17

*Item 15, Section 2, Interview Question 14: NSA comments on factors that limit access to PD activities as an NSA*

<b>NSA</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Summarized Response</b>
NSA 1	Prin	I would say time. We have a CIP conference coming up and I think the closest one to us is Bristol, which is 2 ½ hours away, so that's not so great.
NSA 2	Prin	Times and demands of the job.
NSA 3	AP	There's nothing designed specifically for APs in our district. We often get everything through secondhand information and personal notes from principals' monthly meetings.

(continued)

Table 4.17 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 4	Prin	Just time. It's hard to find time to attend workshops or things like that. Especially if it's during the school year and you've got to leave your building. Then if it's an out of town trip, you're taking time away from family.
NSA 5	Prin	All the responsibilities of the head principal. Sometimes things are urgent and have to be handled, which could possibly pull away from a PD.
NSA 6	AP	Most of the PD that comes through our division is for teachers. There's not a whole lot that's geared specifically for administration. So I think there's an availability issue. Also, there have been a few times that there've been conferences and stuff, but I'm too busy to be out of the building.
NSA 7	AP	Our district provides us with a wide variety of PD opportunities.
NSA 8	AP	I can't do a whole lot of it during the school year because I'm the one at the building all the time.
NSA 9	Prin	I don't really feel like I'm limited.
NSA 10	AP	Conflicts with schedule.
NSA 11	AP	Time
NSA 12	AP	We've got a lot of support here in the building. We have three administrators here, so if I did need to leave for PD, we would still have two people in the building who would be able to cover the day-to-day duties.
NSA 13	AP	Time away from the school is a big factor and cost. In a lot of ways, I would prefer us to spend our money on teachers getting professional development because they're the ones who are truly affecting the kids.
NSA 14	AP	There's never enough time in the day, so it's a time factor.
NSA 15	AP	The biggest thing is when we leave the building and go to PD, it is tough because we don't like to leave the school one administrator down.
NSA 16	AP	Limited access and time. One could say that personally and professionally.

(continued)

Table 4.17 (cont.)

NSA	Current Role	Summarized Response
NSA 17	AP	It's the time, the available time, and having the multiple job assignments.
NSA 18	Prin	Being limited in my ability to be out of the building is a limitation. Then geographically, a lot of things happen on the eastern part of the state, and when you're here in southwest Virginia, you're locked into the opportunities that are brought your direction.
NSA 19	AP	Time, because you stay so busy with everything. When I did the leadership academy, it was good to go, but I had to be gone Wednesday through Friday on two occasions. That is a lot of time you're spending away from school.
NSA 20	AP	Time, having the time to participate in activities. Things are just a whirlwind some days.
NSA 21	AP	The time. It's difficult to take time away from my office. It's difficult to research best practices or even, you know, take a day off to attend a PD activity.
NSA 22	AP	Time constraints. Having to be in the building. It's hard to leave the building when I have a lot going on. Especially certain times of the year.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION OF RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

The purpose of the study was to identify the perceptions of support and professional development (PD) activities available for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs) in southwestern Virginia. The word “support” identified those activities for NSAs that assisted in such things as task management, socialization into the position, unpredictability of the role, mentoring, stress management, and physical health. The term professional development identified those activities for NSAs that assisted in such areas as increasing teacher knowledge of content areas, advancing of effective strategies to support differing student needs, and analysis of data to inform and improve classroom practice. This chapter contains a summary of the findings, conclusions, discussion of results, study concerns, and recommendations for further research and study.

#### **Summary of Findings and Conclusions**

This section will focus on the summary of findings as it relates to the primary research question and sub-questions. This study was directed by the following primary research question: What is the nature of the supports and professional development available for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia? The primary research question was categorized by the following sub-questions. Interview questions were developed based on the primary research question and sub-questions.

- 1) What support activities did these NSAs receive?
- 2) What professional development activities did these NSAs receive?
- 3) Did the NSAs think these activities effectively prepared them for their school administrator roles (principals or assistant principals)?
- 4) In what areas would the NSAs liked to have increased support or professional development activities in?
- 5) What are some perceived barriers to accessing support or professional development activities as a NSA in southwest Virginia?

### **Summary of Findings/Conclusions on the Support Activities provided for NSAs**

1. The NSAs reported a broad range of support activities they had received. The NSAs reported receiving support activities such as mentoring, attending new administrator programs and conferences, and support from central office personnel. Twenty-three percent of the NSAs conveyed that they had not received a support activity or program as an NSA.
2. A majority of the NSAs (68%) reported that the support activities they received as NSAs were effective in supporting them in their first administrative position.
3. The NSAs reported a wide range of activities in which they would like to have increased support activities. The NSAs reported needing extra support activities in areas such as discipline procedures, school board policies, school board expectations, human resource management, community relations, and evaluations of staff. From the wide-range of responses, with not one area accounting for more than 18% of the responses (i.e., discipline procedures accounted 18% of the responses), the researcher assumes the NSAs had varying experiences in the support and PD activities provided for them.
4. Fifty percent of the NSAs stated that the consultation with a mentor provided a crucial aspect of the support the NSAs provided for themselves. Many of the NSAs cited the benefits of support activities outside the school environment. The NSAs noted the benefits of such activities as physical activity, faith or spiritual activities, and time with family.
5. Seventy-seven percent of the NSAs reported that a lack of time, or the demands of the job, were factors that limited their access to support activities.

### **Summary of Findings/Conclusions on the Professional Development Activities for NSAs**

1. A majority of the NSAs (63%) reported that they had not received PD activities to specifically address aspects of being an NSA. Thirty-seven percent of the NSAs reported they had received PD activities. Those NSAs stated they received PD through such things as attending monthly division meetings and PD conferences.
2. Forty-one percent of the NSAs reported that the PD activities they received were not effective in preparing them for their first administrative position. Twenty-three

- percent of the NSAs reported that in some aspects the PD activities provided were effective, but in other aspects the PD activities were not effective in preparing them for their first administrative position. Thirty-six percent of the NSAs reported that the PD activities they received were effective overall in preparing them for their first administrative position.
3. The NSAs stated they would like increased PD in similar areas reported for increased support activities. The NSAs reported needing extra PD activities in areas such as human resource management, finance and budgeting, or legal issues that regarding discipline procedures or special education.
  4. Fifty-five percent of the NSAs interviewed reported that reading literature encompassed a significant portion of the PD they needed and provided for themselves. Fifty percent of the NSAs stated that they attended conferences and workshops to professionally develop themselves.
  5. Seventy-three percent of the NSAs interviewed reported that a lack of time was a factor that limited their access to PD activities and opportunities.

