

Virginia Principals and School Law

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(ABSTRACT)

This study sought to determine Virginia Public School principals' knowledge of school law as it related to the type, length/quantity, and recency of law preparation they received. Other variables measured included how their level of knowledge was associated with their length of administrative experience and with their description of the school community in which they worked.

An on-line survey instrument was designed to collect demographic and professional information and to test knowledge of court cases and federal and state statutes. Three hundred and twelve principals completed the survey, representing all grade levels and all regions in the State of Virginia. The principals' knowledge of school law was measured by a forty item true-false test that addressed four key areas of school law selected by a panel of experts: student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations.

The data were analyzed using analysis of variance and post hoc tests. The findings of this study indicated a significant difference of the means, $\alpha = .05$, between the principals' knowledge of school law in the category of tort liability and the recency of legal preparation. Principals who received their legal preparation over 10 years ago scored significantly lower on the tort section of the test than those who received their legal preparation only 5-10 years ago.

Findings also indicated that principals across all categories of school law displayed only a fair knowledge of school law, earning a mean score of 29.359 out of 40 or 73.3%. The

principals' weakest area of school law was in the category of church/state relations. These findings would provide valuable information for the design of principal preparation programs. They would also encourage state educational policymakers and local school divisions to strengthen the professional development of principals on legal matters.

Dedication

With love and gratitude to my mom and dad who are the best parents a son could wish for
in this world.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“From the late eighteenth century to the present, law and the legal system have played a major role in the shaping of public education in America” (Yudof, Kirp, Levin, & Moran, 2002, p.xi). With the Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling in Brown v. Board of Education that state-mandated racial segregation was unconstitutional, the courts became central players in shaping education policy. With this newfound activism by the courts, Yudof stated that there was increased legislation and litigation that dealt with the allocation of authority over educational decision-making. As Alexander and Alexander (1984) noted:

During the last generation Americans have witnessed an explosion of litigation affecting education. Courts have become much more actively involved in aspects of education that were heretofore left entirely to the discretion of school administrators and school boards. Teachers’, students’, and parents’ rights have been asserted in legal actions against school authority producing a vastly expanded field of judicial precedents which have tended to reshape American education (p.2).

This explosion of litigation has required public school principals to have a better understanding of the law. This study will examine public school principals’ current knowledge of school law and determine what factors influence this knowledge.

Background of the Problem

John Hogan (1985) developed five stages, three of which are overlapping, that show the evolution of the role of the courts in education. In the first stage, which occurred between 1789 and 1850, the federal and state courts ignored education. Courts were rarely called to intervene in school matters.

The second stage was the stage of state control of education from approximately 1850 to 1950 with state courts asserting that education was only a state and local issue. This focus at the state level created case law that, in theory, would contradict federal constitutional standards and requirements. During that time, however, federal courts were only willing to question the validity of state statutes under the U.S. Constitution and ignored the idea that cases involving schools could be brought to court based on an infringement of individual rights.

The third stage was the reformation stage that began in the 1950s with Brown v. Board of Education and extends to today. The federal court recognized the failure of state education laws to meet individual's constitutional rights and began to issue decisions that offered constitutional guidance for educational institutions.

The fourth stage, concurrent with the third stage, consisted of the courts increasing their overall supervision of education. The courts sought to “expand the scope of their powers over the schools (for example, intervening in matters affecting the administration, organization, and programs of the schools; retaining jurisdiction over cases until their mandates, orders, and decrees have been carried into effect)” (Hogan, 1985, p.10).

The fifth stage was noted as the stage of strict construction. This judicial philosophy argued that Federal courts should only examine those issues specifically noted in the Constitution. The growth of this philosophy among judges would affect the trend of federal involvement in schools. As Hogan states,

Beginning March 21, 1973, there was a further development in the role of federal courts in education: the landmark decision in the school finance case, San Antonio Independent School District #1 v. Rodriguez, 411 US 1, 93 S.Ct. 1278 (1973), wherein the Supreme Court of the United States declared: ‘Education, of

course, is not among the rights afforded explicit protection under our Federal Constitution. Nor do we find any basis for saying it is implicitly so protected' (Hogan, 1985, p.10).

Zirkel (1997) confirms the impact of this philosophy with the overall reduction of federal cases in the 1990s dealing with education although special education cases continued to grow. While the federal government and the Supreme Court remain active participants in the formulation of school policy, Yudof (2002) notes that it is state and local legislators, administrators and judges who have begun to reemerge as the primary sources of educational policy and school reform.

Within this historical context, one can see that "few subjects are of greater importance to public school principals...than the basic or fundamental federal constitutional rights of public school students" (Weeks, 1992, p.vii). As the Supreme Court noted in its 1943 decision of West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette,

That ...[schools] are educating the young for citizenship is the reason for scrupulous protection of Constitutional freedoms of the individual, if we are not to strangle the free mind at its source and teach youth to discount important principles of our government as mere platitudes (Weeks, 1992, p. vii).

The need for administrators to have a fundamental understanding of these rights in the face of the ever-present specter of lawsuits is essential according to Weeks.

Need of the Study

The need for this study comes from the continual amount of litigation being brought to courts on public school issues. Doverspike (1992) notes the overall growth of litigation since

1969. He states that the ruling in Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District has fundamentally changed the role of the principal,

In the traditional preparation of principals, there was little precedent to assist them with school-related litigation issues that began to skyrocket in the years following Tinker. Today, the job of the principal is fundamentally different as a result of this tide of litigation. The principal now is a *legal actor* and must therefore be a *legal expert* – at least in certain areas of the law (p.1).

The actual number of cases that principals potentially must face makes the issue even more compelling. Gary Reglin (1992) estimated that about 1,200 to 3,000 suits a year are brought against teachers and administrators. When one considers that from 1789 to 1896 there were only 3,096 total cases at the federal and state level that affected education, one can see the impact the modern day principal must face. (Hogan, 1985)

Professor Zirkel (1997) confirmed the growth of state and federal cases since the 1960s in his article, “The ‘Explosion’ in Education Litigation: An Update”. Zirkel noted in terms of the number of court cases dealing with education,

the plateau has already been reached in the 1980s, and, led by the federal courts in that decade and joined by the state courts in this decade, we are moving down the other side of the mountain of judicial activism in school affairs (p.3).

While Zirkel noted a decline in the number of the total state and federal cases in the 1990s, his forecast for total education litigation in state and federal courts during the 1990s was still 50% greater in state law and 103% greater in federal law than the volume of education cases in those courts in the 1960s. Zirkel (2002) also confirmed that special education cases have continued to increase in federal courts from the 1970s to the 1990s.

This continuing high volume of education cases makes the need for principal understanding of the law key for our times today. “A superficial understanding of school law is becoming increasingly inadequate for the principal of the 1990’s. The principal’s legal knowledge must go beyond a shallow, mechanical level so that a fuller appreciation of liability risks can be reached” (Gordon, 1996,p.3). As Paula Lester (1993) noted in her paper, “Preparing Administrators for the Twenty-First Century,” administrators indicated that by the year 2000, school law would be one of the most important courses required for the preparation of principals. There is clearly a need to determine the extent of school administrators’ awareness of school law in relation to their job experience and preparation in school law (Caldwell, 1986). As Permeth and Mawdsley (2001) conclude, “For contemporary principals, avoiding the courtroom is directly related to understanding school law and court decisions that affect the day-to-day operations of schools” (p. 29).

Statement of the Problem

Since principals are charged with the daily responsibility of operating their schools within legal boundaries, then they must have an essential understanding of school law. School law includes

all those areas of jurisprudence that bear on the operation of public elementary and secondary schools in the United States. “School law” as a field of study is a generic term covering a wide range of legal subject matter including the basic fields of contracts, property, torts, constitutional law, and other areas of law that directly affect the educational and administrative processes of the educational system (Alexander & Alexander, 2001,p.1).

This research study will focus on Virginia Public School Principals' knowledge of school law as it relates to the type, length/quantity and recency of law preparation they received as well as the length of their administrative experience and their geographic location within the state. The four areas of school law identified for this study are student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations. Special education law, which according to Zirkel (1997) has grown from 66 federal and state court cases in the 1970s to a predicted 613 cases at the end of the 1990s, will not be considered in this research study. This restriction is due not only to the voluminous changes made in the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act in 1997 that are currently being reauthorized by Congress but also because of the multiplicity of legal issues that derive from special education law such as Individualized Education Plan (IEP) placement, Least Restricted Environment (LRE) definitions, and regulations regarding student eligibility and services.

Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of knowledge of school law held by Virginia Public School principals as it relates to the type, length/quantity, and recency of law preparation they received. In addition, the study will attempt to determine how that level of knowledge is associated with their length of administrative experience and the principals' description of the school community in which they work.

Research Questions

The study will answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the kind of school law preparation received? (college course, school system workshop, non-school system seminar, other)
2. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of preparation received? (semester, quarter, three weeks minimum, one day or less, other)
3. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the recency of school law preparation?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience held?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the principals' description of the school community in which they work?

Collection of Data

A survey was developed based on statutory and case law to measure the legal knowledge of selected Virginia public school principals. It consists of forty survey questions regarding administrator knowledge of federal and state statutes and case law. This survey was submitted to a panel of judges who are professionals well versed in school law and who were able to access the content validity of the survey. The survey was piloted by fifteen building level administrators in elementary and secondary school for the purpose of reliability. Their comments included the noted lack of special education questions and their dislike of including the case regarding teacher transfer from secondary to elementary school as a demotion.

In addition to the questions regarding knowledge of school law, respondents answered demographic questions. These questions consisted of information about the principal's legal preparation for the job including the type (college/university class for credit, college/university class for non-credit, school system workshop, non-school system workshop, other) of legal preparation they obtained, the length and quantity (semester, quarter, minimum of 3 weeks, 1 day or less, other) of the preparation, the recency of the preparation and the years of administrative experience already obtained. Additional demographic information asked of principals included questions about whether they were elementary or secondary level, their highest educational attainment and the type of resources they used to remain current on school law issues. Questions regarding age, gender, professional development, and prior involvement in litigation on the job were also asked of the respondents. This information can assist in further clarifying issues regarding generic principal preparation (i.e., one-third of the principals surveyed had less than 3 years of experience).

The stratified random sampling technique was used to select public school principals from the eight regions of Virginia identified in the Virginia Department of Education Directory (Appendix E). The survey was conducted on-line and all efforts were made to secure the highest possible response rate. Non-respondents received a follow-up letter with the attached link to the on-line survey.

Treatment of the Data

Analysis of variance was used to interpret the survey data and to examine the strength of the relationship between the variables as well as the possibility that there was no relationship. A .05 level of significance was applied. Descriptive statistics were used to determine mean scores for the entire test as well as the four subcategories of law previously defined.

Delimitations for the Study

1. The study was limited to Virginia public school principals in grades kindergarten through 12th grade.
2. There was no control over whether or not the respondents received on-line assistance while taking the survey.
3. There were only four categories of school law examined with no discussion of special education law and the effects of the IDEA legislation.
4. The four areas of school law identified were student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations.

Organization of the Study

This investigation is presented in five chapters:

- Chapter 1 introduces the problem, discusses the background and briefly summarizes the methodology
- Chapter 2 outlines the relevant primary and related research and literature associated with the topic
- Chapter 3 outlines the research design used in the study, the methodology utilized in the collection of data and the statistical analysis used to explain the results
- Chapter 4 presents the findings of the research
- Chapter 5 presents conclusions and recommendations of the study

Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The literature review was organized into the following four categories: 1) the law, 2) school law, 3) the principal and school law, and 4) law and education research.

The Law

Law has been a part of mankind since the beginning of time. Since the Code of Hammurabi, the existence of a written code of law has been an integral part of Western civilizations. English philosopher John Locke stated that law is derived from the natural state of man who is bound by the laws of nature.

