

A Comparative Study of Principal Performance Evaluation in the Commonwealth of Virginia

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ABSTRACT

The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) makes unprecedented demands on states, school districts, and schools to raise academic achievement and to improve low-achieving schools. Many believe that schools are only as good as the principal leading the school. There is evidence that the format and processes used in principal evaluation often vary from one state to another, and even among school districts within a state. The purpose of this study is to examine the status of principal performance evaluation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The study reviews and compares all school divisions' descriptions of principal evaluation systems, information collection strategies, and schedules for information collection and evaluation of principals.

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the evaluation process for principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. An attempt was made to (1) find out what procedures school divisions used to evaluate principal performance, (2) determine how the evaluation process varied by divisions type (i.e., suburban, urban, and rural), size and location, (3) find out the structures in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices, (4) determine the strategies used to support principals who are evaluated as needing improvement, (5) analyze documents that cover policies and procedures governing principal evaluation, and (6) to present a summary and analysis of data with implications for further research.

This study was conducted first by analyzing a questionnaire regarding assessment practices currently being used by school divisions received from 91 school divisions; second, by

examining the principal evaluation documents returned by 61 of the responding school divisions in Virginia; and third, by gathering data on how principals are recognized for outstanding performance, or supported if they need improvement. The demographics of school divisions represent 1,407 principals and 812,211 students. An extensive review of literature was conducted to explore principal evaluation and its effect on the quality of education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The information accumulated through the literature review, the questionnaire data and the document analysis resulted in findings that profile a comprehensive view of the status of principal evaluation in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The findings of the study indicated that there is agreement among researchers and policymakers that an evaluation process must be in place in order to have effective principals and thus effective schools. The data in this study showed that more than half of respondents (67%) had procedures in place for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures. However, 33% of school divisions did not have procedures in place. This is a sizable number, and a matter of concern, since principal evaluation has been mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia since 1972.

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Chapter 1

Statement of the Problem

Significant, standards-based reforms in education are looking increasingly to principals to lead the way. The preponderance of research states that effective schools are led by effective leaders and the school principal is the single most influential factor in promoting excellence in education (Lashway, 1999; DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran, 2003, Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Murphy, 2002; Reeves, 2004). The role of the principal has changed significantly, and principals are faced with new issues and challenges. A report from the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL, 2000) indicates that principals in today's schools will deal with increasingly diverse student populations, and an increasing number of students' societal problems will become the school's problems. Qualified teachers will be harder to find, safety will continue to remain a top concern, and community expectations will become more demanding. The report also predicts that recognition of academic achievement will be the priority for professional accountability. Given the increased responsibilities of building principals and the recognition of their importance to educational improvement, there is a need to determine the extent to which principal assessment systems are being implemented.

Overview of Principal Evaluation

It is evident that there is a need for sound evaluation of education personnel. According to Stufflebeam (1988), effectively educating students and achieving other related goals depends on the use of evaluation by educational institutions to select, retain, and develop qualified personnel and to manage and facilitate their work. Reeves (2004) indicated that "the purpose of evaluation is to improve the performance of the individual and the organization. Both parties—

the person being evaluated and the entity conducting the evaluation—have a responsibility for reflection, analysis, and improvement (p. xii).” However, despite its necessity, educational institutions have not always been effective in carrying out personnel evaluation responsibilities (Brown & Irby, 1998; Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993). According to Lashway (1998), the evaluation of principals was often an afterthought. Reeves (2004) states that most leadership assessments are carried out infrequently, are unhelpful, and basically get in the way of an effective evaluation. This lenient approach to evaluation shortchanges everyone. As the pivotal players in the school community, principals deserve accurate, relevant feedback that not only satisfies the demands of accountability but also enhances their performance (Lashway, 1998).

The Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act of Virginia (1999) addressed this issue by making performance evaluations mandatory in the Commonwealth of Virginia. It states:

Each local school board shall adopt for use by the division superintendent clearly defined criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals... among other things, an assessment of such administrators; skills and knowledge; student academic progress and school gains in student learning; and effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline. (§ 22.1-294)

Standards-Based Accountability

Standards-based accountability has become a daily reality for school administrators. In the last ten years, this concept has expanded from a new idea to a reality. Policymakers have clearly spelled out the message to states: “Meet the expectations or face the consequences, which range from public embarrassment to school closure” (Lashway, 2001, p. 1). This expectation of

accountability has affected all areas of education, from student assessment to personnel evaluation.

Accountability is not new to the world of education. However, it is certainly on the front burner. Beginning in the 1970s, and continuing well into the 1980s, the public demand for accountability increased. The focus was not only on evaluating teachers now, but also extended to administrators. In 1974, only nine states mandated administrative evaluation for principals. But by 1984, the number increased to 27, with Virginia being one of them.

“The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) is the latest national effort to bring more accountability—a favorite catchphrase of policymakers—to public education” (Retner & Hamilton, 2003, p. 1). This law differs significantly from past federal legislation; its goal is to hold every public school accountable for performance, including schools that do not directly benefit from federal aid. As principals continue to feel mounting pressure to improve student achievement, new ideas have emerged on the role of principal evaluation in raising individual and organizational performance (Lashway, 2003).