## **Discussion of Results**

When analyzing the data from the interview questions that pertain to the subset of questions and the primary research question, the NSAs' perceptions provided insights about the supports and PD activities provided for NSAs in southwest Virginia. The interview questions were arranged in two subsets. One subset was focused around the support activities available for and needed by NSAs. The second subset was focused around the PD activities available for and needed by NSAs.

Seventy-seven percent of the NSAs reported receiving some form of support activity as an NSA. Sixty-eight percent of those NSAs reported that the support activities they received as NSAs were effective. A majority of the NSAs stated that the support activity of mentoring was the most effective and most readily available. In a study conducted by Sciarappa and Mason (2014), highly trained mentors work with NSAs to develop job-embedded skills, strengthen competencies, and build leadership capacity. The researchers (Sciarappa & Mason, 2014) noted that the NSAs indicated that mentoring was critical to their adjustment and success during their first year. Interestingly, a majority of the NSAs in this study who received formal mentoring

reported that they favored the informal mentoring they received from other colleagues more than formal mentoring. Some of the NSAs noted that informal mentoring was much more available and candid than a formal mentor with whom they may or may not have been familiar.

Forty-five percent of the NSAs noted the effectiveness of attending programs specifically designed to provide school leadership training to school administrators. The NSAs attended programs such as the Recently Appointed Administrators (RAA) program coordinated by Virginia Tech University, Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) in southwest Virginia, Statewide Communities of Practice for Excellence (SCOPE) leadership development program through the University of Virginia, and the Initiative One Leadership Institute program. These NSAs reported that such aspects as being able to hear other NSA accounts, networking with other NSAs, and being exposed to new or important information were critical in their new positions.

As part of the interviews for this study, NSAs were directed to classify PD activities as aspects such as human resource management, finance/school budget management, and instructional leadership. Intriguingly, only 37% of the NSAs reported receiving PD activities to specifically address aspects of being an NSA. Some of the NSAs reported they had received PD activities, but not to specifically address being an NSA. Research has indicated that NSAs may feel a need to be more involved in instructional activities because of an over-delegation of managerial responsibilities to the NSA position (Armstrong, 2015; Barnett, Shoho, & Oleszewski, 2012).

An analysis of those data indicates a wide range of responses from the participating NSAs about what PD activities were needed in their first administrative position. Sun and Shoho (2017) reported that NSAs need to be involved in more instructional leadership activities that prepared them for a head principal role or further leadership roles. Also, Hunt (2011) noted such areas as budgeting and finance are also areas in which often little training is provided for NSAs. The wide range of responses in this study indicates to the researcher that NSAs believed they needed PD activities in differing areas of instructional leadership. The NSAs reported they would also benefit from more PD activities in other school administration areas such as finance management, human resource management, managing safety crises, and working with antagonistic staff or other adults.

Researchers (Daresh, 2007; Enomoto, 2012) have noted how providing support and PD

activities to oneself as a school administrator is critical in his or her development as an NSA. Enomoto conveyed that PD activities can be provided to NSAs, but NSAs act independently on how they are going to follow through with the PD. Similarly, a majority of the NSAs in this study reported providing support or PD activities to themselves, that not only helped them, but were also maintainable in their daily schedules. Fifty percent of the NSAs in this study stated that the consultation with a mentor provided a crucial aspect of the support the NSAs provided for themselves. The NSAs reported such aspects as the mentors being readily available to discuss situations, being able to communicate with someone in a non-evaluative position, and a sustained relationship between the mentor and NSA.

Many of the NSAs cited the benefits of support activities outside the school environment. The NSAs noted the benefits of activities such as daily exercise, faith or spiritual activities, and time with family. The NSAs agreed that these activities outside of school helped manage the stress of being an NSA. Many of NSAs noted that these self-provided activities were so important that they would make accommodations to their personal lives such as waking up early to exercise or turning off their email notifications on their phones when they got home from work.

In interview questions 7 and 14 of this study, the NSAs provided feedback regarding what aspects of their current role as an NSA limited their access to support activities (question 7) and PD activities (question 14). When analyzing data from this study, the NSAs gave similar responses in factors that limited their abilities to access both, support and PD activities. In total, 77 percent of the NSAs reported that a lack of time or the demands of the job were factors that limited their access to support activities. Correspondingly, 73% percent of the NSAs interviewed reported a lack of time was a factor that limited their access to PD activities and opportunities. A majority of the NSAs reported that the urgency of their school responsibilities pulled them away from accessing both support and PD activities. Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2015) noted the professional responsibilities of discipline, paperwork, and time management were the major factors that hindered NSA development during their initial years of school administration. Also, Armstrong (2015) reported that NSAs noted that the stress of the constant demands and lack of training in basic administrative technical tasks were indicators of how unprepared they were to fulfill their new roles. This study along with the research of Beam et al. (2015), and Armstrong (2015), indicates there is a significant need for NSAs to receive or seek additional support and

PD activities. The combined research suggests that school divisions should make NSA support and PD extra priority, or the NSAs should seek out informal opportunities (i.e., networking with colleagues, reading literature, or informal mentoring) to continue to develop and prepare themselves for future school leadership roles.

Forty-one percent of the NSAs in this study reported that the geographic area or economic resources were limiting factors in accessing support and PD activities. These NSAs reported having to travel a significant distance to acquire support and PD activities, or having to choose between whether their teachers or themselves received the PD activities. Similarly, Wiezorek and Manard (2018) reported how a lack of resources impacted the ability of rural school principals to find solutions to continue to improve their school communities. The researchers noted how the impact was magnified when applied to NSAs because they may not be fully prepared for the role. The data from this study combined, with the research of Wiezorek and Manard (2018), indicates that the support and PD of NSAs are significantly impacted by the financial and geographic limitations that often are present in rural areas.