The state of Nature has a law of Nature to govern it, which obliges every one, and reason, which is that law, teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty or possessions (Locke, 1690, p.5).

While Locke discussed the law's origins in Nature, the implications of this law for society are also important to note.

The function of law is to regulate human conduct in order to ensure a harmonious society...All laws are based on the assumption that for each action there shall be an expected consequence. Laws are society's attempts to ensure that there are consequences that "ought" to result if certain prohibited acts are committed (Shoop & Dunklee, 1992, p.3).

Black's Law Dictionary helps provide a technical definition of law,

That which is laid down, ordained, or established. A rule or method according to which phenomena or action co-exist or follow each other. Law, in its generic

sense, is a body of rules of action or conduct prescribed by controlling and having binding legal force.

Roscoe Pound (1960) provides an expanded definition of the law that further explains its usefulness to civilized society,

Law is a body of ideals, principles and precepts for the adjustment of the relations of human beings and the ordering of their conduct in society. Laws seek to guide decision as laws seek to constrain action. Law is needed to achieve and maintain justice. Laws are needed to keep the peace- to maintain order. Law is experience developed by reason and corrected by further experience. Its immediate task is the administration of justice; the attainment of full and equal justice to all (Pound, 1960, pp.1-2).

Pound then defined three senses in which the term law is used in the English language. In one sense, law is a way for a regime to order society. In another sense, it is a body of ideas by which the regime seeks to achieve justice. Thirdly, it is a set of ideas that constrains conduct and helps to affect an orderly society.

While the definitions of law presented so far are general in scope, there are particular aspects of law that Carey (1987) develops that are defined as follows:

1. Public laws are those that affect relationships between individuals and government or society.
2. Private laws are those laws that deal with relations between individuals.
3. Criminal laws govern the relationship between individuals when such relationships are harmful to society and therefore are punished.

4. Civil law deals with relationships between individuals. It is different from criminal law since it focuses on seeking damages from that person who hurts another person physically or economically.

It is the last category of law that comprises the majority of law cases against school employees.

School Law

School law includes “all those areas of jurisprudence that bear on the operation of public elementary and secondary schools in the United States. ‘School law’ as a field of study is a generic term covering a wide range of legal subject matter including the basic fields of contracts, property, torts, constitutional law, and other areas of law that directly affect the educational and administrative processes of the educational system” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p.1).

School law and education law can be used interchangeably, although for the purpose of this research, the term school law will be used exclusively. The broad concepts of school law cannot be considered in isolation from other legal issues. Court cases not directly related to education have been instrumental in developing the body of education law (Reutter, 1982, p.10).

Laws continue to change on a regular basis in our society. “The law is immutable, it changes all of the time. It is changing in the courts, in the U.S. Congress, and in the state legislature” (Banthin & Stelzer, 1980, p.9). School law is a subject that requires constant attention and updating.

Many of these changes come from legislative enactments that provide the basis for public school law. As Alexander and Alexander (2001) note, “It then becomes the role of the courts through litigation, to interpret the will of the legislature. The combination of constitutions,

statutes, and courts (or case) law forms the primary legal foundation on which the public schools are based” (p.2).

Constitutional law is the first pillar in the legal foundation for school law. Constitutional law is derived from the U.S. Constitution and the constitutions of each of the fifty states. Article VI, Section 2, states that the Constitution “shall be the supreme law of the Land.” Therefore, “this means that state and federal court decisions, state and federal legislation, rules and regulations of state and federal administrative agencies and local school policies that are inconsistent with the provisions of the Constitution are invalid” (Fischer & Sorensen, 1996,p.4).

At the state level, constitutions specifically provide for education. “All state constitutions make provision for a system of free public schools. Such provisions range from very specific educational provisions to broad mandates that the legislature of the state shall provide funds for the support of a public school system.” (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p.2).

The second pillar that forms the foundation for school law is statutory law. Statutory law consists of the legislative acts of the federal and state law-making bodies. As Alexander and Alexander (2001) note,

Statutes, in our American form of government, are the most viable and effective means of making new law or changing old law...The public schools of the United States are governed by statutes enacted by state legislatures...Rules and regulations of both state and local boards of education fall within the category of statutory sources of school law (pp. 2-3).

The third pillar in the foundation for school law is case law or common law. “Judge-made law is often called case law or common law, indicating that it has evolved from the common thought and experience of a people” (Fischer & Sorensen, 1996, p.5). Features of

common law include the development of a general precedent that applies throughout the state or the country, enforcement by courts, development of decisions from actual legal controversies, use of the jury systems and decisions based on the supremacy of law (Alexander & Alexander, 2001, p.3).

The fourth and fifth pillars in the foundation of school law consists of the regulations enacted by administrative bodies such as state departments of education and school boards and the opinions of the attorney general at both the state and federal level. These areas of school law often deal with the guidelines or directives established to enforce the law and the interpretation of what the law means regarding a certain issue or question.

Within all of these laws there is a legal hierarchy. Rules developed and enacted at one level should not contradict those rules at a higher level. The hierarchy of law is as follows:

- 1) Pillar I: Federal Constitution and State Constitutions
- 2) Pillar II: Federal and State Legislation
- 3) Pillar III: Federal and State Court Decisions or Rulings
- 4) Pillar IV: Rules and Regulations of Administrative Bodies such as Department of Education regulations
- 5) Pillar V: Opinions of Attorney General (Alexander, 1998)

The Principal and School Law

The principalship is a difficult and complex job with many responsibilities in a variety of areas. An understanding of school law is paramount. “In today’s litigious age, school officials confront legal liability on a daily basis. Effective principals understand and utilize so-called legalese, as well as basic principles of law, to ensure that their schools run smoothly and that faculty members and students reach their full potential” (Taylor, 2001, p.66). Principals have a

job that regularly involves issues of school law; “the law has something to say about most of the areas principals have to deal with ... disciplining students, dismissing tenured teachers, and providing equal access to school facilities” (Luce, 1994, p.25). Principals must understand their legal rights and liabilities because as Reglin (1992) notes, “The ‘lawsuit’ is the major weapon in the arsenal of those who wish to change American public schools” (p.26). However, as Shoop and Dunklee (2002) add, “Effective school administrators do not want to win lawsuits; they want to avoid them altogether” (p. 2).

Hardin (1998) cites the importance of school law for principals and shows that this is noted at the highest levels of the school district. Her study of all superintendents in Louisiana found that school law was ranked first (77%) by superintendents when asked what course was most needed for the principal position. A 2001 study done by the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals found that 88% of principals felt legal issues in education to be highly significant or significant to the execution of their jobs (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2001). As Shoop and Dunklee (2002) conclude,

We know the job of school principal is vastly different today from what it was 20 years ago, 10 years ago-or even yesterday. Today’s principals grapple with a sea of conflicting demands from their school boards, central office administrators, students, teachers, parents, and community pressure groups. Principals’ jobs are further complicated by the seemingly endless and often contradictory statutes, court decisions, and attorney generals’ opinions that directly affect the operation of their schools. As a result of these pressures, principals often feel insecure and, at times powerless, when it comes to balancing the pressure to do something, on the one hand, against legal restraints, on the other. Today’s principals face an

additional dilemma as they address the task of balancing the need for order with the need to respect the legal rights of students, teachers, and parents (Dunklee & Shoop, 2002).

Law and Education Research

There is a substantial body of research regarding principals' knowledge of school law as it relates to their legal preparation and other factors. Caldwell (1986) surveyed 298 Virginia school principals and asked them to answer a 40-item legal knowledge true/false test that discussed rights of pupils, teacher/administrator issues, torts, and church/state relations. The average score was 78.1% and the distribution of scores ranged from as high as 95% to as low as 47.5%. She concluded that principals only have an "adequate or average knowledge of school law" (p. 77). She also found the following test results using a .05 level of significance:

1. There was no significant difference between knowledge of school law and the type of school law preparation
2. There was no significant difference between recently trained administrators and administrators trained over ten years ago
3. There was no significant difference between the educational attainment level of the principal and their test results
4. There was no significant difference in scores among regions in the state
5. There was no significant difference between knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience.

Kerrigan (1987) surveyed 300 Massachusetts principals. She surveyed half in rural school systems and half in urban school systems. She developed a 24-item survey that contained 15 statements regarding educational law and policy and nine questions that related to

administrators in their role as a school principal. Kerrigan found “that principals do not know or are not aware as to whether or not their school system has policy guidelines, or if they are based on Commonwealth of Massachusetts law, or if their school district has some type of policy handbook for administrators, or if administrators have access to the policies” (p.139). Kerrigan concluded that principals did not feel adequately informed about the laws that affect them and their schools and that more training such as course workshops and seminars should be developed.

Clark (1990) looked at Mississippi educators’ knowledge of school law using his Legal Knowledge Survey. The Legal Knowledge Survey consisted of 10 scenarios that corresponded to the following areas of student rights: freedom of expression (speech and press), search and seizure, religion, suspension and expulsion, school attendance, corporal punishment, child abuse, special education, school vandalism, and divorce/child custody. The Likert-type scale allowed educators to respond to questions regarding each legal scenario as definitely true, probably true, unsure, probably false, and definitely false for each of the 41 items. Clark found that principal knowledge of school law was only “marginally correct” (p. 2) and that there was a difference in those who had taken a course in school law and those who had not taken a course. He also found that administrators’ (including superintendents) knowledge of school law was not affected by their total years of experience except in the area of divorce/child custody.

Osborn (1990) also examined principal knowledge of school law when he administered a 40-item law survey to 199 South Dakota principals. Osborn found that the principals scored an average of 72% on the survey and that this mean score only represented a “fair knowledge of South Dakota school law” (p. vi). His study did show a breakdown by principal level with secondary principals outscoring elementary principals by a significant margin. However, Osborn

found that all principals who had taken a course in school law performed better than those with no course work at all. Osborn also found no significant differences in principal knowledge of school law based on years of experience.

Reglin in his 1992 South Carolina State College study surveyed 290 South Carolina educators that included 43 principals and 63 assistant principals. Reglin created a 15 item instrument that asked questions on a number of areas relating to public education including: prayer, Bible reading, student rights, teacher rights, handicapped students, corporal punishment, tracking, exit examinations, and school finance. Reglin found after analyzing the returned surveys that only 65% of the educators responded correctly about corporal punishment and only 22% responded correctly regarding school finance. He also discovered that 83% of the educators had received no undergraduate courses in school law and 38% of the principals and assistant principals had no graduate law courses. Reglin concluded that,

educators seem to have little concept of the law as it relates to them and their day-to day school activities. In fact, many educators regard legal principles applicable to public school education with apathy or disinterest. There is an immediate need to provide staff development training in the areas of school finance, corporal punishment, and teachers' rights (p. 30).

Cairnes looked only at principals in a 1995 study for the Montana Board of Education. He surveyed 361 Montana principals and found that a reoccurring theme was the need for more education in school law. As Cairnes noted,

Principals feel the need for more training in school law. Current certification requirements state that one course in school law be mandatory for initial certification...Rather than require more school law for initial certification, it may

be that sponsorship of regular school law seminars be offered by the Universities, such as those put on twice per year by the legal profession (p. 10).

Gordon (1996) tested 120 West Virginia principals with a Legal Knowledge Index. The Legal Knowledge Index was developed in a school law seminar from the input of twelve graduate students and six secondary school principals. They helped develop the 40-item instrument to assess specific knowledge of West Virginia school law. Gordon found that the mean score on the legal knowledge index was 29 out of a total raw score of 40. This finding showed that only 73% mastered the material. Gordon concluded “respondents in this study had an average preparation in school law” (p. 7). Gordon also found that principals working in “large town communities”, defined as those with a population greater or equal to 25,000, scored higher on the Index with a raw score of 32. Gordon reasoned that the difference was due to principals in larger towns confronting more legal issues on a daily basis than their colleagues in smaller communities.