The Virginia General Assembly took standards expectations for personnel to another level in 1999, when it passed legislation requiring local school boards to use uniform performance standards in evaluating superintendents, other administrators, and teachers. These standards, the *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents*, provide guidance for school boards in the development of evaluation policies and procedures (Virginia Department of Education, 2000).

Accountability of administrators exists not only within school walls; it extends out into the community, which presents another challenge. Taxpayers want to know if schools are living up to their responsibilities. Recognizing the importance that society has placed on the role of the

principal, it would appear that efforts to enhance the role of school principal through effective and conscientious evaluation would receive widespread attention and support. This study will examine the process by which Virginia school divisions evaluate principals. This chapter will provide the purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, an overview of some of the issues affecting principal evaluation, definition of terms, delimitations of the study, and assumptions.

Purpose of the Study

This study describes the evaluation of principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia in three ways: First, by examining the principal evaluation documents from the 132 school divisions in the state; second, by conducting a survey of the human resource directors in each division to gather demographic and other data about the assessment practices that are currently being used by divisions; and third, by gathering data for the human resource directors on how principals are recognized for outstanding performance, or supported if they need improvement.

Research Questions

1. What procedures do school divisions use to evaluate principal performance?
2. How does the evaluation process vary by division size, school levels, and division type (i.e., suburban, urban, and rural)?
3. What structures are in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices?
4. What strategies are used to support principals who need improvement?

Significance of the Study

In 1999, the Commonwealth of Virginia passed the Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act. This act required each school district in Virginia to develop criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals, assistant principals, and supervisors. To help localities meet this requirement, the state adopted *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents* (Virginia Department of Education, 2000) that included Interstate School Licensure Leadership Consortium (ISLLC) standards as the evaluation framework. Since the responsibility for building principals has increased, and their importance to educational improvement has been recognized, the extent to which principal assessment systems are using the guidelines and the ISLLC standards in the state needs to be determined.

Reforms in education through standards and accountability increase the pressure for schools to have strong leaders. There is a general belief that good school principals produce successful schools, and efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed without this leadership (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). If student achievement is not where parents and teachers believe it should be, the onus then shifts to the principal.

It is helpful to take a historical tour of the principal's role from the 1950s to the present to examine how the role of the principal has evolved into what it is today. In the 1950s, the principal was largely seen as the building manager. In the 1960s, principals were expected to accomplish more of the bureaucratic issues at the school level. However, implementation and development of large-scale policies were still handled by government agencies (Hallinger & Bridges, 1997).

Principals became “change agents” during the federal efforts that were heavily focused on curriculum in the early 1960s and early 1970s. *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) was the catalyst that brought about major reform, as it painted a very gloomy picture of public school education. Research on both school and classroom effectiveness began to identify the principal as the major factor in bringing about positive changes in the school (Hallinger & Bridges, 1997).

As a result of this research, the role of the principal was broadened and the role of instructional leader was added—without removing the responsibilities of a school manager. This completely overwhelmed the principals, and the public was watching. The accountability of administrators was not confined within school walls. It began to extend out into the community, where it encountered another challenge: taxpayers wanted to know if schools were living up to their responsibilities (Lashway, 2001).

During the early 1980s, school systems, counties, and state departments of education made an attempt to give principals the knowledge all of them deemed important. According to Hallinger and Bridges (1997), the efforts of state departments of education and leadership academies overextended the effectiveness research, and ended up institutionalizing unrealistic expectations of principals as prime movers of student achievement (Hallinger & Bridges, 1997, p. 2).

The role of the principal today has become synonymous with “instructional leader.” A review of the literature indicates that effective principals are strong educators, who concentrate their efforts on central issues of learning and teaching and continuous school improvement (School Improvement in Maryland, 2003). The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) puts principals on the front line to meet the requirements of this new law. There is nothing new about

principals complying with mandates and new laws; however, this law has many educators confused and worried (Tirozzi & Ferrandino, 2002). This presents another challenge for principals. There is a much stronger emphasis on technology and community involvement with the school. Parents have a strong voice in the decision-making in the school. Principals are expected to be out and about in the community and partnering with businesses (Franklin, 2000).

Because of the complexities of the principalship, the evaluation of principals is widely acknowledged to be challenging (Brown, Irby, & Neumeyer, 1998).

Definition of Key Terms

1. Assessment instrument: any systematic means of generating tangible information about leadership qualities.
2. Personnel evaluation: “the systematic assessment of a person’s performance and/or qualifications in relation to a professional role and some specified and defensible institutional purpose” (Joint Committee, 1988, p. 7).
3. Standard: “a principle commonly agreed to by people engaged in the professional practice of evaluation for the measurement of the value or the quality of an evaluation” (Joint Committee, 1988, p. 187).
4. Division type: For the purposes of this study, division type refers to a category selected by respondent to indicate whether the school district is urban, suburban, rural, or some other geographic indicator.
5. Division size: Within the content of this study, refers to total number of students enrolled in school division at the time of study.
6. School levels: Refers to whether a school serves elementary, middle, or high school students.