The research reviewed within Chapter Two examines the transition/ preparation of NSAs, the responsibilities and roles of NSAs, supports and PD for rural school administrators, and the mentoring of NSAs. This study is distinctive from those studies because it analyzes the specific support and PD activities provided for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia through the perspective of the NSAs. This study is also unique in that it examines what support and PD activities the NSAs provided for themselves, therefore, acknowledging the factor of personal characteristics and initiative in the support and PD provided for and needed by NSAs.

### **Support and PD Activities to implement in a NSA Program**

The data from this study indicates seven areas that school divisions could utilize to either create a program for NSAs or further develop their program for NSAs. Those areas correlate with the primary research question and the five primary sub-questions of the study (listed in Chapter One and the beginning of Chapter 5). From the study's five-sub-questions, 14 interview questions were developed to conduct research on the support and PD activities for and needed by NSAs in southwestern Virginia. The seven areas of development for an NSA program, comprised of support and PD activities, are listed below and further explained in *Table 5.1* below.

1. Support activities the NSAs perceived as effective (generated from combined percentages from responses of interview questions two and three)
2. Professional development activities the NSAs perceived as effective (generated from combined percentages from responses of interview questions nine and ten)
3. Support activities the NSAs perceived as needed (generated from combined percentages from responses of interview questions four and six)
4. Professional development activities the NSAs perceived as needed (generated from combined percentages from responses of interview questions 11 and 13)
5. Support activities the NSAs provided for themselves
6. Professional development activities the NSAs provided for themselves
7. Factors that limit NSAs' access to support and professional development activities (generated from combined percentages from responses of interview questions 7 and 14)

In *Table 5.1* below, the areas of support and PD activities are listed in ranking order by how often they were indicated in NSAs' responses.

Table 5.1

*Support and PD Activities to Implement in a NSA Program.*

*School divisions should consider the following when developing an NSA program:*

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**Effective support activities**

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1. Mentoring from building principal, both formal and informal.
  2. Support activities received from programs for NSA development or programs designed for school leadership. Programs such as the RAA through Virginia Tech, the CIP consortium of southwest Virginia, and the SCOPE program through UVA.
  3. The collective guidance and advice from administrative team.
  4. Mentoring through formal mentor programs.
  5. Experience gained from performing actual duties related to the position.
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(continued)

Table 5.1 (cont.)

<b>Effective Support Activities</b>
6. Availability of central office staff for advice and communication.
7. The expectations, duties, responsibilities, and roles of a NSA written in an handbook for beginning school administrators.
8. Support activities that create networking opportunities with other school administrators.
9. Experience from prior roles, such as guidance counselor or administrative intern.
<b>Effective Professional Development Activities</b>
1. PD activities received from programs for NSA development or programs designed for school leadership. Programs such as the RAA through Virginia Tech, the CIP consortium of southwest Virginia, and the SCOPE program through UVA.
2. The collective guidance and advice on areas such as instructional leadership human resources, or finance management.
3. A literacy conference specifically for administrators.
4. A yearly school leadership retreat where various topics are discussed.
5. A school safety PD activity organized by the school division.
<b>Needed Support Activities</b>
1. Time management training to manage the tasks of a NSA.
2. Handling matters in student discipline procedures.
3. Human resource management and evaluations of school staff.
4. Guidance on the most effective instructional practices and pedagogy.
5. Special Education procedures and law.
6. Training on school board policies and regulations.
<b>Professional Development activities the NSAs perceived as needed</b>
1. Instructional leadership and related matters.

(continued)

Table 5.1 (cont.)

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<b>Professional Development activities the NSAs perceived as needed</b>
2. School finance and budget management training.
3. Human resource management and evaluations of school staff.
4. The collective guidance and advice from other administrators.
5. School law training, specifically in special education and discipline procedures.
6. Time management training to manage the tasks of a NSA.

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<b>Support activities the NSAs should provide for themselves</b>
1. The consultation of a mentor.
2. The practice of maintaining good physical health through diet and exercise.
3. The practice of maintaining proper balance between family and profession.
4. Routines that encourage collaboration with their administrative team.
5. Activities that help sustain one's religious, faith, or spiritual well-being.

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<b>Professional Development activities the NSAs should provide for themselves</b>
1. The practice of reading literature and keeping up-to-date with effective practices and procedures.
2. The attendance of conferences on a variety of topics and issues.
3. The attendance of available teacher PD activities.

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<b>Practices to limit the following barriers to support and PD activities</b>
1. A lack of time created by demands of profession and family.
2. The financial resources available to acquire support and PD activities.
3. The geographic area of the school or school division is in. that creates a significant amount of travel time to receive support or PD activities.
4. The limited number of administration in a school building. For example, if one school administrator leaves it can create a burden on the school.

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## **Study Concerns**

Although there were mock interviews that were used to pilot and modify questions for the study, the following realizations took place as the study progressed. Future research related to the support and PD of novice school administrators could benefit from these recommendations.

1. Interview questions two, three, nine, and twelve asked about the effectiveness of the support and PD activities received by the NSAs. The NSA position has many facets that compose its professional characteristics. Many of the NSAs responded that in some aspects, their support and PD activities were effective and other aspects they were not. Further studies should more clearly apply the question of effectiveness to specific aspects of the NSA position.
2. Interview questions seven and fourteen asked the NSAs to address factors that limited their access to support and PD activities with little clarification. From the large majority of similar responses involving limited time to access the activities, further clarification of the question may have been needed. Future research on limiting factors to access supports or PD could be asked through a bulleted list of possible limiting factors or a survey fashion.

While the specificity of those interview questions could be further focused in future studies, the questions did encourage open-ended dialogue between the participants and the researcher, therefore, allowing for further analysis of their experiences of being NSAs in southwestern Virginia.