Singletary (1996) partially replicated in South Carolina a study that Dr. Tommy Ronald Clark had performed in Mississippi six years earlier that utilized his Legal Knowledge Survey. Singletary sent the survey to 40 principals, 116 teachers, and 42 superintendents. She found that while principal knowledge of the school law scenarios was superior to that of the teacher or the superintendent, there was a need for annual school law staff development programs for all principals and school level administrators. Singletary also found that a principal’s years of experience was a factor in his or her knowledge of school law as it related to corporal punishment and religion.

Kalafatis (1999) surveyed 91 public school principals in Virginia with a forty-question survey on search and seizures issues. Setting a cut score of 29 out of 40, he found that only 35%

met the minimum competency level of their knowledge of search and seizure law. Thus almost 65% failed to meet the minimum competency level. Kalafatis also assessed whether there were differences in the scoring of legal knowledge based on principal school level, either elementary, middle or high school, and found no significant difference.

Kalafatis concluded that there is a “need for additional course work in school law, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels...The Virginia Department of Education also needs to sponsor periodic seminars and to encourage individual school districts to offer more law related programs for professional development purposes” (p. 88).

Kalafatis’ conclusion was supported during the 2001 Educational Law Association Winter Conference. DeSpain, Johnson and Poorman expressed serious concerns at the conference about the preparation of administrators, particularly newer ones.

Many of the young administrators training to be school superintendents had not lived through the legislation that now significantly impacted their school districts, nor had many of them ever even sat in a court room for a legal action of any kind” (p. 65).

They advocated additional changes including more direct involvement with the legal system during administrator preparation programs, greater focus on legal consistency in policy documents at the district level, and more on-going collaboration with university educational administration preparation programs and school boards to provide professional development for the administrative team on legal matters (p. 66).

Summary

The review of the literature indicates that although principals consider school law an important part of their preparation program and their daily school operation, they still lack a

strong knowledge of school law. There exists a need for continuing research in school law to determine why principals lack this legal knowledge and what recommendations can be made to improve the education of new and veteran principals on the important aspects of school law.

Chapter III

Introduction

This study was designed to collect and examine Virginia school principals' knowledge of school law in the areas of student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability and church/state relations as it relates to the type, length/quantity, and recency of law preparation they received. The study will also examine how that level of knowledge is associated with their length of administrative experience and the principals' description of the school community in which they work.

Pre-Survey Procedures

Review of the Literature

A review of the literature on court cases and Virginia statutes that dealt with education was conducted. Books, dissertations, journals and conference proceedings were also reviewed so that questions could be developed for the survey that were legally current and appropriate to the categories of law being surveyed. School law instructional materials were also reviewed for recurring patterns or themes in current administrator preparation programs. On the basis of this review, forty questions were developed representing current legal issues in the areas of student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations. The questions were based largely on individual rights of students, teachers and parents that stemmed from case law. They were reviewed by a panel of experts and then piloted by a group of building level administrators. These questions were seen as areas of concern that directly impacted the principal in the day-to-day operation of schools. Questions were designed to be as specific to Virginia law as possible since the survey would only test Virginia public school principals.

Instrumentation

The research instrument consisted of three parts: Part I: School and Personal Information, Part II: School Law Preparation, and Part III: School Law Survey. The survey consisted of forty true/false questions. There were some concerns with survey development that include the need for clearly articulated questions and well-defined goals. In order to ensure a high quality survey, a panel of professors and practitioners of school law were identified and asked to review and assess the survey's content and construct validity. The review of question structure, question content, and question readability was examined and each question was reviewed to determine that only one legal issue was addressed in the question in order to avoid confusion. There was also a discussion regarding the use of the true/false format versus a multiple choice or a Likert-type format. Since the research questions closely resembled Caldwell's 1986 study, it was decided to retain the true/false format for the survey.

The panel was also asked to review the following questions: Are these issues important to the principal's successful operation of the school? Are the questions clearly and concisely stated? Are the questions easy to comprehend? The panel was asked to add any additional concerns or comments. These concerns and comments were reflected in a revised set of questions submitted to the committee chair. The committee chair then made a definitive evaluation and recommendation regarding the final survey instrument.

A pilot study was conducted to assess the relevance and appropriateness of the survey instrument to building level administrators. Fifteen building level administrators in elementary and secondary school participated in the pilot, attaining an average score of 76.5%. Based on the results of this pilot, some of the school law questions were reworded to make them more readable and understandable.

Sample Selection and Procedure

The population for this study was limited to K-12 public school principals in the state of Virginia. Principals were chosen from the eight regions of Virginia as identified by the Virginia Department of Education Directory (see Appendix E). A sample represents a part of the target population and the sample is representative of that population for the variable being studied. The stratified random sampling technique was utilized to insure that all members of the population had an equal opportunity for being selected. To estimate the sample size for the desired power, the following formula for was used (Agresti and Finlay, p 138).

$$n = \sigma^2 \left(\frac{z}{B} \right)^2$$

Based on a previous study (Caldwell), the variance of the populations was estimated at $\sigma_x^2 = 25$, z was set at 1.96, for a 95% confidence interval, and the Boundary (B), the desired boundary on the error was set to 1.0. This calculation resulted in a sample size of n =96. Because several subgroups were going to be analyzed, it was determined that a 25% (n= 530) stratified sampling of the superintendent's regions would result in a sample of sufficient power to analyze subpopulations. Since the number of public school principals noted by the Virginia Department of Education in 2001-2002 was 1836, the sample size for this study with a 95% level of confidence and a bound of error of plus or minus one on a score of forty would be 336.

Thus within each region of Virginia, approximately 25% of that region's population was randomly sampled. The selected Virginia public school principals were then mailed a cover letter with instructions to complete the on-line survey. The letter instructed them to access the internet and enter the URL noted on the letter. The letter provided them with a unique id number to ensure their anonymity. The letter also explained that after they finished the survey, they would be asked to hit the "submit" button that would download their results to an online database. After hitting the "submit" button, they were automatically sent to another link providing them an answer sheet for the forty questions. This link was established in an effort to increase the survey response rate. Respondents were not able to retrieve the survey after viewing the answer sheet. Non-respondents were then sent a follow-up letter one week after the deadline noted in the letter. In addition, an internet search was conducted in the school division websites of the non-respondents in an attempt to find their office e-mail address. Those non-respondents who had office e-mail addresses were also sent the follow-up letter electronically with an attached link to the survey so they could complete the survey more efficiently.

Variables

The independent variables in this study were the principals' preparation in school law based on the kind of school law received (college course, workshop, etc), principals' preparation in school law based on the length of preparation received (semester, quarter, etc.), principals' preparation in school law based on the recency of school law preparation, years of administrative experience held, and the principals' description of the school community in which they worked. The dependent variables in this study were the principal's score and subscores on the forty-item school law questionnaire.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the kind of school law preparation received? (college course, school system workshop, non-school system seminar, other)
2. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of preparation received? (semester, quarter, three weeks minimum, one day or less, other)
3. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the recency of school law preparation?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience held?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and their description of the school community in which they work?

Procedures for Data Analysis

Data analysis involved SPSS Student Version 11.0 computer tabulation of the responses. The survey data were exported from Websurveyor.com's database as an Excel file. As an Excel file, the data were then imported into the SPSS program so that statistical applications could be run. An examination of the relationships between the independent variables and the respondent's knowledge of school law was conducted.

Frequencies were run for each variable in the questionnaire. In Part III of the survey which looked at the participants' legal knowledge, scores on the School Law Survey were tabulated to obtain a final score and four subscores that corresponded to the following categories

of school law: student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations. Mean and standard deviation were also calculated for the final score and each subscore.

Since the level of measurement for the School Law Survey is on an interval scale for the four subscores and the final score, the measurement of differences between and among variables was completed by the use of one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance).

Research Design

A combination of legal and survey research was used in this study. Data collected was analyzed using analysis of variance.

Research Question One

Is there a significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school and the type of school law preparation received? (college course, school system workshop, non-school system seminar, other)

For question one, the basic research design has the type of school law preparation as the independent variable and the dependent variables outlined as follows:

Figure 1

Research Design for Question One

| | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|
| College Workshop Seminar Other | Student | Teacher/ Administrator | Tort | Church/ State | Total |
|---|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|

The analysis of variance was run five times on five factors that include the four categories of law included in the survey and the total or final score.

Research Question Two

Is there a significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of preparation received? (semester, quarter, three weeks minimum, one day or less, other)

For question two, the basic research design has the length/quantity of school law preparation as the independent variable and the dependent variables outlined as follows:

Figure 2

Research Design for Question Two

| | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------------|------|--------------|-------|
| Semester Quarter Min. 3 wks 1 day or less Other | Student | Teacher/ Administrator | Tort | Church/State | Total |
|---|---------|---------------------------|------|--------------|-------|

Research Question Three

Is there a significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school law and the recency of school law preparation?

For question three, the basic research design has the recency of school law preparation as the independent variable and the dependent variables outlined as follows:

Figure 3

Research Design for Question Three

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|
| 0-2 yrs. 3-4 yrs. 5-10 yrs. Other | Student | Teacher/ Administrator | Tort | Church/ State | Total |
|--|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|

Research Question Four

Is there a significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience held?

For question four, the basic research design has the years of administrative experience held as the independent variable and the dependent variables outlined as follows:

Figure 4

Research Design for Question Four

| | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|
| < 1 yr. 1-3 yrs. 4-7 yrs. 8-12 yrs. > 12 yrs. | Student | Teacher/ Administrator | Tort | Church/ State | Total |
|---|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|

Research Question Five

Is there a significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school law and the principals' description of the community in which they work?

For question five, the basic research design has the principals' description of the community in which they work as the independent variable and the dependent variables can be outlined as follows:

Figure 5

Research Design for Question Five

| | | | | | |
|--|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|
| Urban Suburban Rural Combination of urban- suburban-rural | Student | Teacher/ Administrator | Tort | Church/ State | Total |
|--|---------|---------------------------|------|------------------|-------|

Chapter IV

Presentation of the Data

This study was designed to collect and assess Virginia Public School principals' knowledge of school law as it relates to the kind, length/quantity, and recency of law preparation they received. In addition, the study examined how the principal's level of law knowledge is associated with their years of administrative experience and the type of school community in which they work. Their knowledge of school law was measured by a forty-item on-line True/False test that examined the following categories of school law: student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations. In order to accomplish these objectives, the study posited five research questions, which are as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the type of school law preparation received? (college course, school system workshop, non-school system seminar, other)
2. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of preparation received? (semester, quarter, three weeks minimum, one day or less, other)
3. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the recency of school law preparation?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience held?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the description of the community in which they work?

A letter providing the web address for the on-line survey was sent to the random sample of 507 Virginia public school principals. This sample was developed based on the need for a 95% level of confidence given there were 1836 principals statewide. The first parts of the survey asked for demographic data and professional data related to the respondent's legal preparation. The last part of the survey was the forty-item test designed to assess principal's knowledge of school law. Of the 507 letters sent out, 312 respondents accessed the on-line database. This effort provided a 61.53% response rate from which the survey responses were analyzed. While the 61.53% response rate was lower than Caldwell's 1986 Virginia principals study (81.90%) and Gordon's 1996 West Virginia principals study (88.23%), it compares favorably to Kalafatis' more recent 1999 Virginia principals study (37%). In fact, the Report on the 2001 Virginia Principals Study, conducted by William and Mary professors Michaela DiPaola and Megan Tschannen-Moran in conjunction with the Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals and the Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals, yielded a 38% response rate.

Demographic information collected from principals in the survey included school level, gender, age, educational attainment, community description and involvement in previous litigation. Principals were also asked about how they stayed abreast of legal issues and what type of conferences they had recently attended. The data was analyzed based on the methods described in Chapter Three.