7. Formative evaluation: a phase of ongoing observation and supervision, designed to improve performance (MDESE, 1987).
8. Summative evaluation: A phase that encompasses all information obtained during the formative phase; may serve as a basis for administrative decisions

Limitations of the study

The analysis of the principal performance evaluation process will be limited strictly to Virginia school divisions.

Assumptions of the Study

The underlying assumptions of the study were:

1. The School Division survey form used to collect data concerning policies and procedures used in each school division would result in the collection of relevant and valid information.
2. The personnel officer or official respondent from each school division who completed the questionnaire would provide accurate information according to the respective school divisions policy and evaluation procedures.
3. The evaluation documents (policies and procedures) received from school divisions provide a fair representation of the current status of principal evaluation in Virginia school divisions.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

The review of research and literature undertaken for this study describes the need and demand for greater accountability in the education process. During the past two decades, more attention has been focused on evaluation in all areas of education. It has become an essential element of nearly every reform initiative adopted by schools and school districts around the country.

Dimensions of Evaluation

Numerous definitions or descriptions of evaluation have been cited in the literature, ranging from the very simple to the most complex. Historically, Ralph Tyler is credited with one of the earliest definitions of evaluation. In 1942, he defined evaluation as the process of determining the degree of congruence between performance and objectives (Berk, 1981, p.4). Popham offered one of the most simple and straightforward statements, defining evaluation as “the assessment of merit” (Wolf, 1990, p. 2). A more expanded definition, given by L. J. Cronback, describes evaluation as the “collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational program” (Wolf, 1990, p. 2).

A similar but more comprehensive definition comes from Patton (1981), who states that evaluation “involves the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs, personnel, and products in order for interested persons to make judgments about specific aspects of what those programs, personnel, or products are doing and affecting” (p. 18).

C.E. Beeby (as cited in Wolf, 1990) defined evaluation as “the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence, leading, as part of the process, to a judgment of value with a view to action” (p. 3). Wolf prefers this definition because it expands the aspect of gathering and analyzing information and adds the element of action following the decision-making process.

Ernest House (1990) presents his view of appropriate evaluations as “the determination of the worth or value of something, in this case of educational programs, policies and personnel, judged according to appropriate criteria, with those criteria explicated and justified” (p. 24).

In summary, a composite of the various definitions as related to education includes (a) the gathering and analysis of data, (b) the use of judgment based on appropriate and defined criteria, and (c) the making of decisions with a few toward action.

The preponderance of literature focuses on information about recommendations for evaluating principals. There is little formal research that describes how most districts currently conduct their evaluation process. Reeves (2004) states:

The purpose for evaluation is not merely to change the individual who, with just the proper combination of advice and threats, will reform her ways and become a satisfactory leader. Rather, the purpose of evaluation is to improve the performance of the individual and the organization. Both parties—the person being evaluated and the entity conducting the evaluation—have a responsibility for reflection, analysis, and improvement (pp. xii-xiii).

Evaluation criteria can have a profound symbolic meaning because they represent the values and expectations of the public for school personnel, especially regarding teaching and learning. Using those criteria as a measure to judge the effectiveness of educators can help focus assessment efforts on self-growth, instructional effectiveness, and improvement of job

performance on the whole (Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards, 2000). Evaluating the effectiveness of the school administrator is essential to ensuring a school's success. However, a review of the literature indicates that systematic procedures of evaluating principals tend to vary widely (Ediger, 2002; Franklin, 2000; Lashway, 2003). While there is a dearth of in-depth research about principal evaluation, it has been determined that the systems are often more efficient for evaluating teachers than they are for evaluating principals (Peterson, 1991; Reeves, 2004; Shipman & Murphy 2001; Stufflebeam & Nevo, 1993).

Historical Perspectives of Principal Evaluation in the Commonwealth

In its quest for excellence and increased accountability, the Virginia Department of Education has implemented several reform initiatives. Particular attention was focused on the role of the principal in public education, and the need for more systematic efforts to standardize the educational system (Table 1).

Responding to this increased interest and scrutiny, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation in 1971 that established the Standards of Quality for Public Schools. Article VIII, §2 of the Constitution of Virginia required the Board of Education to prescribe standards of quality for the public schools in Virginia:

Standards of quality for the several school divisions shall be determined and prescribed from time to time by the Board of Education, subject to revision only by the General Assembly. The General Assembly shall determine the manner in which funds are to be provided for the cost of maintaining an educational program meeting the prescribed standards of quality (Board of Education Agenda, 2004, p.1)

Table 1

Chronology of Principal Evaluation Reform Initiatives

Year	Reform initiative	Source	Description
1971	New Standards of Quality Act	Virginia General Assembly	Requires performance objectives for state and school divisions.
1972	Manual for Implementing Standards of Quality and Objectives for Public Schools	Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)	Provides suggestions and instructions designed to help local school divisions implement the standards and objectives.
1974	Evaluation Procedures Handbook	VDOE	Provides a clear explanation of the process to be used in evaluating the performance of central office personnel and principals.
1984	Excellence in Education: A Plan for Virginia's Future	Initiated by the Governor's Commission	Examines the ways Virginia's principals are selected, compensated, and recertified.