## **Recommendations for Further Research/Study**

The following are suggestions for further research and study. The recommendations are based upon the researcher's opinions regarding the results of the study and research.

1. This study only examined NSAs in southwestern Virginia. Other studies should be conducted in various parts of the nation, to better determine the perceptions of the supports and professional development (PD) available for and needed by NSAs
2. This study only researched the perceptions of NSAs. Many of the NSAs noted the importance of support from a principal or administrative team. Further research should be conducted on the perceptions of the support and PD activities available for

- and needed by NSAs from the school administrators providing the support and PD activities to NSAs.
3. This study analyzed the support and PD activities for NSAs in southwestern Virginia from the perceptions of NSAs in southwest Virginia. This study does not take into account the views of other school leadership personnel, such as, more experienced principals, central office personnel, or superintendents. A study should take place examining the insights provided by other school leadership personnel using the same questions asked in this study. The additional research would contribute to the body of knowledge incorporating the support and PD of NSAs.
  4. Ninety-six percent of the NSAs in this study began their school administrative career in an assistant principal position. Six of the 22 NSAs were in a head principal position at the time of the study. Additional research should be conducted to gather data on the effectiveness of the support and PD provided to NSAs who transitioned quickly to the head principal role.
  5. Many NSAs reported attending programs outside their school division specifically designed to provide school leadership training to school administrators. The NSAs attended programs such as the Recently Appointed Administrators (RAA) program coordinated by Virginia Tech University, Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) in southwest Virginia, Statewide Communities of Practice for Excellence (SCOPE) leadership development program through the University of Virginia, and the Initiative One Leadership Institute program. The opportunities to attend the school leadership programs were either paid for or arranged by the NSAs' school divisions. Additional study should be conducted in an effort to gather research on the effect of school leadership programs on NSAs preparation and abilities. This research could examine school divisions that require NSAs to attend such programs, compared to school divisions that provide other forms of school leadership training to NSAs within their school division.
  6. Sixty-four percent of NSAs in this study indicated they did not receive PD activities as an NSA. Additional research needs to be completed to examine if PD activities are being provided for NSAs during this critical stage of their careers. More research

should also be collected to determine what PD activities are most effective in preparing NSAs for their school administrative positions.

7. Many of the NSAs spoke of the importance of maintaining their health through diet and exercise as a key support. Further research should be conducted to gather data on the effects of maintaining health through proper diet and exercise on school administrators.

### **Recommendations for Practice or Changes in Policy**

The data gathered during the study would indicate additions or changes in practice in the following areas. The recommendations are based upon the researcher's opinions regarding the results of the study and research.

1. The Virginia General Assembly has directed that "Each school board should provide a program of high quality professional development...for principals and supervisors designed to increase proficiency in instructional leadership and management" (Code of Virginia, 2019) Furthermore the VDOE, has recommended that school divisions use PD to develop administrators to provide a basis for leadership improvement optimize student learning (VDOE, 2012). However, data indicates that 64% of NSAs in this study did not receive PD activities as an NSA. This study defined an NSA as a school administrator in years one, two, or three of his or her school administrative careers. Since 64% the NSAs interviewed had two or three years' experience as a school administrator, this leads the researcher to believe that the NSAs had adequate time to observe if they were going to receive PD activities or not. School divisions should implement practices to ensure that these school leaders are receiving PD activities at a critical time in their careers.
2. A majority of the NSAs noted the support provided by their principals as an effective support. The NSAs indicated that being able to go to their principals with a variety of questions was a key aspect in their development. Therefore, school divisions should make a deliberate effort to pair a NSA with a school leader who is knowledgeable in the area of support or PD the NSA has the greatest need for (i.e., instructional leadership, human resources, or discipline procedures)

3. Many of the NSAs reported that the most effective support and PD activities they received came from school leadership development programs. The NSAs spoke of the benefits of attending the Recently Appointed Administrators (RAA) program coordinated by Virginia Tech University, Comprehensive Instructional Program (CIP) in southwest Virginia, Statewide Communities of Practice for Excellence (SCOPE) leadership development program through the University of Virginia, and the Initiative One Leadership Institute program. Many of the NSAs discussed how being able to network and share school leadership experiences with like-minded peers was a significant benefit. School divisions and school leaders should examine how to establish networks of dialogue and discussion with other school divisions and schools. Through these networks, an effort to establish an exchange of ideas and problem solving solutions can take place.
4. Seventy-three percent of the NSAs interviewed stated a lack of time or the priority of other situations limited their ability to acquire support and or PD activities. It is widely recognized that many NSAs will move on to greater school leadership positions. School divisions should provide support and PD activities to the NSAs in a manner where it is prioritized and mandated that the NSAs attend the activities. Therefore, school divisions should provide extra support (in the form of administrative personnel) to schools, so that the responsibilities of the NSAs are secured while they receive the support and PD activities.
5. In total, 64% of NSAs in this study reported that the PD activities provided for them were not effective in preparing them for their first administrative position. In an effort to best prepare NSAs for school leadership positions, school divisions should provide PD activities in various areas such as human resource management, school finance and budgeting, and instructional leadership.
6. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, the locality's ability to provide for its educational programming is often measured by its local composite index (LCI). Eight out of the eleven school divisions where participating NSAs worked were in the bottom 27<sup>th</sup> percentile out of the 134 school divisions in Virginia (VDOE, 2019) (see Appendix F). Many of the NSAs expressed that the multiplicity of roles they had to fill (i.e., one NSA in the study was a CTE director for the division and an assistant principal) and

the school divisions' lack of financial resources hindered opportunities to acquire support and PD activities. However, a majority of the NSAs stated the support they received from the building principal, other building administrators, central office personnel, and superintendent were effective. Therefore, school divisions, particularly smaller rural school divisions like most of the divisions in southwestern Virginia, should implement cost-effective strategies, such as training central office staff and principals in providing support and PD activities for NSAs.

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**APPENDIX A**  
**INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

Perceptions of the Supports and Professional Development for and Needed by Novice School Administrators in Southwestern Virginia Interview Protocol

Below you will find questions that will be asked during our upcoming interview. Questions have been created in an effort to gather qualitative data. You may wish to look over and answer these questions prior to the interview.