Population Sample

Of the 312 surveys analyzed, 185 represented elementary principals, 44 represented middle school principals, and 56 represented high school principals. There were 13 surveys that were classified as other. Other could have included combination schools or vocational and technical academies. There were 14 principals who gave a non-response to the question. The

number of non-responses varied according to the demographic and professional question asked. These non-responses were totaled and noted separately on each of the data tables. Some principals also gave non-responses to some of the test questions. These non-responses were treated as incorrect answers when the scores for the survey were tabulated.

At least 50% (n=156) of the respondents were female. There were 43.9% (n=137) of the respondents who identified themselves as male. On this question, 6.1% (n=19) of the respondents chose not to identify themselves in any manner.

There were 6.4% (n=20) of the respondents that were 20-35 years old, while the largest percentage of respondents, 51%, (n=159) identified themselves as 47-55 years old. There were 21.5% (n=67) of the respondents that were 36-46 years old and 16% (n=50) of the respondents that were 56-65 years old. There were 5.1% (n=16) of the principals who chose not to respond to this question.

Most principals, 49%, (n=153) had a Masters degree while 30.1% (n=94) had a Masters + 30 or Educational Specialist designation. Only 15.4% (n=48) of the respondents had a Doctorate. There were 4.9% (n=15) principals who chose not to respond to this question.

Only 7.7% (n=24) of the principals who responded had less than 1 year experience as a principal while 23.4% (n=73) had 12 years or more. There were 25.3% (n=79) of the principals that had 1 to 3 years of experience and 23.7% (74) that had 4 to 7 years of experience. Only 14.7% (n=46) had 8 to 12 years of experience. There were 5.1% (n=16) of the principals who chose not to respond to this question.

There were 43.3% (n=135) of the respondents who described their school community as rural in contrast to the 14.7% (n=46) who described their school community as urban. Suburban respondents accounted for 28.2% (n=88) of the sample and 9% (n=28) said their community was

a combination of urban-suburban-rural. There were 4.9% (n=15) of the principals who chose not to respond to this question.

In terms of the respondents' legal preparation, there were varying responses depending on the question asked. Almost 1 in 5 or 18.9% (n=59) of the respondents had been involved in litigation during their time as principal. However, majorities of respondents said they received legal information from publications (74% or n=231), conferences (55.1% or n=172) and the Virginia Department of Education (54.5% or n=170). There were 46.8% (n=146) of the principals who received legal information from seminars.

Table 1

Frequencies and Percentages of Job Level, Gender, Age, Education Level, Experience and School Community

| Variable | N = 312 | | |
|---|---------|------|--|
| Level | N | % | |
| Elementary | 185 | 59.3 | |
| Middle | 44 | 14.1 | |
| High | 56 | 17.9 | |
| Other | 13 | 4.2 | |
| Non-response | 14 | 4.5 | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 137 | 43.9 | |
| Female | 156 | 50.0 | |
| Non-response | 19 | 6.1 | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Age Category | | | |
| 20-35 years | 20 | 6.4 | |
| 36-46 years | 67 | 21.5 | |
| 47-55 years | 159 | 51.0 | |
| 56 years + | 50 | 16.0 | |
| Non-response | 16 | 5.1 | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Education | | | |
| Masters | 153 | 49.0 | |
| Masters + 30 (Ed. Specialist) | 94 | 30.1 | |
| Doctorate | 48 | 15.4 | |
| Other | 2 | .6 | |
| Non-response | 15 | 4.9 | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| Years as a Principal | | | |
| Less than 1 year | 24 | 7.7 | |
| 1 to 3 years | 79 | 25.3 | |
| 4 to 7 years | 74 | 23.7 | |
| 8 to 12 years | 46 | 14.7 | |
| More than 12 years | 73 | 23.4 | |
| Non-response | 16 | 5.1 | |
| <hr/> | | | |
| School community | | | |
| Urban | 46 | 14.7 | |
| Suburban | 88 | 28.2 | |
| Rural | 135 | 43.3 | |
| Combination urban- suburban-rural | 28 | 9.0 | |
| Non-response | 15 | 4.9 | |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages equal 100%.

Most respondents (49.7% or n=155) said they reviewed legal material on a monthly basis. Only 14.1% (n=44) said they reviewed legal information weekly. Significant numbers of respondents said they had attended association conferences with 77.9% (n=243) saying they had attended them within the last 3 years.

The majority of respondents (89.4% or n=279) had a college course in school law for credit. Just 4.2% (n=13) reported that they had a school system workshop. There were 5.1% (n=16) of the principals who chose not to answer that question. Most respondents (86.2% or n=269) had a semester course while 6.1% (n=27) had less than a semester. There were 5.1% (n=16) of the principals who chose not to answer that question. Recency of legal preparation was varied with 9.6% (n=30) of respondents having received their preparation within the last 2 years, 16.7% (n=52) within the last 3-4 years, and 37.8% (n=118) having received their preparation 5-10 years ago. Over 30% (n=94) reported having received their legal preparation as other. There were 5.8% (n=18) of the respondents who chose not to answer that question.

Table 2

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Items Related to Legal Preparation

| Question | N = 312 | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|------|
| | | N | % |
| Litigation involvement | Yes | 59 | 18.9 |
| | No | 237 | 76.0 |
| | Non-response | 16 | 5.1 |
| | | | |
| Type of school law preparation | College for credit | 279 | 89.4 |
| | College for non-credit | 1 | .3 |
| | School system workshop | 13 | 4.2 |
| | Non-school system workshop | 2 | .6 |
| | Other (not specified) | 1 | .3 |
| | Non-response | 16 | 5.1 |
| Length of preparation | Semester | 269 | 86.2 |
| | Quarter | 12 | 3.8 |
| | Minimum of 3 weeks | 4 | 1.3 |
| | 1 day or less | 3 | 1.0 |
| | Other (not specified) | 8 | 2.6 |
| | Non-response | 16 | 5.1 |
| Recency of preparation | 0-2 years | 30 | 9.6 |
| | 3-4 years | 52 | 16.7 |
| | 5-10 | 118 | 37.8 |
| | Other | 94 | 30.1 |
| | Non-response | 18 | 5.8 |
| Mode of legal information | Seminars | 146 | 46.8 |
| | Publications | 231 | 74.0 |
| | Conferences | 172 | 55.1 |
| | Virginia Dept. of Education | 170 | 54.5 |
| | Other (not specified) | 69 | 22.1 |
| | Non-response | 19 | 6.1 |
| Frequency of Material Review | Weekly | 44 | 14.1 |
| | Monthly | 155 | 49.7 |
| | Quarterly | 94 | 30.1 |
| | Non-response | 19 | 6.1 |
| Conference Attendance | NASSP | 65 | 20.8 |
| | NAESP | 83 | 26.6 |
| | VASSP | 83 | 26.6 |
| | VAESP | 123 | 39.4 |
| | AASA | 8 | 2.6 |
| | Other (not specified) | 118 | 37.8 |
| | Non-response | 35 | 11.2 |
| Recency of Conference Attendance | This year | 98 | 31.4 |
| | 1-3 years ago | 145 | 46.5 |
| | 4-6 years ago | 22 | 7.1 |
| | Over 6 years ago | 12 | 3.8 |
| | Non-response | 35 | 11.2 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages equal 100%.

Principals' knowledge of school law was measured by a forty-item test developed by the researcher. Principals were asked to indicate on-line whether each item was true or false. Items were equally weighted. The mean total score for all principals was 29.359 out of a possible 40 correct or 73.3%. The mean score for questions related to student issues was 12.365 out of 15 or 82.4%. The mean score for teacher/administrator issues was 7.333 out of 10 or 73.3%. The mean score for tort liability was 4.372 out of 6 or 72.9%. The lowest mean score was for church/state relations. It was 5.289 out of 9 or 58.8%. The highest individual total score was 100% and the lowest recorded score was 12.5%.

Table 3

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Items Contained in the Student Issues Scale

| Item | True | | False | |
|---|------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Before a pupil can be suspended for even a short period of time, he must be allowed the opportunity to respond to the charges, providing he does not represent an immediate threat to safety. (True) | 291 | 93.3 | 21 | 6.7 |
| 2. Public school students must salute the flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance. (False) | 15 | 4.8 | 297 | 95.2 |
| 3. A principal must obtain a search warrant before searching a student's locker, pockets, or purse. (False) | 12 | 3.8 | 300 | 96.2 |
| 4. Pupils have unlimited constitutional rights as individuals to exercise free speech in public schools. (False) | 21 | 6.7 | 291 | 93.3 |
| 5. Students may be disciplined by school authorities for acts committed while off school grounds. (True) | 239 | 76.6 | 73 | 23.4 |
| 6. School officials may be personally liable for sexual harassment if they are indifferent to student charges of teacher harassment. (True) | 272 | 87.2 | 40 | 12.8 |
| 7. A student has the constitutional right to an attorney in short-term suspension cases. (False) | 183 | 58.7 | 129 | 41.3 |
| 8. A school cannot be liable for one student's sexual harassment of another student. (False) | 19 | 6.1 | 293 | 93.9 |
| 9. The school district must allow pupils to wear armbands, picket peacefully, distribute publications, or otherwise express their opinions where such means of expression are not shown to materially disrupt or substantially interfere with school activities. (True) | 225 | 72.1 | 87 | 27.9 |
| 10. Academic penalties for a student's nonattendance at school violate that student's due process rights. (False) | 119 | 38.1 | 193 | 61.9 |
| 11. Reasonable student dress codes based on genuine concern for health, safety, or disruption of the school instructional environment may be enforced by school officials. (True) | 301 | 96.5 | 11 | 3.5 |
| 12. Students may organize a Gay and Lesbian Club if the school allows other non-curricular clubs to meet. (True) | 258 | 82.7 | 54 | 17.3 |
| 13. Under most circumstances, the courts permit strip searches of students by administrators. (False) | 35 | 11.2 | 277 | 88.8 |
| 14. A principal may have control over the content of a valedictorian speech at graduation. (True) | 247 | 79.2 | 65 | 20.8 |
| 15. School authority supersedes the custodial authority of the parent in matters of suspected child abuse. (True) | 245 | 78.5 | 67 | 21.5 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages equal 100%.

Table 4

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Items Contained in the Teacher/Administrator Issues Scale

| Item | True | | False | |
|---|------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Teachers may be dismissed for failure to comply with Virginia school laws and regulations provided proper procedures are followed. (True) | 293 | 93.9 | 19 | 6.1 |
| 2. The school division must provide a hearing for the non-renewal of a probationary teacher's contract if the teacher can show that non-renewal damages his or her reputation in the community or forecloses employment elsewhere. (True) | 95 | 30.4 | 217 | 69.6 |
| 3. The burden of proof in dismissing a continuing contract teacher in Virginia is upon the school board. (True) | 273 | 87.5 | 39 | 12.5 |
| 4. A school board may transfer a teacher from secondary school to elementary school without initiating demotion proceedings. (True) | 276 | 88.5 | 36 | 11.5 |
| 5. One of the most common requirements for certification and recertification is that the teacher must be of good moral character. (True) | 105 | 33.7 | 207 | 66.3 |
| 6. Unwed pregnant teachers may be dismissed by local school boards for immorality. (False) | 29 | 9.3 | 283 | 90.7 |
| 7. A number of courts have ruled that immoral conduct must be related to the teacher's fitness to teach before the teacher may be dismissed. (True) | 240 | 76.9 | 72 | 23.1 |
| 8. Teachers may be fired for their oral and written statements clearly critical of school authorities, even if the statements have no effect on school operations or objectives. (False) | 53 | 17.0 | 259 | 83.0 |
| 9. According to the Code of Virginia, a teacher cannot be dismissed until remediation has been attempted. (True) | 137 | 43.9 | 175 | 56.1 |
| 10. School boards may legally establish policies that reasonably regulate a teacher's appearance as one factor affecting his or her suitability for a particular position. (True) | 217 | 69.6 | 95 | 30.4 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages equal 100%.