Table 1 continued

Year	Reform initiative	Source	Description
1986	Appointment of VDOE Task Force	VDOE	Established to study the evaluation of personnel in public schools.
1988	Personnel Evaluation Standards	Joint Commission on Standards for Educational Evaluation	Provided criteria and guidelines to help educational institutions assess and improve their evaluation of educators.
1999	Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act	Passed by the Virginia General Assembly	Mandates strategies to recognize and develop the heightened responsibilities of educators. Addresses the evaluation and training of school personnel with a primary focus on student achievement and safety.
2000	Guidelines for Uniform Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators and Principals	Adopted by the Virginia Board of Education	Establishes major categories of evaluation criteria and performance indicators for teachers, administrators, and superintendents.

Table 1 continued

Year	Reform initiative	Source	Description
2000	Implementation of Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium Standards	Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration	Outlines a series of standards that can be used by states for licensure and develops model standards and assessments for school leaders.
2001	The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001	U.S. Department of Education	Uses a standards-based system; increases role for federal government in education and assures that all children are educated to their full potential.
2003	Commission to Review, Study, and Reform Educational Leadership	Virginia Board of Education	Supports research and policy development to aid the preparation of principals and superintendents.
2004	HB 1014 and SB 1014	Recommended by the Board of Education and passed by the Virginia General Assembly	Mandates significant changes in the Standards of Quality; requires annual compliance report to the Board of Education.

The Board of Education adopted the first Standards of Quality (SOQ) on August 7, 1971. They were revised by the General Assembly in 1972 and adopted as uncodified Acts of the General Assembly. These standards were established for personnel, instructional materials (including educational television), program, and system-wide planning and management. In addition to the standards, the Virginia General Assembly enacted legislation that required performance objectives for the state and for school divisions. Also, planning and management objectives were required for public schools and teachers (Virginia Department of Education, 1974b).

The standards and objectives were designed to help each child to develop as fully as possible in the following ways:

1. To acquire competence in using fundamental learning skills and to acquire basic knowledge needed for participation in today's society;
2. To acquire skills and knowledge needed for education beyond high school or for employment;
3. To acquire a sense of personal worth and dignity;
4. To develop attitudes and values that lead to responsible participation as a citizen of our republic;
5. To develop an understanding of one's relationship to his ecological, physical, economic, and social environment;
6. To understand and appreciate people of different nationalities and ethnic groups and their contributions to the development of our nation and culture;
7. To develop personal habits for continuing physical and mental health;

8. To appreciate beauty and to understand its contribution to daily life. (Virginia Department of Education, 1974b, pp. i-ii).

The report indicated that the standards and objectives would be reviewed every two years to keep pace with changing expectations and conditions affecting education, new knowledge in the science and processes of education, and improved methods of evaluating educational quality. The departmental staff was organized into 22 teams, representing each planning district, to work directly with the localities in developing plans for meeting the standards and objectives (p. ii).

The process for evaluation of central office personnel and principals included five major areas as indicated in the model.

1. Establish performance targets.
2. Identify performance data.
3. Collect performance data.
4. Make evaluation assessment.
5. Conduct evaluation conference.

Following this process, recommendations (which ultimately would become school division procedure) were made to determine:

1. Who should be evaluated, and how frequently?
2. Who should participate in the evaluation at each step in the process?
3. What time limits should be prescribed for each step in the evaluation process?
4. What regulations should govern the use and storing of evaluation findings?

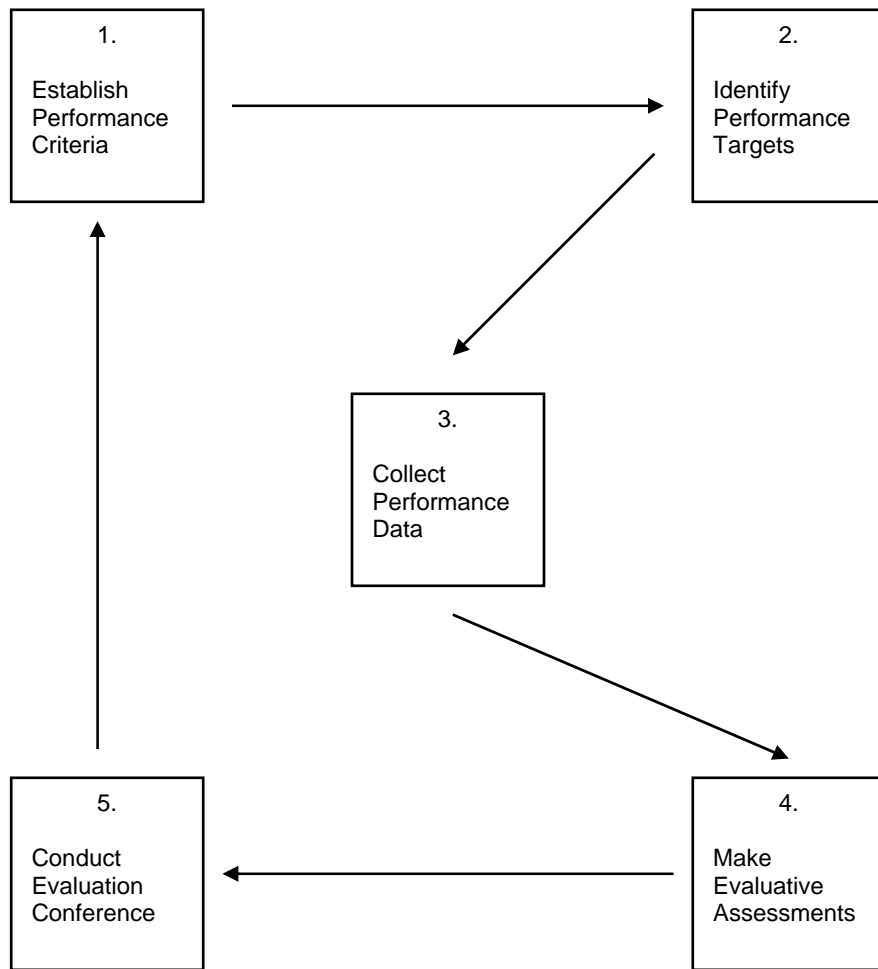
In addition, the committee was also charged with developing the following materials:

1. An inventory form, including broad areas and performance criteria based upon job content and job expectations, to be used to identify areas of strength as well as those in which improvement is needed in terms of job performance.
2. A form for recording “performance targets” identified from (1) above.
3. Forms to be used by both evaluator and evaluatee to assess the degree of accomplishment in achieving “performance targets.”
4. An overall assessment form to be used as a final step in evaluation at a given time (pp. 77-78).

As a result of the reform initiatives, the Virginia Department of Education published the *Manual for Implementing Standards of Quality and Objectives for Public Schools* (1972-74). (See Figure 1.) This document was designed to promote substantial improvements in public education and propel Virginia’s public school system into a new and more progressive era. Subsequently, a pattern was established for the biennial revision of the standards.

Specific provisions in the standards mandated the evaluation of administrators. Evaluating central office personnel and principals was held to be necessary for the following reasons: elimination of incompetent persons, the assessment of personnel for promotion, the assurance of accountability, the improvement of performance, and the professional development of personnel (p. 74). The standards stated that performance objectives were the best way to evaluate principals. An underlying assumption of this approach was that principals were capable of improvement, and that efforts would be enhanced if evaluation were conducted systematically with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results (p. 74).

Figure 1. Evaluation of Central Office Personnel and Principals (Model) Components



. Evaluation of Central Office Personnel and Principals (Manual for Implementing Standards of Quality and Objectives for Public Schools in Virginia, 1972-74, p. 76). Reprinted with Permission.

The provision within the standard that mandated evaluation of administrators as stated in the manual specified that:

1. The superintendent and his staff shall provide for the cooperative evaluation of central office personnel and principals and shall provide assistance to principals in the cooperative evaluation of teachers and other school employees (p.74).
2. Evaluation shall be a cooperative process in which both evaluates and evaluators share responsibilities in various phases of the process.

In a conversation on February 18, 2005, Dr. Thomas Elliott, Assistant Superintendent of the Division of Teacher Education and Licensure, Virginia Department of Education, was asked about changes in the evaluation of principals since 1972 (Appendix A). Elliott said, “There have been some changes since the Standards of Quality were established in 1972. However, greater uniformity among school divisions was needed. As a result, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Unified Performance Standards and Evaluation*. Stronger school systems used the guidelines to significantly improve what was already good. The weaker school systems, before standards, tended to remain the same.”

Guidelines for Unified Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Principals

During the last quarter century, the expectations of public schools changed substantially. Reform efforts in education shifted to the teaching and learning process, with primary focus on increasing student achievement. This led to the Education Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act of 1999, which the Virginia General Assembly designed to create new school and personnel evaluation and training requirements.

Following this act, on January 6, 2000, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents. As the first phase of the Department of Education's initiative, these guidelines established major categories of evaluation criteria and performance indicators for teachers, administrators, and superintendents.

The second phase of implementation involved the collaborative efforts of the Virginia Association of School Superintendents, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia's Curry School of Education. Training workshops were offered during the 2000-01 year to assist administrative and supervisory personnel in the evaluation and documentation of teacher and administrative performance.

The third phase of response was the creation of evaluation prototype instruments (Appendix B), which combined criteria in the guidelines with research, best practices, and stakeholder input. These documents included suggestions and samples for use by school divisions, and offered supportive strategies for educators to become more productive. The section of the act that applies to administrator evaluation states:

Each local school board shall adopt for use by the division superintendent clearly defined criteria for a performance evaluation process for principals... among other things, an assessment of such administrators; skills and knowledge; student academic progress and school gains in student learning; and effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline.” (Virginia Department of Education, 2000, p.5).

To respond to the Educational Accountability and Quality Enhancement Act, the Virginia Department of Education sought the help of consultants from the University of Virginia and the College of William and Mary. They were responsible for providing research and helping to

develop evaluation guidelines for consideration. An advisory committee, composed of a superintendent, teachers, community members and representatives of professional organizations, met during the summer and fall of 1999 to offer direction in the development process and approve the proposed evaluation criteria (Virginia Board of Education, 2000).

The framework for evaluation criteria was organized in five categories that reflect the scope and focus of the work for each administrative position. The Virginia Department of Education suggested guidelines for the implementation of the five major categories of evaluation criteria and performance indicators.