*Directions: For the qualitative items, space has been provided for feedback.*

**Introduction Question: Introduction/ Demographics Survey Questions:** Tell me a little about yourself in the following demographics question.

A) How long have you been in education? B) How long have you been in school administration? C) What was your first school administrative position? D) What is your current school administrative position?

**Support Activities for and needed by NSAs Interview Questions**

(Support activities will refer to activities that could be considered mentoring, coaching, shadowing, task management, or transition support)

1. In your first administrative position, were there any division or other support activities or programs (i.e., mentoring, coaching, shadowing, task management, or transition programs) to specifically address aspects of being a novice school administrator?

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2. In your opinion, were these support activities effective in supporting you in your first administrative position?

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3. In your opinion, what has been the most effective support activity in which you have engaged as a NSA, and who or what organization provided that experience?

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4. What support activities do you believe were needed in your first administrative position?

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5. What things do you currently do to support yourself as a NSA (i.e. consult a mentor, stress management support, emotional support, or physical health support)?

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6. What support activity do you believe you need specifically as an individual, from your experience as a NSA?

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7. What factors in your current role as a NSA, do you believe limit your access to support activities?

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**Professional Development Activities for and Needed by NSAs Interview Questions**

(Professional development activities for NSAs will refer to activities that could be considered PD in such things as instructional leadership, curriculum development, finance management, human resource management).

8. In your first administrative position were there any division or other professional development activities (i.e. instructional leadership, curriculum development, finance management, human resource management) to specifically address aspects of being a novice school administrator (NSA)

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9. In your opinion, were these professional development activities effective in preparing you for your first administrative position?

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10. In your opinion, what has been the most effective professional development activity in which you have engaged as a NSA, and who or what organization provided that experience

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11. What professional development activities do believe were needed in your first administrative position?

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12. What things do you currently do to professionally develop yourself as a NSA (i.e. workshops, conferences, online modules, coursework, reading literature, attending administrative or teacher PD)?

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13. What professional development activity do you believe you need specifically as an individual, from your experience as a NSA?

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14. What factors in your current role as a NSA, do you believe limit your access to professional development activities?

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The interview will be audio recorded. After the interview, the researcher will type a transcript of the interview. You will be invited to read the transcript and make comments or corrections.

## APPENDIX B

### ALIGNMENT OF SUB-QUESTIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RESEARCH SUB-QUESTIONS	INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
<p>What support activities did the NSAs receive?</p>	<p>A. In your first administrative position, were there any division or other support activities or programs (i.e., mentoring, coaching, shadowing, task management, or transition programs) to specifically address aspects of being a novice school administrator (NSA)? (Question 1)</p> <p>B. What things do you currently do to support yourself as a NSA (i.e., consult a mentor, stress management support, emotional support, physical health support)? (Question 5)</p>
<p>What professional development activities did the NSAs receive?</p>	<p>A. In your first administrative position were there any division or other professional development activities (i.e., instructional leadership, curriculum development, or finance management) to specifically address aspects of being a novice school administrator (NSA)? (Question 8)</p> <p>B. What things do you currently do to professionally develop yourself as a NSA (i.e., workshops, conferences, online modules, coursework, attending administrative or teacher PD)? (Question 12)</p>

<p>Did the NSAs think these activities effectively prepared them for their school administrator roles (principals or assistant principals)?</p>	<p>A. In your opinion, were these support activities effective in supporting you in your first administrative position? (Question 2)</p> <p>B. In your opinion, what has been the most effective support activity in which you have engaged as a NSA, and who or what organization provided that experience? (Question 3)</p> <p>C. In your opinion, were these professional development activities effective in preparing you for your first administrative position? (Question 9)</p> <p>D. In your opinion, what has been the most effective professional development activity in which you have engaged as a NSA, and who or what organization provided that experience? (Question 10)</p>
<p>In what areas did the NSAs want and need to have increased support or professional development activities?</p>	<p>A. What supports activities do you believe were needed in your first administrative position? (Question 4)</p> <p>B. What support activity do you believe you need specifically as an individual, from your experience as a NSA? (Question 6)</p> <p>C. What professional development activities do believe were needed in your first administrative position? (Question 11)</p> <p>D. What professional development activity do you believe you need specifically as an individual, from your experience as a NSA? (Question 13)</p>

<p>What are some perceived barriers to accessing support or professional development activities as a NSA in southwestern Virginia?</p>	<p>A. What factors in your current role as a NSA do you believe limit your access to support activities? (Question 7)</p> <p>B. What factors in your current role as NSA do you believe limit your access to professional development activities? (Question 14)</p>
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## APPENDIX C

### EMAIL SCRIPT TO SUPERINTENDENTS FOR NSA CONTACT PERMISSION AND INFORMATION

Date

Name of Division Representative  
Name of School Division

Subject line of email - RE: Permission to Conduct Research Study

Dear (Superintendent),

My name is Luke Boone. I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am in the process of writing a dissertation to obtain a Doctorate of Education. I am writing to request permission to conduct research in your school division. Also, I am writing to gain permission to contact your division's principals or assistant principals who would be considered novice school administrators (NSAs) in their first, second, or third year as a school administrator. In contacting your division's NSAs, I would be asking about their interests in participating in a study about the support and professional development activities available for and needed by novice school administrators in southwest Virginia (VDOE's Regions Six and Seven).. The study is entitled *Perceptions of the Supports and Professional Development for and needed by Novice School Administrators in Southwestern Virginia*.

The study is about the nature of support and professional development activities available for and needed by novice school administrators in southwestern Virginia. The focus will be on school administrators in their first, second, or third year in the profession in southwestern Virginia. Participants will be asked to participate in an interview consisting of one introductory question and 14 open-ended questions. The interview questions are attached to this email. These questions will focus on the support and professional development activities for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs), did the NSAs think these activities were effective, and what additional support and professional development activities would the NSAs like to have had? Potential benefits of this study are: Data collected will provide school leaders, and school districts and divisions, with a focused list of effective support and professional development activities for NSAs. The practices identified in the study can be used by school leaders and school districts or divisions for replication to enhance school leadership in public schools. By enhancing school leadership, a raise in student success and achievement may also be possible. If you agree, please reply to this e-mail acknowledging your permission as the division superintendent.