Table 5

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Items Contained in the Tort Liability Scale

| Item | True | | False | |
|--|------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. The <i>in loco parentis</i> standard permits teachers to take responsibility to protect students in their care. (True) | 293 | 93.9 | 19 | 6.1 |
| 2. An accident, which could have been foreseen and prevented by “reasonable” care, may constitute negligence. (True) | 297 | 95.2 | 15 | 4.8 |
| 3. Student participants in athletic events assume the risks and hazards of the game. (True) | 252 | 80.8 | 60 | 19.2 |
| 4. A parent may not challenge the accuracy of school records maintained on their children. (False) | 22 | 7.1 | 290 | 92.9 |
| 5. Teachers have governmental immunity for ordinary negligence. (True) | 179 | 57.4 | 133 | 42.6 |
| 6. A principal is generally not liable for the negligent acts of a properly assigned and qualified school employee. (True) | 150 | 48.1 | 162 | 51.9 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages equal 100%.

Table 6

Frequencies and Percentages of Responses to Items Contained in the Church/State Relations Scale

| Item | True | | False | |
|--|------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Vouchers for parochial schools using public money have been found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. (False) | 71 | 22.8 | 241 | 77.2 |
| 2. Bible reading and prayers in the public school classroom are permissible, providing there is substantial community support for these exercises. (False) | 40 | 12.8 | 272 | 87.2 |
| 3. The Bible may be taught from a literacy or historical viewpoint in the public school. (True) | 266 | 85.3 | 46 | 14.7 |
| 4. A teacher can hold prayer with students in his or her classroom each morning if the prayer is not state promulgated. (False) | 41 | 13.1 | 271 | 86.9 |
| 5. Invocations and benedictions are an acceptable part of public school graduations. (False) | 133 | 42.6 | 179 | 57.4 |
| 6. Public money for the transportation of parochial school pupils does not violate the federal constitution. (True) | 134 | 42.9 | 178 | 57.1 |
| 7. Student-led student initiated prayers at high school football games do not violate the Establishment clause. (False) | 230 | 73.7 | 82 | 26.3 |
| 8. Equal access law that allows students to form religious clubs applies to both elementary and secondary schools. (False) | 269 | 86.2 | 43 | 13.8 |
| 9. A school board may allow a released time program off school grounds to be established for religious instruction. (True) | 162 | 51.9 | 150 | 48.1 |

Note. Due to rounding error, not all percentages equal 100%.

Table 7

Mean, Standard Deviation and Totals for Each Subscale in the Survey

| Scale | \bar{X} | Possible Score | s.d. | N |
|------------------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|-----|
| Student Issues | 12.365 | 15 | 2.371 | 312 |
| Teacher/Administrator Issues | 7.333 | 10 | 1.756 | 312 |
| Tort Liability | 4.372 | 6 | 1.149 | 312 |
| Church/State Relations | 5.289 | 9 | 1.608 | 312 |
| Overall | 29.359 | 40 | 5.502 | 312 |

Research Question One

Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the kind of school law preparation received?

Principals were asked about what kind of school law preparation they received. Their possible choices were as follows: a) College/University course for credit, b) College/University course for non-credit, c) School system workshop, d) Non-school system workshop, and e) Other. An overwhelming 89.4%, or two hundred seventy nine out of three hundred and twelve, had a College/University course for credit with only 0.3% (n=1) taking the course for non-credit. Only 4.2% (n=13) of the respondents selected the school system workshop as their designated type of legal preparation. Just 0.6% (n=2) had a non-school system workshop and only 0.3% (n=1) cited other. Exactly 5.1% (n=16) of the principals gave no response.

The analysis of variance was performed after collapsing the dependent variables into two categories due to low numbers in three of the selections. The College/University course for non-credit was collapsed into the College/University course for credit and the non-school system workshop and other were collapsed into the school system workshop category. The analysis of variance showed no relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and the kind of school law preparation they received given $\alpha = .05$.

Table 8

One-way ANOVA: Type of Institution Providing Preparation as a Factor in Principal Knowledge of School Law

| Scale | Source of Variance | d.f. | S.S. | M.S. | f ratio | p(F) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------|----------|--------|---------|------|
| Student Issues | Explained | 1 | 1.985 | 1.985 | .531 | .467 |
| | Error | 290 | 1084.522 | 3.740 | | |
| | Total | 291 | | | | |
| Teacher/Administrator | Explained | 1 | .007 | .007 | .003 | .957 |
| | Error | 290 | 731.883 | 2.524 | | |
| | Total | 291 | 731.890 | | | |
| Tort Liability | Explained | 1 | 2.263 | 2.263 | 2.028 | .156 |
| | Error | 290 | 323.628 | 1.116 | | |
| | Total | 291 | 3235.890 | | | |
| Church/State | Explained | 1 | .191 | .191 | .082 | .775 |
| | Error | 290 | 676.179 | 2.332 | | |
| | Total | 291 | 676.370 | | | |
| Overall | Explained | 1 | 6.561 | 6.561 | .324 | .570 |
| | Error | 290 | 5871.604 | 20.247 | | |
| | Total | 291 | 5878.164 | | | |

Table 9

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Knowledge of School Law and Subscales by Type of Institution Providing Law Preparation

| <i>Institution</i> | <i>S</i> | | | <i>T/A</i> | | | <i>T</i> | | | <i>C/S</i> | | | <i>Total</i> | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>N</i> |
| <i>College-Credit</i> | 12.523 | 1.956 | 279 | 7.437 | 1.608 | 279 | 4.419 | 1.059 | 279 | 5.355 | 1.531 | 279 | 29.735 | 4.548 | 279 |
| <i>College-Non-Credit</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>School workshop</i> | 12.923 | 1.320 | 13 | 7.462 | 1.050 | 13 | 4.846 | .987 | 13 | 5.231 | 1.423 | 13 | 30.462 | 3.178 | 13 |
| <i>Non-School Workshop</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>Other</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Research QuestionTwo

Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of preparation received?

The possible choices included semester, quarter, three weeks minimum, one day or less or other.

Two hundred sixty-nine respondents or 86.2% of the principals surveyed indicated the semester was the length of their legal preparation. Only 3.8% (n=12) of principals received one quarter of preparation. Those receiving just three weeks and those receiving only one day were 1.3% (n=4) and 1.0% (n=3), respectively. Just 2.6% (n=8) cited other as the length of their legal preparation. Exactly 5.1% (n=16) of the principals gave no response.

An analysis of variance was performed after collapsing the choices of minimum of three weeks, 1 day or less, and other into one group. The analysis indicated that there was no significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of school law preparation they received.

Table 10

One-way ANOVA: Length of Preparation Program as a Factor in Principal Knowledge of School Law

| Scale | Source of Variance | d.f. | S.S. | M.S. | f ratio | P(F) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------|----------|--------|---------|------|
| Student Issues | Explained | 2 | 1.661 | .831 | .259 | .772 |
| | Error | 293 | 938.551 | 3.203 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 940.213 | | | |
| Teacher/Administrator | Explained | 2 | .234 | .117 | .051 | .951 |
| | Error | 293 | 679.357 | 2.319 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 679.591 | | | |
| Tort Liability | Explained | 2 | 1.845 | .922 | .885 | .414 |
| | Error | 293 | 305.493 | 1.043 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 307.338 | | | |
| Church/State | Explained | 2 | 2.446 | 1.223 | .549 | .578 |
| | Error | 293 | 652.149 | 2.226 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 654.595 | | | |
| Overall | Explained | 2 | .742 | .371 | .022 | .979 |
| | Error | 293 | 5003.299 | 17.076 | | |
| | Total | 295 | | | | |

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Knowledge of School Law and Subscales by Length of Preparation Program

| <i>Length</i> | <i>S</i> | | | <i>T/A</i> | | | <i>T</i> | | | <i>C/S</i> | | | <i>Total</i> | | |
|---|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>N</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>N</i> |
| <i>Semester</i> | 12.584 | 1.811 | 269 | 7.461 | 1.520 | 269 | 4.476 | 1.042 | 269 | 5.338 | 1.479 | 269 | 29.859 | 4.197 | 269 |
| <i>Quarter</i> | 12.250 | 1.712 | 12 | 7.583 | 1.676 | 12 | 4.333 | .888 | 12 | 5.500 | 1.883 | 12 | 29.667 | 3.676 | 12 |
| <i>Minimum of 3 Weeks 1 day or less Other</i> | 12.733 | 1.387 | 15 | 7.400 | 1.454 | 15 | 4.133 | .640 | 15 | 5.733 | 1.387 | 15 | 30.000 | 3.094 | 15 |

Research Question Three

Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the recency of preparation received?

The possible choices included 0-2 years, 3-4 years, 5-10 years and other.

The recency of preparation varied widely among the respondents. Only 9.6% (n=30) of the principals had their legal preparation in the last two years while 16.7% (n=52) had their legal preparation three to four years ago. The greatest percentage of respondents, 37.8% (n=118), selected five to ten years for when they had received their legal preparation. Additionally, 30.1% (n=94) selected other. Exactly 5.8% (n=18) of the principals gave no response.

An analysis of variance was performed on the differences between the means on the subscores and the total score of the survey. A significant difference was found at the p(F) of .043 for the subscore category of tort liability. A post hoc Tukey HSD test showed a significant difference of the means (.4144) between those who reported having the recency of their legal preparation as 5-10 years ago (4.627) and those who reported the recency of their legal preparation as other (4.213). This analysis indicated that there was a significant difference in the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of school law preparation they received. Those who had their legal preparation over 10 years ago, as defined by other in the survey, scored significantly lower on the tort section of the test than those who received their legal preparation only 5-10 years ago.

Table 12

One-way ANOVA: Recency of School Law Preparation as a Factor in Principal Knowledge of School Law

| Scale | Source of Variance | d.f. | S.S. | M.S. | f ratio | p(F) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------|----------|--------|---------|-------|
| Student Issues | Explained | 3 | 7.214 | 2.405 | .643 | .588 |
| | Error | 290 | 1084.011 | 3.738 | | |
| | Total | 293 | | | | |
| Teacher/Administrator | Explained | 3 | 14.184 | 4.728 | 1.925 | .126 |
| | Error | 290 | 712.088 | 2.455 | | |
| | Total | 293 | 726.272 | | | |
| Tort Liability | Explained | 3 | 9.033 | 3.011 | 2.751 | .043* |
| | Error | 290 | 317.365 | 1.094 | | |
| | Total | 293 | 326.398 | | | |
| Church/State | Explained | 3 | .427 | .142 | .061 | .980 |
| | Error | 290 | 680.488 | 2.347 | | |
| | Total | 293 | 680.915 | | | |
| Overall | Explained | 3 | 78.239 | 26.080 | 1.307 | .272 |
| | Error | 290 | 5788.128 | 19.959 | | |
| | Total | 293 | 5866.367 | | | |

Note. * $p < .05$

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Knowledge of School Law and Subscales by Recency of School Law Preparation Program

| <i>Recency</i> | <i>S</i> | | | <i>T/A</i> | | | <i>T</i> | | | <i>C/S</i> | | | <i>Total</i> | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> |
| <i>0-2 years ago</i> | 12.400 | 1.453 | 30 | 7.567 | 1.478 | 30 | 4.400 | .894 | 30 | 5.433 | 1.716 | 30 | 29.800 | 3.556 | 30 |
| <i>3-4 years ago</i> | 12.442 | 2.330 | 52 | 7.462 | 1.873 | 52 | 4.442 | 1.227 | 52 | 5.385 | 1.670 | 52 | 29.731 | 5.828 | 52 |
| <i>5-10 years ago</i> | 12.720 | 1.438 | 118 | 7.636 | 1.210 | 118 | 4.627 | .875 | 118 | 5.314 | 1.305 | 118 | 30.297 | 2.880 | 118 |
| <i>Other</i> | 12.383 | 2.328 | 94 | 7.128 | 1.791 | 94 | 4.213 | 1.172 | 94 | 5.351 | 1.651 | 94 | 29.075 | 5.407 | 94 |

Research Question Four

Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to their years of administrative experience?