1. *Planning and Assessment.* The administrator effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision making.

The administrator collaboratively develops and implements a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning.

The administrator plans, implements, supports, and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and student achievement in the Standards of Learning.

The administrator develops plans for effective allocation of fiscal and other resources.

2. *Instructional Leadership.* The administrator communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.

The administrator supervises the alignment, coordination, and delivery of assigned programs and /or curricular areas.

The administrator selects, inducts, supports, evaluates, and retains quality instructional and support personnel.

The administrator provides staff development programs consistent with program evaluation results and school instructional improvement plans.

The administrator identifies, analyzes, and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques.

3. *Safety and Organizational Management for Learning.* The administrator maintains effective discipline and fosters a safe and positive environment for students and staff.

The administrator effectively coordinates the daily operation of the assigned area of responsibility.

The administrator effectively manages human, material, and financial resources to ensure student learning and to comply with legal mandates.

The administrator demonstrates effective organizational skills to achieve school, community, and division goals.

4. *Communication and Community Relations.* The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with students and staff.

The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with parents and other community members.

The administrator works collaboratively with staff, families, and community members to secure resources and to support the success of a diverse student population.

5. *Professionalism.* The administrator models professional, moral, and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions.

The administrator works in a collegial and collaborative manner with other administrators, school personnel, and the community to promote and support the mission and goals of the school division.

The administrator takes responsibility for the participants in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning.

The administrator provides service to the profession, the division, and the community.

If the foregoing guidelines are used by local school divisions, they must consider their organizational goals and review their existing evaluation policy carefully before proceeding to implement the new guidelines (Virginia Board of Education, 2000, p. 19).

The Politics of Principal Evaluation

Davis and Hensley (1999) discovered in their in-depth literature review and interviews of superintendents and principals that most principals felt that their evaluations provided no benefit to them and were created with undue political influence, over which they had no control. Unlike the schools of yesterday, principals today are faced with increased political challenges. Pressures from school, parents, community, intra- and extra-organizational influences are all demanding much more of principals. Principals need to have performance appraisals that are fair, accurate, and provide meaningful feedback. This is true especially because they have to navigate these rough waters (Davis & Hensley, 1999).

A snapshot of the history of principal evaluation indicates that pressures to consolidate schools resulted in a significant decrease in the number of school districts across the U.S. In 1937, there were 119,001 school districts in America. However, by 1950, that number decreased substantially to 83,718. By 1990, numbers had declined significantly, to 15,358 school districts

across the nation; as of 2001, their number had declined again, to 14,559 (U.S. Department of Education, 2003). However, this did not decrease interest in the evaluation of district employees. The internal and external political environments intensified for the superintendents and principals. A change in roles and responsibilities occurred, and pressure from the emerging new constituencies appeared. Now principals and superintendents were expected to add more to their already full plates to please the public (Davis & Hensley, 1999).

Davis and Hensley (1999) conducted in-depth interviews of six superintendents and 14 principals in Northern California. They wanted first hand knowledge of how these administrators perceived the district's evaluation process. Even though this is a rather small sample, valuable information was discovered. The seven open-ended interview questions focused on (a) the evaluation process, (b) feedback received in conferences, (c) negative influence on principal evaluation, (d) strategies used to soften the political factors, both adverse and positive, and (e) information sources used by supervisors to conduct the evaluation. Davis and Hensley (1999) commented that interviewees were very candid. Within this group of 14 principals, only one felt good about the formal evaluation process. Several of the superintendents agreed that political factors weighed heavy in the process, and often played a disturbing role in principal evaluations. Davis and Hensley believed that even though this is a small sampling, many of the concerns could represent the norm rather than the exception.

Conclusions of the study suggest that principals who do not win the respect and trust of school personnel limit their success as administrators. Davis & Hensley (1999) conclude that principals should go all out in their attempts to involve all stakeholders—school board members, parents, community groups, teachers, and (when appropriate) students—in school

programs. By reaching out and staying visible, principals can keep conflicts to a minimum.

Principals must be willing to build good relationships with key people and groups.

No longer will staying in and running the building work. Principals must be visible and possess a high level of political acuity in their assessments of, and responses to, efforts by school stakeholders to influence school activities and/or district office perceptions about the principal (Davis & Hensley, p. 402).

Principal Performance Evaluation

Evaluation is a broad comprehensive and multidimensional process. However, there are basically two types of principal evaluation: *formative* and *summative*. Formative is relatively informal and involves ongoing observation and supervision geared toward helping principals to improve performances. According to Rosenberg (2001), the most effective formative evaluation results come from the teaching staff. Summative evaluation is more structured, and includes all information obtained during the formative phases to judge the success or failure of a program or performance. Formative evaluation is usually restricted to the individuals most closely affected by the particular program under consideration. Summative evaluation results are usually disseminated to a much larger audience (Gaslin, 1974).

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1979) define formative evaluation as “an ongoing process within the curriculum-instructional activity sequence” (p. 269). They describe summative evaluation as “the cumulative impact of the curriculum on learning, or ... a general assessment of the cumulative learning of the whole curriculum by the student” (p. 269).