Also, if possible please send me information about who would be considered novice principals or assistant principals in their first, second, or third years of administration in your division. If I receive your reply, I will contact your division's principals and assistant principals who meet the novice school administrator criteria, and request their consent to be participants in the study.

Verbal consent will also be obtained through a phone interview.  
Your approval to proceed in obtaining permissions is greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me, I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.  
Sincerely,

Luke Boone, Researcher Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
lukeb7@vt.edu cc: David Alexander, Dissertation Committee Chair

## APPENDIX D

### INTENT FORM EMAIL OR TELEPHONE SCRIPT TO NSAS IN SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA

Email/ Telephone Script Requesting Intent/ Permission to Interview

Subject line of email - RE: Info for VA Tech Doctorate Dissertation

Good Morning/ Afternoon Administrator \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Luke Boone. I am currently enrolled as a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. I am in the process of writing a dissertation to obtain a Doctorate of Education. The study is entitled *Perceptions of the Supports and Professional Development Activities for and needed by Novice School Administrators in Southwestern Virginia*. I am calling/emailing you to request permission to interview you as a participant in a study on the nature of support and professional development activities available for and needed by novice school administrators in southwestern Virginia. As a principal myself, I truly understand how busy your day-to-day schedule is throughout the week, and how precious time is. It is my hope to conduct an interview that aligns with your schedule. I have recently emailed your superintendent or assistant superintendent requesting permission to ask your intent to interview as part of the study. Also, I have attached the interview protocol so that you may have an estimate of how long the interview will last and have a chance to review questions in an effort to save time during the interview.

The study is about the nature of support and professional development activities available for and needed by novice school administrators in southwestern Virginia. The focus will be on novice school administrators, including both principals or assistant principals in their first, second, or third year of school administration. You will be asked to participate in an interview consisting of one introductory question, and 14 open-ended questions. The interview questions are attached to this email. These questions will focus on the support and professional development activities for and needed by novice school administrators (NSAs), did the NSAs think these activities were effective, and what additional support and PD activities would the NSAs like to have had? Potential benefits of this study are: Data collected will provide school leaders, and school districts and divisions, with a focused list of effective support and professional development activities for novice principals. The practices identified in the study can be used by school leaders and school districts or divisions for replication to enhance school leadership in public schools. By enhancing school leadership, a raise in student success and achievement may also be possible.

Your agreement to allow me to conduct the interview will constitute the following:

- Your identity will be protected. No participant will be identified in the final report. Original data will be destroyed after research is completed.
- In order to protect confidentiality of participants, neither the school nor the school divisions will be identified in the final report.

- Information gathered during the course of the study will be analyzed and the findings may contribute to published research reports and presentations.
  - There are no foreseeable inconveniences or risks involved in participating in the study.
  - A copy of the study will be provided to your school division upon completion of this study. The final report will contain a summary of all of the interviews and will not identify specific schools, school principals or assistant principals, or school divisions in order to preserve confidentiality.
  - There will be no compensation for participants in this study.
- If you have intent on participating in the study and would like to be a participant, please reply back to this email with a “YES”. If you do not have intent in participating in the study, please reply back to this email with a “NO”. If you agree to having intent on participating in the study, I will contact you to schedule an interview, and verbal consent will be obtained at the beginning of the interview.

Thank you again for your time, your consideration is greatly appreciated. Please do not hesitate to contact me, I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Luke Boone, Researcher Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University  
lukeb7@vt.edu cc: David Alexander, Dissertation Committee Chair

**APPENDIX E**  
**INFORMED CONSENT**

**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY**

**Informed Consent for Participants in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

*Title of Project: Perceptions of the Supports and Professional Development for and needed by Novice School Administrators in Southwestern Virginia*

**Investigator (s): Luke Boone**

**Email [lukeb7@vt.edu](mailto:lukeb7@vt.edu)**

**Phone: (276) 340-2649**

**I. Purpose of this Research/Project**

The purpose of this study is to examine the nature of supports and professional development available for and needed by novice school principals and novice assistant principals in the southwestern of Virginia. This study will also help determine the did the novice school administrators think these activities were effective, and what additional support and PD activities would the novice school administrators like to have had?

**II. Procedures**

Data will be collected through interview questions in a standardized open-ended format. The interview instrument design was developed by the researcher using an interview protocol to collect data (see Appendix A). Information will be collected through a qualitative design with qualitative data collection on the supports and professional development available for and needed by NSAs in the southwestern Virginia. Interviews will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The telephone interview will be audio recorded and transcribed.

**III. Risks**

There are no apparent nor anticipated risks to persons who participate in the study. Participants will be assured their confidentiality through 1) the use of coded names (i.e. NSA1) for the participants and the school, 2) limiting access to transcripts to only the researcher and the participant.

**IV. Benefits**

No promise or guarantee of benefits has been made to encourage you to participate. Potential benefits of this study are data collected will provide school leaders, and school districts and divisions, with a focused list of effective support and professional development activities for novice principals. The practices identified in the study can be used by school leaders and school districts or divisions for replication to enhance school leadership in public schools. By enhancing school leadership, a raise in student success and achievement may also be possible.

**V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality**

At no time, will the researchers release identifiable results of the study to anyone other than individuals working on the project without your written consent. Your identity will be protected as you will not be identified in the final report. Every effort will be made to disclose the identity

of the participants by using code names such as “NSA 1”. Any identification of participants will be kept on a password protected computer that is separate from data that is coded. Electronic Files from the digital recordings of the interview will be stored in a locked, password protected device. The researcher will be the only person who will have access to the interview audio recordings. Copies of the transcripts may be viewed only by the researcher. division will be identified in the final report. Participation in the study is voluntary. Should you decide to withdraw permission after the study begins, you may notify the researcher of your decision.