The possible choices included less than 1 year, 1 to 3 years, 4 to 7 years, 8 to 12 years, and more than 12 years.

Respondents varied widely based on their years of experience. While 7.7% (n=24) of the principals surveyed had less than one year in the job, an additional 25.3% (n=79) had only 1 to 3 years of experience. So 33% or one-third of Virginia principals surveyed had less than 3 years of experience. This percentage was balanced with principals of 8 to 12 years (14.7%; n=46) and principals with more than 12 years of experience (23.4%; n=43) combining for a total of 38.1% of the sample surveyed. Principals with 4 to 7 years of experience represented 23.7 % (n=74) of the respondents. Exactly 5.1% (n=16) of the principals gave no response.

The analysis of variance showed that there was no significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law and their years of experience as a principal for $\alpha = .05$.

Table 14

One-way ANOVA: Years of Experience as a Factor in Principal Knowledge of School Law

| Scale | Source of Variance | d.f. | S.S. | M.S. | f ratio | p(F) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------|----------|--------|---------|------|
| Student Issues | Explained | 4 | 6.435 | 1.609 | .429 | .788 |
| | Error | 291 | 1091.156 | 3.750 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 1097.591 | | | |
| Teacher/Administrator | Explained | 4 | 14.947 | 3.737 | 1.514 | .198 |
| | Error | 291 | 718.077 | 2.468 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 733.024 | | | |
| Tort Liability | Explained | 4 | 1.017 | .254 | .227 | .923 |
| | Error | 291 | 325.888 | 1.120 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 326.905 | | | |
| Church/State | Explained | 4 | 2.730 | .683 | .293 | .883 |
| | Error | 291 | 678.729 | 2.332 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 681.459 | | | |
| Overall | Explained | 4 | 22.118 | 5.529 | .275 | .894 |
| | Error | 291 | 5856.261 | 20.125 | | |
| | Total | 295 | 5878.378 | | | |

Table 15

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Knowledge of School Law and Subscales by Years of Experience

| <i>Years of Experience</i> | S | | | T/A | | | T | | | C/S | | | Total | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|
| | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> |
| <i>Less than 1 year</i> | 12.792 | 1.285 | 24 | 7.167 | 2.078 | 24 | 4.250 | .944 | 24 | 5.250 | 1.225 | 24 | 29.458 | 3.451 | 24 |
| <i>1 to 3 years</i> | 12.392 | 2.523 | 79 | 7.443 | 1.810 | 79 | 4.430 | 1.206 | 79 | 5.304 | 1.712 | 79 | 29.570 | 6.101 | 79 |
| <i>4 to 7 years</i> | 12.419 | 1.843 | 74 | 7.568 | 1.136 | 74 | 4.460 | 1.023 | 74 | 5.257 | 1.434 | 74 | 29.703 | 3.22 | 74 |
| <i>8 to 12 years</i> | 12.739 | 1.867 | 46 | 7.022 | 1.719 | 46 | 4.478 | 1.130 | 46 | 5.413 | 1.857 | 46 | 29.652 | 5.152 | 46 |
| <i>More than 12 years</i> | 12.603 | 1.441 | 73 | 7.671 | 1.375 | 73 | 4.466 | .899 | 73 | 5.493 | 1.237 | 73 | 30.233 | 3.178 | 73 |

Research Question Five

Is there a significant relationship between the principals' knowledge of school law in relation to their description of the school community?

The possible choices included urban, suburban, rural and a combination of urban-suburban-rural.

Exactly 43.3% (n=135) of the respondents identified their school community as rural. The next largest percentage of principals, 28.2% (n=88), identified their school as suburban. Only 14.7% (n=46) of respondents identified their community as urban while 9.0% (n=28) of respondents felt their community was a combination of urban-suburban-rural. Exactly 4.9% (n=15) of the principals gave no response.

An analysis of variance was performed and indicated that there was no significant difference between principals' knowledge of school law and their description of the school community at p(F) of .053. However, due to the possibility of a Type II error, post hoc test was conducted. Based on the Tukey HSD, there was a significant mean difference of 1.120 on the student subscale between those who described their school community as suburban, $\bar{X} = 12.898$, and those who described their community as a combination or urban-suburban-rural, $\bar{X} = 11.786$.

Table 16

One-way ANOVA: Community Description as a Factor in Principal Knowledge of School Law

| Scale | Source of Variance | d.f. | S.S. | M.S. | f ratio | p(F) |
|-----------------------|--------------------|------|----------|--------|---------|------|
| Student Issues | Explained | 3 | 28.380 | 9.460 | 2.592 | .053 |
| | Error | 293 | 1069.499 | 3.650 | | |
| | Total | 296 | 1097.879 | | | |
| Teacher/Administrator | Explained | 3 | 4.764 | 1.588 | .637 | .592 |
| | Error | 293 | 730.334 | 2.493 | | |
| | Total | 296 | 735.098 | | | |
| Tort Liability | Explained | 3 | 1.360 | .453 | .408 | .748 |
| | Error | 293 | 325.738 | 1.112 | | |
| | Total | 296 | 327.098 | | | |
| Church/State | Explained | 3 | 12.458 | 4.153 | 1.814 | .145 |
| | Error | 293 | 670.821 | 2.289 | | |
| | Total | 296 | 683.279 | | | |
| Overall | Explained | 3 | 133.032 | 44.344 | 2.256 | .082 |
| | Error | 293 | 5759.514 | 19.657 | | |
| | Total | 296 | 5892.545 | | | |

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics for ANOVA: Knowledge of School Law and Subscales by Community Description

| <i>Geographic Region</i> | <i>S</i> | | | <i>T/A</i> | | | <i>T</i> | | | <i>C/S</i> | | | <i>Total</i> | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|----------|--------------|-------------|----------|
| | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> | \bar{x} | <i>s.d.</i> | <i>n</i> |
| <i>Urban</i> | 12.391 | 2.552 | 46 | 7.304 | 1.824 | 46 | 4.283 | 1.223 | 46 | 5.109 | 1.767 | 46 | 29.087 | 5.754 | 46 |
| <i>Suburban</i> | 12.898 | 1.348 | 88 | 7.591 | 1.256 | 88 | 4.477 | .934 | 88 | 5.557 | 1.413 | 88 | 30.523 | 3.126 | 88 |
| <i>Rural</i> | 12.504 | 1.530 | 135 | 7.437 | 1.572 | 135 | 4.467 | 1.028 | 135 | 5.385 | 1.511 | 135 | 29.793 | 4.019 | 135 |
| <i>Combination of urban-suburban-rural</i> | 11.786 | 3.359 | 28 | 7.179 | 2.078 | 28 | 4.429 | 1.230 | 28 | 4.893 | 1.370 | 28 | 28.286 | 6.820 | 28 |

Chapter V

Summary, Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purposes of this chapter are to provide a general summary of the study and to present discussions and conclusions drawn from the findings in Chapter IV. Additionally, recommendations for further study will be made as well as a discussion for the implications of Virginia's public school principals.

Summary of the Study

This study attempted to answer five research questions regarding the effect of certain variables on Virginia principals' knowledge of school law. While a review of the literature indicated that understanding school law was an essential part of the principal's job, this same literature also indicated that principals had only an adequate or fair understanding of school law issues. This study addressed principals' knowledge of school law as it relates to the kind, length/quantity, and recency of law preparation they received. In addition, the study addressed how that level of knowledge is associated with their years of administrative experience and the type of school community in which they work. This study was conducted by surveying Virginia public school principals using an on-line questionnaire that was designed to gather demographic and professional information as well as to measure principals' knowledge of school law. The principal's knowledge of school law was scored and then analyzed according to the variables selected. Appropriate methods of statistical analysis were used including descriptive statistics, analysis of variance and Tukey HSD post hoc test.

Summary of Research Questions

Research Question One Summary

Is there a significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of school law and the kind of school law preparation received? (college course, school system workshop, non-school system seminar, other).

A forty-item test was used to measure the principal's knowledge of school law in relation to preparation. An analysis of variance was used to examine differences among the means and no significant difference was found. Thus the findings indicated that there was no significant statistical difference between the principal's knowledge of school law and the kind of school law preparation they received. This is the same conclusion that Caldwell (1986) reached in her study.

Research Question Two Summary

Is there a significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of school law in relation to the length/quantity of preparation received? (semester, quarter, three weeks minimum, one day or less, other)

An analysis of variance was run to examine differences among the means and no significant difference was found. Thus no statistically significant difference was found between the principal's knowledge of school law and the length/quantity of the principal's preparation. This is the same conclusion that Caldwell (1986) reached in her study.

Research Question Three Summary

Is there a significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of school law and the recency of school law preparation?

An analysis of variance was run to examine differences among the means and a significant difference was found at the p(F) of .043 for the subscore category of tort liability. The post hoc Tukey test showed a significant difference of the means (.4144) between those who reported having the recency of their legal preparation 5-10 years ago (4.627) and those who reported the recency of their legal preparation as other (4.213). Since the recency question was worded as follows: "How recently did you receive your school law preparation? 0-2 years ago, 3-4 years ago, 5-10 years ago, Other," then the most logical conclusion for those selecting other is that they received their legal preparation over 10 years ago. Interestingly, Caldwell's study (1986) found the lowest subscale score of Virginia principals was in the area of tort liability with a score of 54.9%. Caldwell had even concluded, "a study dealing only with tort liability should be conducted." (p.77) The low score of current principals who had legal preparation programs over 10 years ago could reflect the fact that school law preparation programs at that time had little emphasis on liability issues.

Research Question Four Summary

Is there a significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience held?

An analysis of variance was run to examine differences among the means and no significant difference was found. Thus no statistically significant difference was found between the principal's knowledge of school law and the years of administrative experience held. This is the same conclusion that Caldwell (1986) reached in her study.

Research Question Five Summary

Is there a significant relationship between the principal's knowledge of school law and the description of the community in which they work?

An analysis of variance was run to examine differences among the means and no significant difference was found between the means. However, due to the p(F) of .053 for the subscore category of student issues, a post hoc Tukey HSD test was conducted. The Tukey HSD test showed a significant mean difference (1.120) between those principals who described their school community as suburban, 12.898, and those who described their school community as a combination of urban-suburban-rural, 11.786.

In the literature review, Gordon (1996) had found that West Virginia principals in large communities of 25,000 or more scored higher on his legal knowledge index than those from rural areas. While his study might concur with the finding that suburban district principals have the highest scores, it does not explain why the combination of urban-suburban-rural district principals recorded the lowest scores in the study. A better survey explanation of the community descriptions, such as Gordon's use of the U.S. census data definitions, may have clarified the unique characteristics of those combination districts.

Discussion of Questionnaire

Four categories of school law were examined in this questionnaire: student issues, teacher/administrator issues, tort liability, and church/state relations. Principals scored highest in the questions related to student issues with an 82.4% overall average.

There were only two areas of concern from the student issues section. A majority of principals (58.7%) incorrectly thought students had the right to an attorney in short-term suspension cases. The U.S. Supreme Court in Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565, 95 S.Ct. 729 (1975),

clearly stated otherwise. Similarly, 38.1% of principals incorrectly believed that academic penalties for a student's nonattendance violated a student's due process rights. With many Virginia school systems offering specific policies regarding student non-attendance, this was also surprising.