The authors divide the types of evaluation into function time, emphasis in evaluation, and type of instrumentation. Another distinction is that the cognitive behaviors are cited as formative,

while the summative expands the cognitive behaviors and sometimes include psychomotor and affective behaviors.

Examples of performance criteria for formative evaluation include (a) scheduled observations, (b) unscheduled observations, (c) non-observed data, (d) artifact data, and (e) growth plans. Performance criteria for evaluation include (a) summative form, (b) criteria performance, (c) summative conference, and (d) growth plans (Valentine, 1988).

Significant in the presentation by Sergiovanni and Starratt (1979) is the interplay between the summative and formative aspects of evaluation. Although formative can be considered as ongoing and summative as the end or final evaluation, these two phases of evaluation are critically intertwined. This is supported by Castettes (1986), who asserts that “emerging theory and practice lean toward the view that the formative and summative dichotomy can be dealt with, providing that a dual appraisal format is employed” (p. 329).

Without high-quality performance evaluation systems, we cannot know if we have quality education in the classroom or in the principal’s office. Therefore, it seems reasonable to argue for a well-designed and properly implemented performance evaluation (Stronge & Tucker, 2003). “Evaluation systems should be fair and comprehensive and grounded in both performance and organizational requirements. Consequently an evaluation system should be designed to encourage improvement in the educational specialist being evaluated, as well as in the school or program” (p. 7).

“Unfortunately, performance evaluations too frequently has been viewed not as a vehicle for growth and improvement, but rather as a formality... a superficial function that has lost its meaning” (Stronge & Tucker, 2003, p. 9).

A similar view is expressed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1988). Dominant criticisms of performance evaluation practices indicate that they have failed:

1. To screen out unqualified persons from certification and selection processes.
2. To provide constructive feedback to individual educators.
3. To recognize and help reinforce outstanding service.
4. To provide direction for staff development programs.
5. To provide evidence that will withstand professional and judicial scrutiny.
6. To provide evidence efficiently and at reasonable cost.
7. To aid institutions in terminating incompetent or unproductive personnel, and
8. To unify, rather than divide, educational specialists and administrators in their collective efforts to educate students (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, pp. 6-7).

Elliott believes that “in the past, one of the biggest problems in the Commonwealth with principal evaluation has been the lack of attention and resources for professional development. However, due to state and federal mandates, the Virginia Department of Education is awarding \$100,000 grants to selected leadership preparation partnerships. This collaborative project provides principals and school leaders with training and mentoring to become instructional leaders, as well as administrators. We should no longer rely on our colleges and universities to train our principals, but school divisions should work cooperatively with our institutions of higher learning in order to develop new programs and models for effective leadership” (T. Elliott, personal communication, February 18, 2005).

Bolton (1980) also views this separation as limiting the quality of evaluation. He asserts that evaluation falls short of its potential unless it is continuous, cyclical, and designed to correct errors as they arise and facilitate plans for change (p. 30).

The evaluation of principals brings many benefits. Weiss (1989) stated that it encourages communication within organizations, assures goal setting is mutual between principal and superintendents, sensitizes evaluators to principals' needs, and increases the desire to improve. However, Strong (1991) maintained that evaluation systems are meaningless and contribute modestly to accomplishing the goal of the organization if they are void of clearly articulated and communicated purposes. According to Drake and Roe (1999), principals have repeatedly reported that their evaluations are superficial, nonexistent, or contingent upon informal feedback to the superintendent or board members.

There are a plethora of methods to use in assessing the achievement of school principals (Donaldson, 2001). The responsibility for evaluating the principals is largely that of the superintendent. However, larger school systems find this task unmanageable for one person, and principals are evaluated by assistants, i.e., assistant superintendents, directors, or a committee (Franklin, 2000). This variety lends itself to critical debate about principal evaluation. Discussions of the typical principal evaluation tend to be highly unfavorable. Reeves (2004), who reviewed hundreds of evaluation systems and descriptions of leadership evaluation procedures, characterized most leadership assessments as a "mess." He further states, "These systems fail to recognize excellence, give encouragement to bad practice, tolerate mediocrity, turn a blind eye to abusive practice, accept incompetence, and systematically demoralize courageous and committed leaders" (2003, p. 2). A snapshot of principal evaluation practices by Lashway (2003) found that in a study conducted by NAESP in 1998 by Doud and Keller, 76

percent of respondents reported being evaluated at least once a year, 13 percent every two or three years, and 10 percent rarely or never. Central office personnel conducted most of these evaluations. In Reeves's study (2004), he reported that more than 18 percent of leaders had not received any type of evaluation while in their current position.

Stine (2001), in his sampling of seventeen California districts, found several types of evaluations in use. Rating of principals using a checklist and freeform evaluations consisted of a narrative and evaluation by objective measured principal performance against a set of predetermined goals. In North Carolina, principal evaluations also varied greatly. It was concluded that "the only consistency across the state was a considered lack of consistency" (UNC Center for School Leadership Development, p. 1).