The Virginia Tech (VT) Institutional Review Board (IRB) may view the study’s data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

## **VI. Compensation**

There will be no compensation for your participation in this study.

## **VII. Freedom to Withdraw**

It is important for you to know that you are free to withdraw from this study at any time without penalty. You are free not to answer any questions that you choose or respond to what is being asked of you without penalty. At the time of your withdrawal, your interview and transcript will be destroyed and the data will not appear in the final dissertation.

Please note that there may be circumstances under which the investigator may determine that a subject should not continue as a subject.

## **VIII. Questions or Concerns**

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions about this study, you may contact one of the research investigators whose contact information is included at the beginning of this document.

Should you have any questions or concerns about the study’s conduct or your rights as a research subject, or need to report a research-related injury or event, you may contact the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board at [irb@vt.edu](mailto:irb@vt.edu) or (540) 231-3732.

## **IX. Subject's Verbal Consent**

Verbal consent will be obtained at the start of the interview based on the following;

I have read the Consent Form and conditions of this project. I have had all my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary verbal consent:

**APPENDIX F**

**VDOE REGIONS SIX AND SEVEN WITH LOCAL COMPOSITE INDEX (LCI)  
PERCENTILE RANKINGS OUT OF 134 SCHOOL DIVISIONS IN VIRGINIA (I.E.,  
THE 1ST PERCENTILE WOULD HAVE LOWEST LCI IN VIRGINIA)**

<b>Region 6</b>	<b>NSA in Study</b>	<b>LCI percentile ranking in VA</b>	<b>ADM</b>	<b>Region 7</b>	<b>NSA in Study</b>	<b>LCI percentile ranking in VA</b>	<b>ADM</b>
Alleghany County	Yes	26th	2,176	Bland County	No	33rd	797
Botetourt County	No	64th	4,665	Buchanan County	No	34th	2,889
Covington	No	30th	940	Bristol	Yes	27th	2,193
Craig County	No	38th	600	Carroll County	No	20th	3,752
Danville	No	16th	5,935	Dickenson County	No	14th	2,183
Floyd County	No	41st	1,992	Galax	No	18th	1,305
Franklin County	No	69th	6,952	Giles County	No	22nd	2,391
Henry County	Yes	6th	7,045	Grayson County	No	45th	1,616
Martinsville	Yes	3rd	2,057	Lee County	No	1st	3,064
Montgomery County	Yes	66th	9,048	Norton	No	25th	814
Patrick County	No	9th	2,800	Pulaski County	Yes	37th	4,193
Pittsylvania County	Yes	12th	8,852	Radford	No	10th	1,599

(continued)

Appendix F (cont.)

Roanoke City	No	41st	12,791	Russell County	Yes	8th	3,850
Roanoke County	Yes	55th	13,982	Scott County	No	2nd	3,540
Salem	No	59th	3,716	Smyth County	Yes	5th	4,403
				Tazewell County	Yes	19th	5,936
				Washington County	No	43rd	7,090
				Wise County	No	18th	5,754
				Wythe County	No	37th	4,081

## APPENDIX G

### LIST OF SCHOOL DIVISIONS IN VDOE'S REGION 6 & REGION 7

#### **VDOE Region 6**

1. Alleghany County
2. Botetourt County
3. Covington
4. Craig County
5. Danville
6. Floyd County
7. Franklin County
8. Henry County
9. Martinsville
10. Montgomery County
11. Patrick County
12. Pittsylvania County
13. Roanoke
14. Roanoke County
15. Salem

#### **VDOE Region 7**

1. Bland County
2. Buchanan County
3. Bristol
4. Carroll County
5. Dickenson County
6. Galax
7. Giles County
8. Grayson County
9. Lee County
10. Norton
11. Pulaski County
12. Radford
13. Russell County
14. Scott County
15. Smyth County
16. Tazewell County
17. Washington County
18. Wise County
19. Wythe County

## APPENDIX H

### DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT FROM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

#### Interview Question 1

Support Activity	NSAs	Percentage of NSAs
Mentoring (Formal & Informal)	2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22	59
RAA School Leadership Program	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19,	41
Central Office Support	1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16.	32

#### Interview Question 2

Support Activity	NSAs	Percentage of NSAs
Mentoring (Formal & Informal)	2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 22	59
RAA School Leadership Program	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 19,	41
Central Office Support	1, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16.	32

APPENDIX I

DATA SOURCE: VDOE LOCAL COMPOSITE INDEX

2018-2020 COMPOSITE INDEX OF LOCAL ABILITY-TO-PAY		
Div. Num.	Division	Final 2018-2020 Composite Index
001	ACCOMACK	.3506
002	ALBEMARLE	.6780
003	ALLEGHANY <sup>2</sup>	.2423/.2899
004	AMELIA	.3231
005	AMHERST	.3073
006	APPOMATTOX	.2950
007	ARLINGTON	.8000
008	AUGUSTA	.3602
009	BATH	.8000
010	BEDFORD*	.3132
011	BLAND	.3070
012	BOTETOURT	.3856
013	BRUNSWICK	.3537
014	BUCHANAN	.3078
015	BUCKINGHAM	.3485
016	CAMPBELL	.2851
017	CAROLINE	.3446
018	CARROLL	.2727
019	CHARLES CITY	.5175
020	CHARLOTTE	.2439
021	CHESTERFIELD	.3522
022	CLARKE	.5506
023	CRAIG	.3235
024	CULPEPER	.3573
025	CUMBERLAND	.2810
026	DICKENSON	.2470
027	DINWIDDIE	.2783
028	ESSEX	.4298
029	FAIRFAX COUNTY	.6754
030	FAUQUIER	.6114
031	FLOYD	.3337
032	FLUVANNA	.3912
033	FRANKLIN COUNTY	.3954
034	FREDERICK	.3898
035	GILES	.2779
036	GLOUCESTER	.3821
037	GOOCHLAND	.8000
038	GRAYSON	.3462
039	GREENE	.3321
040	GREENSVILLE	.2189
041	HALIFAX	.3000
042	HANOVER	.4468
043	HENRICO	.4183
044	HENRY	.2253
045	HIGHLAND	.8000
046	ISLE OF WIGHT	.3968
047	JAMES CITY	.5657
048	KING GEORGE	.3721
049	KING AND QUEEN	.3945
050	KING WILLIAM	.3283
051	LANCASTER	.7718
052	LEE	.1754