Virginia public school principals demonstrated an adequate amount of knowledge about teacher/administrator issues. Large majorities of the respondents understood the due process procedures of continuing contract teachers as well as teachers' free speech rights. Surprisingly, Virginia principals did not appreciate the distinction noted in Perry v. Sindermann, 408 U.S. 593, 92 S. Ct. 2694 (1972), and Board of Regents of State Colleges v. Roth, 408 U.S. 564, 92 St. Ct. 2701 (1972), that even annual contract teachers could have a hearing if they could show that the termination damages their reputation in the community or forecloses employment elsewhere. The likelihood of proving those conditions must be so rare as to nullify its importance to the principals. Additionally, many principals did not know good moral character was a part of the certification process. Here it is possible that the phrasing of the question, "One of the most *common* (my italics) requirements for certification and recertification is...good moral character" may have influenced principals to choose the incorrect answer.

Virginia principals also had an adequate knowledge of tort liability with an average score of 72.9%. High percentages of Virginia principals understood the legal concepts of *in loco parentis*, reasonable care, and assumption of risk. While a majority of principals also understood the concept of governmental immunity for ordinary negligence, 42.6% did not. An even greater percentage (51.9%) did not know that they were generally not liable for the negligent acts of their employees who had been properly assigned and trained. Since the study showed that those principals who received their legal preparation over 10 years ago performed the worst on this

section, additional workshops in tort liability should be developed by the professional associations and the Virginia Department of Education.

Virginia principals scored worst in the category of church/state relations. They answered 5.289 questions correctly out of 9, for a score of 58.8%. This performance should raise concern among state education officials and policy-makers. For example, over 42.6% of Virginia principals did not know that invocations and benedictions were NOT an acceptable part of public school graduations. There was no difference in the scores based on the school's location in a rural, urban or suburban community. The principals' poor score stands in light of the fact that the Supreme Court case that decided the issue, Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577, 112 S. Ct. 2649 (1992), is over 10 years old.

There was also tremendous confusion regarding student-led student initiated prayer at football games with 73.7% of the principals answering incorrectly. Principals believed student prayer before football games was legal even though the Supreme Court ruled against such prayer in Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe, 120 S.Ct. 2266, 2000 WL 775587, just three years ago.

Principals also were confused about the applicability of the Equal Access Act that was passed by Congress in 1984. An overwhelming majority (86.2%) thought the Act allowing religious groups to meet in schools applied to both elementary and secondary schools. The Act only applies to secondary schools that allow other non-curricular clubs to meet and this finding suggests that many elementary principals may have provided those groups greater access to their schools than legally required.

On the other hand, principals were also confused about released time programs off school grounds that allow for religious instruction by religious groups. Only a slim majority of

principals, 51.9%, knew that these programs were constitutionally permissible. Since this Supreme Court case, Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306, 72 S. Ct. 679, is over 50 years old, one hopes the issue is due to lack of practical use of the rule within their system rather than lack of knowledge.

Limitations of the Study

1. Control There were no controls employed over the testing conditions of the study. No time limitations were imposed and there is no way to verify that principals may have researched answers or obtained help from other sources.
2. Place The on-line questionnaire was developed specifically for the State of Virginia
3. Time The legal issues included in the questionnaire were those deemed to be currently faced by Virginia public school principals.
4. Content Special education law was not included in the questionnaire. However, the question about principal involvement in litigation did not ask principals to distinguish between general education cases and special education cases. Since the percentage of Virginia principals involved in litigation remained constant since Caldwell's 1986 study, it cannot be determined if the general education cases declined and the special education cases increased for this sample of principals.
5. Instrumentation The instrument developed was a True-False test. While True-False tests are less reliable and reflect best practice somewhat less, the decision to use

this type of test was based on the fact the study (Caldwell) that this study most closely replicates used the same format.

Findings of the Study

1. The average score obtained in this study was 73.3%, which was similar to previous studies using a forty-item survey (Caldwell, 1986, 78.1%, Osborn, 1990, 72% and Gordon, 1996, 76%).
2. Fifty-nine (59) Virginia principals representing 18.9% of the respondents indicated that they had been previously involved in litigation. This represents almost the exact same percentage (18.5%) of Virginia principals that Caldwell found in 1986.
3. Almost 90% of Virginia principals in the study received school law preparation through a formal college semester course.
4. Almost 70% of Virginia principals received school law preparation within the last 10 years.
5. One-third of Virginia principals in the study have 3 years of experience or less.
6. About half (49.7%) of the respondents read legal materials on a monthly basis.
7. No significant differences in survey scores were found among principals with respect to the type and the length/quantity of their legal preparation or their years of experience.
8. There was a significant difference at $p(F)$ of .043 on the recency of preparation and the subscale score on tort liability. There was a significant difference of the means of .4144 between those who had received their legal preparation within the last 5 to 10 years (4.627) and those who had reported other (4.213).

9. No significant difference in survey scores was found among principals with respect to their description of the school community in which they work. However, a post hoc Tukey HSD test did show a significant difference of the means (1.120) between those principals who described their community as suburban, 12.898, and those who described their community as a combination of urban-suburban-rural, 11.786.
10. Principals were most knowledgeable about school law related to student issues with an average score of 82.4%. The only areas of concern were regarding academic penalties for a student's nonattendance and the issue of an attorney in short-term suspension cases.
11. Almost equal percentages of principals in the study answered correctly the categories of teacher/administrator and tort liability (73.3% and 72.9% respectively). Issues regarding annual contract teachers, certification, governmental immunity and personal liability caused the greatest confusion.
12. Principals in the study performed worst in the legal category of church/state relations. A troubling 42.6% of principals did not know that invocations and benedictions were not an acceptable part at public school graduations despite an over 10 year old Supreme Court case to the contrary.

Conclusions

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Based upon the literature review and the finding that over 18% of the respondents have been involved with litigation during their time as principal, the importance of teaching principals school law continues to be paramount for principal preparation programs and state education officials.

2. Since principals scored an average of 73.3% on the survey, which represents a D+ in 6-point grading scale school systems and a C in 10 point grading scale school systems, this would continue to indicate that they possess only an adequate or fair knowledge of school law. This was the same conclusion reached in other studies when principals scored in a similar range. Their low score of 58.8% on church/state relations is particularly troubling given the sensitivity and controversy surrounding public schools on this issue statewide and nationwide.
3. A state seminar on church/state relations should be held for all Virginia principals to disseminate federal and state guidelines on religious expression and religious accommodation in public schools.
4. A tort liability workshop should be required for all principals with over 10 years of experience.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. This same study should be conducted in another state(s) to determine whether these results are applicable beyond the State of Virginia.
2. Instruments like these should be used by school divisions and university preparation programs to determine what specific areas of school law should be addressed in school in-service training and university curriculum.
3. This study should be repeated in 3 to 5 years with an update of the current legal issues to see if legal awareness has increased or decreased.

4. A separate study should be conducted on principal knowledge of special education law due to its growing importance in schools.

Implications for Further Study

1. Another study should be conducted to determine what the real reasons are behind principals' lack of legal knowledge. It should focus on the factors that cause this lack of knowledge.
2. Another study should be conducted on why principals do not understand tort liability or church/state relations as well as other areas of school law.

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Appendix A
Panel Selected to Review School Law Questionnaire

Panel Evaluating the School Law Questionnaire

Jan Leslie
Principal and former Virginia Association of Secondary School Principals (VASSP) President
Herndon High School
Herndon, Virginia

Dr. Randy Barrack
Executive Director
VASSP
Richmond, Virginia

Dr. Tom Shortt
Executive Director
Virginia Association of Elementary School Principals
Richmond, Virginia

Dr. Walt Mallory
Adjunct Professor of Education
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia

Dr. Teresa Caldwell
Coordinator, Staff Development, Instructional Services
Fairfax County Public Schools
Fairfax, Virginia

Appendix B
School Law Survey and Answer Sheet

Final Questionnaire

School Law and Virginia Public School Principals

Thank you for agreeing to take the on-line questionnaire. As noted in the letter, the questionnaire will remain completely CONFIDENTIAL. The data will be analyzed and discussed only in generalized terms and will NOT reflect your individual responses. Directions: Please mark the correct response for each question.

Please enter your survey id number now. It is located on the letter you received below the web address.

Are you a principal in a?

- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- Other

Which of the following best describes the community that your school serves?

- Urban
- Suburban
- Rural
- A combination of urban-suburban-rural

Are you?

- Male
- Female

Are you?

- 20-35
- 36-46
- 47-55
- 56-65

What is your highest educational attainment?

- Masters
- Masters + 30 (Educational Specialist)

- Doctorate
- Other

Have you been involved in litigation during your time as principal?

- Yes
- No

What type of school law preparation did you receive in order to earn your endorsement as an administrator?

- College/University course for credit
- College/University course for non-credit
- School system workshop
- Non-school system workshop
- Other

What was the length of school law preparation you received?

- Semester
- Quarter
- Minimum of 3 weeks
- 1 day or less
- Other

How recently did you receive your school law preparation?

- 0-2 years ago
- 3-4 years ago
- 5-10 years ago
- Other

How many years have you been a principal?

- Less than 1 year
- 1 to 3 years
- 4 to 7 years
- 8 to 12 years
- More than 12 years

How do you receive current legal information?

- Seminars

- Publications
- Conferences
- Virginia Department of Education
- Other

How often do you read materials specifically relating school law?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Quarterly

Do you attend conferences or seminars such as those sponsored by?

- NASSP
- NAESP
- VASSP
- VAESP
- AASA
- Other

Have you attended any of these conferences?

- This year
- 1-3 years ago
- 4-6 years ago
- Over 6 years ago

Next Page

(1 of 2)

School Law and Virginia Public School Principals

1. Before a pupil can be suspended for even a short period of time, he must be allowed the opportunity to respond to the charges, providing he does not represent an immediate threat to safety.

- True
 False

2. Public school students must salute the flag and say the Pledge of Allegiance.

- True
 False

3. A principal must obtain a search warrant before searching a student's locker, pockets, or purse.

- True
 False

4. Pupils have unlimited constitutional rights as individuals to exercise free speech in public schools.

- True
 False

5. Students may be disciplined by school authorities for acts committed while off school grounds.

- True
 False

6. School officials may be personally liable for sexual harassment if they are indifferent to student charges of teacher harassment.

- True
 False

7. A student has the constitutional right to an attorney in short-term suspension cases.

- True
 False

8. A school cannot be liable for one student's sexual harassment of another student.

- True
 False

9. Vouchers for parochial schools using public money have been found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.

- True
- False

10. The school district must allow pupils to wear armbands, picket peacefully, distribute publications, or other express their opinions where such means of expression are not shown to materially disrupt or substantially interfere with school activities.

- True
- False

11. Academic penalties for a student's nonattendance at school violates that student's due process rights.

- True
- False

12. Reasonable student dress codes based on genuine concern for health, safety, or disruption of the school instructional environment may be enforced by school officials.

- True
- False

13. Students may organize a Gay and Lesbian Club if the school allows other non curricular clubs to meet.

- True
- False

14. Teachers may be dismissed for failure to comply with Virginia school laws and regulations providing proper procedures are followed.

- True
- False

15. The school division must provide a hearing for the non-renewal of a probationary teacher's contract if the teacher can show that non-renewal damages his or her reputation in the community or forecloses employment elsewhere.

- True
- False

16. The burden of proof in dismissing a continuing contract teacher in Virginia is upon the school board.

- True
- False

elementary school without initiating demotion proceedings.

- True
- False

18. One of the most common requirements for certification and recertification is that the teacher must be of good moral character.

- True
- False

19. Unwed pregnant teachers may be dismissed by local school boards for immorality.

- True
- False

20. A number of courts have ruled that immoral conduct must be related to the teacher's fitness to teach before the teacher may be dismissed.

- True
- False

21. Under most circumstances, the courts permit strip searches of students by administrators.

- True
- False

22. Teachers may be fired for their oral and written statements clearly critical of school authorities, even if the statements have no effect on school operations or objectives.

- True
- False

23. The in loco parentis standard permits teachers to take responsibility to protect students in their care.

- True
- False

24. According to the Code of Virginia, a teacher cannot be dismissed until remediation has been attempted.

- True
- False

25. School boards may legally establish policies that reasonably regulate a teacher's appearance as one factor affecting his or her suitability for a particular position.

- True

False

26. An accident, which could have been foreseen and prevented by "reasonable" care, may constitute negligence.

True

False

27. Student participants in athletic events assume the risks and hazards of the game.

True

False

28. A principal may have control over the content of a valedictorian speech at graduation.

True

False

29. Bible reading and prayers in the public school classroom are permissible, providing there is substantial community support for these exercises.

True

False

30. A parent may not challenge the accuracy of school records maintained on their children.

True

False

31. The Bible may be taught from a literacy or historical viewpoint in the public school.

True

False

32. A teacher can hold prayer with students in his or her classroom each morning if the prayer is not state promulgated.

True

False

33. Invocations and Benedictions are an acceptable part of public school graduations.

True

False

34. Teachers have governmental immunity for ordinary negligence.

- True
- False

35. Public money for the transportation of parochial school pupils does not violate the federal constitution.

- True
- False

36. Student-led student initiated prayers at high school football games do not violate the Establishment clause.

- True
- False

37. Equal access law that allows students to form religious clubs applies to both elementary and secondary schools.

- True
- False

38. A school board may allow a released time program off school grounds to be established for religious instruction.

- True
- False

39. A principal is generally not liable for the negligent acts of a properly assigned and qualified school employee.

- True
- False

40. School authority supersedes the custodial authority of the parent in matters of suspected child abuse.

- True
- False

Thank you for taking the time to complete this on-line questionnaire. If you would like to see an answer sheet for the above questions please click on the website below. Thank you again for your time. Sincerely, Scott Brabrand (This survey was created with [WebSurveyor](#))

School Law and Virginia Public School Principals

Answer Sheet of Law Survey by Scott Brabrand

Check below to see how you did!!

TRUE 1. Before a pupil can be suspended for even a short time, he must be allowed

the opportunity to respond to the charges, providing he does not represent an immediate threat to safety.

- FALSE 2. Public school students must salute the flag and say the Allegiance.
- FALSE 3. A principal must obtain a search warrant before searching a student's locker, pockets, or purse.
- FALSE 4. Pupils have unlimited constitutional rights as individuals to exercise free speech in public schools.
- TRUE 5. Students may be disciplined by school authorities for acts committed while off-school grounds.
- TRUE 6. School officials may be personally liable for sexual harassment if they are indifferent to student charges of teacher harassment.
- FALSE 7. A student has the constitutional right to an attorney in short-term suspension cases.
- FALSE 8. A school CANNOT be liable for one student's sexual harassment of another student.
- FALSE 9. Vouchers for parochial schools using public money have been found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court.
- TRUE 10. The school district must allow pupils to wear armbands, picket peacefully, distribute publications, or otherwise express their opinions where such means of expression is not show to materially disrupt or substantially interfere with school activities.
- FALSE 11. Academic penalties for a student's nonattendance at school violate that student's due process rights.
- TRUE 12. Reasonable student dress codes based on genuine concern for health, safety, or disruption of the school instructional environment may be enforced by school officials.
- TRUE 13. Students may organize a Gay and Lesbian Club if the school allows other noncurricular clubs to meet.
- TRUE 14. Teachers may be dismissed for failure to comply with Virginia school laws and regulations providing proper procedures are followed.

- TRUE 15. The school division must provide a hearing for the non-renewal of a probationary teacher's contract if the teacher can show that non-renewal damages his or her reputation in the community or forecloses employment elsewhere.
- TRUE 16. The burden of proof in dismissing a tenured teacher is upon the school board.
- TRUE 17. A school board may transfer a teacher from secondary school to elementary school without initiating demotion proceedings.
- TRUE 18. One of the most common requirements for certification and recertification is that the teacher must be of good moral character.
- FALSE 19. Unwed pregnant teachers may be dismissed by local school boards for immorality.
- TRUE 20. A number of courts have ruled that immoral conduct must be related to the teacher's fitness to teach before the teacher may be dismissed.
- FALSE 21. Under most circumstances, the courts permit strip searches of students by administrators.
- FALSE 22. Teachers may be fired for their oral and written statements clearly critical of school authorities, even if the statements have no effect on school operations or objectives.
- TRUE 23. The *in loco parentis* standard compels teachers to take responsibility to protect students in their care.
- TRUE 24. According to the Code of Virginia, a teacher cannot be dismissed until remediation has been attempted.
- TRUE 25. School boards may legally establish policies that reasonably regulate a teacher's appearance as one factor affecting his or her suitability for a particular position.
- TRUE 26. An accident, which could have been foreseen and prevented by "reasonable" care, may constitute negligence.
- TRUE 27. Student participants in athletic events assume the risks and hazards of the game.
- TRUE 28. A principal may have control over the content of a valedictorian speech at graduation.
- FALSE 29. Bible reading and prayers in the public school classroom are permissible, providing there is substantial community support for these exercises.

- FALSE 30. A parent may not challenge the accuracy of school records maintained on their children.
- TRUE 31. The Bible may be taught from a literary or historical viewpoint in the public school.
- FALSE 32. A teacher can hold prayer with students in his or her classroom each morning if the prayer is not state promulgated.
- FALSE 33. Invocations and benedictions are an acceptable part of public school graduations.
- TRUE 34. Teachers have governmental immunity for ordinary negligence.
- TRUE 35. Public money for the transportation of parochial school pupils does not violate the federal constitution.
- FALSE 36. Student-led student initiated prayers at high school football games do not violate the Establishment clause.
- FALSE 37. Equal access law that allows students to form religious clubs applies to both elementary and secondary schools.
- TRUE 38. A school board may allow a released time program off school grounds to be established for religious instruction.
- TRUE 39. A principal is generally not liable for the negligent acts of a properly assigned and qualified school employee.
- TRUE 40. School authority supersedes the custodial authority of the parent in matters of suspected child abuse.

Appendix C

Letter Sent to Principals With Instructions To Complete On-line Survey

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
College of Education - Northern Virginia Graduate Center

January 9, 2003

«PRINCIPAL»

«ADD1»

«ADD2»

Dear Virginia Principal:

I am an assistant principal at Herndon High School in Fairfax County, Virginia and a doctoral candidate in Educational Administration at Virginia Tech. I am in the process of writing my dissertation in the area of school law. The purpose of this letter is to ask for your help in collecting information for my research.

You have been selected at random from the Virginia Education Directory as representative of Virginia Public School Principals. This study is being conducted in collaboration with VASSP and VAESP and the final results will be shared with them at an appropriate association meeting. Additionally, information from this study will be used to design professional development for principals and for university curriculum. Your response is very important to me and I would appreciate you taking the time to complete an on-line questionnaire. If you are not the person to whom this letter was addressed, please forward this letter to the current or acting principal at your school.

The questionnaire will remain completely CONFIDENTIAL. The data will be analyzed and discussed only in generalized terms and will NOT reflect your individual responses. However, you WILL be able to immediately access an answer sheet after completing the survey for your own personal feedback.

Please complete the on-line questionnaire by January 22nd. You can access the questionnaire by going directly to:

<http://websurveyor.net/wsb.dll/10990/schoollaw.htm>

(Note: fill in the web address represents letters not numbers)

When on-line, you will be asked first to enter the following survey id number: «CONTROL»
Completing the questionnaire will take no longer than 5-10 minutes!

Allow me to express my appreciation to you in advance for completing my on-line questionnaire. If you would like to have an executive summary of my research results, please contact me at the address below.

Sincerely,

Scott Brabrand

Appendix D
Follow up Letter to Non-Respondents

Follow up Letter to Non-respondents

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

College of Education - Northern Virginia Graduate Center

January 24, 2003

«.PRINCIPA»

«ADD1»

«ADD2»

Dear Virginia Principal:

On January 9, 2003 a letter requesting you to fill out an on-line survey entitled “Virginia Principals and School Law” was mailed to you. It included a web address <http://websurveyor.net/wsb.dll/10990/schoollaw.htm> and an id number _____.

Based on the survey results so far, I have not received your survey. Because the letter has been sent to a small, yet representative sample, it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to represent Virginia school principals accurately.

Thank you again for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Scott Brabrand
Assistant Principal
Herndon High School

Appendix E
8 Regions of Virginia Used to Develop Stratified Random Sample
Source: Virginia Department of Education

Region 1

Charles City County
Richmond City
Petersburg County
Henrico County
Dinwiddie County

Goochland County
Chesterfield County
Surry County
Powhatan County
Hopewell County

New Kent County
Hanover County
Colonial Heights City
Sussex County
Prince George County

Region 2

Accomack County
Virginia Beach City
Portsmouth City
Norfolk City
Northhampton County

Poquoson City
Chesapeake City
Franklin City
Southampton City
Suffolk City

Isle of Wight County
Newport News City
Williamsburg/James City County
Hampton City
York County

Region 3

Caroline County
Fredericksburg City
King & Queen County
Matthews County
Richmond County
Town of West Point

Town of Colonial Beach
Gloucester County
King William County
Middlesex County
Spotsylvania County
Westmoreland County

Essex County
King George County
Lancaster County
Northumberland County
Stafford County

Region 4

Alexandria City
Culpeper County
Falls Church City
Loudoun County
Manassas Park City
Prince William County
Warren County

Arlington County
Fairfax County
Fauquier County
Madison County
Orange County
Rappahannock County
Winchester City

Clarke County
Fairfax City
Frederick County
Manassas City
Page County
Shenandoah County

Region 5

Albemarle County
Augusta County
Buena Vista City
Fluvanna County
Highland County
Lynchburg City
Rockingham County

Amherst County
Bath County
Campbell County
Greene County
Lexington City
Nelson County
Staunton City

Appomattox County
Bedford County
Charlottesville City
Harrisonburg City
Louisa County
Rockbridge County
Waynesboro City

Region 6

Botetourt County
Craig County
Franklin County
Montgomery County
Roanoke County

Covington City
Danville City
Henry County
Patrick County
Roanoke City

Alleghany Highlands County
Floyd County
Martinsville City
Pittsylvania County
Salem City

Region 7

Bland County
Carroll County
Giles County
Norton City
Russell County
Tazewell County
Wythe County

Bristol City
Dickenson County
Grayson County
Pulaski County
Scott County
Washington County

Buchanan County
Galax City
Lee County
Radford City
Smyth County
Wise County

Region 8

Amelia County
Charlotte County
Halifax County
Nottoway County

Brunswick County
Cumberland County
Lunenburg County
Prince Edward County

Rockingham County
Greensville/Emporia County
Mecklenburg County

VITA

VITA

Scott Sorensen Brabrand

Professional experience

| | | |
|---|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2001 - present | Fairfax County Public Schools | Herndon, VA |
| Assistant Principal II | | |
| 1999 - 2000 | Fairfax County Public Schools | Herndon, VA |
| Assistant Principal I | | |
| Summer 1999 | Fairfax County Public Schools | Herndon, VA |
| Administrator – Early Start and Jump Start Program | | |
| 1994 - 1999 | Fairfax County Public Schools | Herndon, VA |
| Social Studies Teacher | | |
| 1994 - 1995 | Bell Atlantic | Silver Spring, MD |
| Assistant Manager | | |
| 1991 - 1993 | Bell Atlantic | Landover, MD |
| Assistant Manager | | |
| 1990 - 1991 | C&P Telephone of Virginia | Alexandria, VA |
| Group Manager | | |

Education

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|
| August 2000 – May 2003 | Virginia Tech | Blacksburg, VA |
| Ed.D. in Educational Administration | | |
| 1998 - May 2000 | Virginia Tech | Blacksburg, VA |
| Ed.S. in Virginia Tech's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Program | | |
| 1993 - 1997 | George Washington University | Washington, D.C. |
| Masters in Education in Department of Teacher Preparation and Special Education | | |
| 1986 - 1990 | Georgetown University | Washington, D.C. |
| B.S. in Foreign Service at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service | | |