**2018-2020 COMPOSITE INDEX OF LOCAL ABILITY-TO-PAY**

Div. Num.	Division	Final 2018-2020 Composite Index
053	LOUDOUN	.5383
054	LOUISA	.5474
055	LUNENBURG	.2525
056	MADISON	.4608
057	MATHEWS	.5060
058	MECKLENBURG	.3767
059	MIDDLESEX	.6160
060	MONTGOMERY	.3920
062	NELSON	.5356
063	NEW KENT	.4172
065	NORTHAMPTON	.4746
066	NORTHUMBERLAND	.7187
067	NOTTOWAY	.2385
068	ORANGE	.4025
069	PAGE	.3007
070	PATRICK	.2396
071	PITTSYLVANIA	.2443
072	POWHATAN	.4302
073	PRINCE EDWARD	.3598
074	PRINCE GEORGE	.2391
075	PRINCE WILLIAM	.3783
077	PULASKI	.3192
078	RAPPAHANNOCK	.7672
079	RICHMOND COUNTY	.3100
080	ROANOKE COUNTY	.3620
081	ROCKBRIDGE	.4498
082	ROCKINGHAM	.3682
083	RUSSELL	.2322
084	SCOTT	.1917
085	SHENANDOAH	.3821
086	SMYTH	.2174
087	SOUTHAMPTON	.2963
088	SPOTSYLVANIA	.3627
089	STAFFORD	.3462
090	SURRY	.8000
091	SUSSEX	.3482
092	TAZEWELL	.2624
093	WARREN	.4333
094	WASHINGTON	.3434
095	WESTMORELAND	.4743
096	WISE	.2474
097	WYTHE	.3146
098	YORK	.3822
101	ALEXANDRIA	.8000
102	BRISTOL	.2922
103	BUENA VISTA	.1849
104	CHARLOTTESVILLE	.6772
106	COLONIAL HEIGHTS	.4179
107	COVINGTON	.2981
108	DANVILLE	.2546
109	FALLS CHURCH	.8000
110	FREDERICKSBURG	.6210

**2018-2020 COMPOSITE INDEX OF LOCAL ABILITY-TO-PAY**

Div. Num.	Division	Final 2018-2020 Composite Index
113	HARRISONBURG	.3645
114	HOPEWELL	.2032
115	LYNCHBURG	.3700
116	MARTINSVILLE	.2135
117	NEWPORT NEWS	.2781
118	NORFOLK	.2958
119	NORTON	.2870
120	PETERSBURG	.2430
121	PORTSMOUTH	.2462
122	RADFORD	.2429
123	RICHMOND CITY	.4925
124	ROANOKE CITY	.3416
126	STAUNTON	.3867
127	SUFFOLK	.3420
128	VIRGINIA BEACH	.4046
130	WAYNESBORO	.3578
131	WILLIAMSBURG	.7703
132	WINCHESTER	.4244
134	FAIRFAX CITY	.8000
135	FRANKLIN CITY	.2952
136	CHESAPEAKE	.3476
137	LEXINGTON	.4172
138	EMPORIA	.2168
139	SALEM	.3715
142	POQUOSON	.3742
143	MANASSAS	.3557
144	MANASSAS PARK	.2675
202	COLONIAL BEACH	.3600
207	WEST POINT	.2554

**Data Sources:**

*True Value of Property, Adjusted Gross Income, and Taxable Retail Sales - Virginia Department of Taxation*

*March 31, 2016 Average Daily Membership (ADM) - Virginia Department of Education*

*Total Population - Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, UVA; U.S. Census*

Downloadable Excel and PDF files containing the 2018-2020 composite index for each school division are available on the Department of Education website at:

[http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school\\_finance/budget/compositeindex\\_local\\_abilitypay/index.shtml](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/school_finance/budget/compositeindex_local_abilitypay/index.shtml).

<sup>2</sup> The actual composite index to be used for Alleghany Co. in FY19 only is .2423 pursuant to the appropriation act and Section 15.2-1302, Code of Virginia. Upon completion of the 15-year hold harmless period in FY19, the calculated value of .2899 will be used in FY20.

<sup>3</sup> The actual composite index to be used for Bedford Co. in the 2018-2020 biennium is .3132 pursuant to the appropriation act and Section 15.2-1302, Code of Virginia .

**APPENDIX J**  
**VIRGINIA TECH IRB APPROVAL**



Division of Scholarly Integrity and  
Research Compliance  
Institutional Review Board  
North End Center, Suite 4120 (MC 0497)  
300 Turner Street NW  
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061  
540/231-3732  
irb@vt.edu  
<http://www.research.vt.edu/sirc/hrpp>

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 1, 2019  
**TO:** M. David Alexander, Luke Elliott Boone  
**FROM:** Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)  
**PROTOCOL TITLE:** Perceptions of the Supports and Professional Development for and needed by Novice School Administrators in Southwestern Virginia  
**IRB NUMBER:** 19-344

Effective May 1, 2019, the Virginia Tech Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) and Institutional Review Board (IRB) determined that this protocol meets the criteria for exemption from IRB review under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii).

Ongoing IRB review and approval by this organization is not required. This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these activities impact the exempt determination, please submit a new request to the IRB for a determination.

This exempt determination does not apply to any collaborating institution(s). The Virginia Tech HRPP and IRB cannot provide an exemption that overrides the jurisdiction of a local IRB or other institutional mechanism for determining exemptions.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at

<https://secure.research.vt.edu/external/irb/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before beginning your research.)

**PROTOCOL INFORMATION:**

Determined As: **Exempt, under 45 CFR 46.104(d) category(ies) 2(ii)**  
Protocol Determination Date: **May 1, 2019**

**ASSOCIATED FUNDING:**

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this protocol, if required.

*Invent the Future*

VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY  
*An equal opportunity, affirmative action institution*