The Center for Performance Assessment conducted the National Leadership Evaluation Study in 2002 (Reeves, 2004). This was a nationwide study based on interviews, surveys, and document reviews. Over 500 leaders from 21 states were included in the survey, and more than 300 leadership evaluation instruments were reviewed. The study had some limitations; it was not comprehensive, and did not represent every school system in the nation. The study found that principals agreed that their evaluations were generally positive (89 percent), accurate (79 percent), and consistent with job expectations (76 percent). Fewer principals (approximately 60 percent) felt the evaluation process had improved their performance or motivation, and only 47 percent said that their evaluations were specific enough to know what behaviors should be changed.

Likewise, a survey produced by Brown, Irby, and Neumeyer (1998) found that principals in the Judson Independent School District of San Antonio, Texas, expressed concerns about their current evaluation system. They felt that the system did not adequately assess the complex nature

and comprehensive scope of their positions. The system as it stood did not lend itself to the growth and development of their leadership practices or to school improvement and student achievement.

Seven concerns were identified, which a later article by Brown, Irby, and Neumeyer (1998) called the Seven Policy Considerations for Principal Appraisal:

1. Evaluation should focus on school improvement.
2. Evaluation should be performance based.
3. Evaluation should be relevant to the principal's job functions.
4. Evaluation should clearly define local performance expectations.
5. Evaluation should promote buy-in and collaboration among all administrators.
6. Evaluation should promote principal growth and improved leadership practice.
7. Evaluation systems should provide for resources and clearly communicate procedures.

These seven concerns can be found throughout the literature as concerns for administrators around the country (Brown et al., 1998"). Lashway (2003) noted that even though there is little evidence that principals or their districts view evaluation as a major problem area, there is no indication that it plays an important role in school improvement efforts.

Standards and Performance Assessment

According to Green (2002), the rating scale with criteria prescribed by school districts is the most common tool for evaluating school administrators. Typically, the form is adopted at the district level after an informal process involving school principals. Implicit in the use of district-level criteria is agreement between the district administrators and the school principals on the criteria to be used.

National standards provide an alternative to criteria developed at the district level. One advantage of national standards is the credibility that comes from a professional organization of school administrators. However, national standards are often worded vaguely and may not be helpful for observing actual performance. To be useful, criteria must have some basis for observation. In addition, they require local context.

In 1988, a 16-member committee, coordinated with representatives of fourteen major professional associations concerned with education, developed standards for evaluating personnel in education. They gathered input from hundreds of teachers, administrators, board members, and others involved in the evaluation of educational personnel. This group recognized the importance of having personnel standards to evaluate in order to achieve the goal of effectively educating students. They produced a document titled *The Personnel Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation, 1988).

These standards were also used to guide hiring practices, promotions, rewards, and even for remediation purposes, if necessary. According to the committee, the need for personnel evaluations in educational institutions is pervasive, important, and multifaceted (Stufflebeam, 1988, p. 6).

The function of these standards is to correct deficiencies in current practice; to present educators and policy board members with principles for developing and assessing thorough, acceptable personnel evaluation procedures; and provide practical advice for implementing them (Stufflebeam, 1988). The standards target four groups to help implement their evaluation responsibilities. The first group includes educational administrators, faculty committees, members of policy boards, and others. The second audience includes principals, deans, department chairs, faculty, and others when they are serving in the role of personnel evaluator.

The third audience for these standards includes teachers, professors, counselors, administrators, and other educators when they are being evaluated. The fourth audience for the standards includes those who use *The Personnel Evaluation Standards* for research, development, or teaching (Stufflebeam, 1988). Stufflebeam noted that the committee believed that the evaluation of personnel is paramount to guaranteeing quality in education.

In this age of accountability and increased scrutiny, principals are feeling the pressure. Research indicates that the office of the building principal is key to the success of a school and its students, and school administrators are welcoming the opportunity to rethink their performance appraisal process. The traditional system, which is in place in many districts, is outdated and irrelevant to the expectations of today's school leaders (Lashway, 2003).

ISLLC Standards. Evaluating whether a principal is effective is important to ensuring a school's success. However, the procedures for teacher evaluation are more in depth than those for evaluating principals, as the principals' evaluation procedure tends to vary widely (Franklin, 2000). The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) formed a joint venture with the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) to develop the ISLLC Standards. The alliance, which included 32 education agencies and 13 education administrative associations, worked three years to develop the Standards for School Leaders (Franklin, 2000).

A number of states have begun to use a system developed by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC). Developed in 1996, the program outlines a series of standards that can be used by states for licensure. The consortium was formed for the purpose of developing model standards and assessments for school leaders. The ISLLC standards have returned the focus of school leadership to teaching and learning, where the focus of school leadership originated (Iwanicki, 1999).

These members believed that standards for school leaders provided a powerful leverage point for reform (Shipman & Murphy, 2001). The ISLLC Standards present a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that link leadership practice to improved school performance. To maximize their effectiveness, the ISLLC Standards are compatible with the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) Curriculum Guidelines for school administration.

ISLLC defines a school administrator as an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by exhibiting these six standards:

1. Facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community;
2. Advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff and professional growth;
3. Ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment;
4. Collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources;
5. Acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and
6. Understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context, to reframe the way they evaluate preparation programs.

These six essential criteria form the basis of a comprehensive effort to convert principals from managers to learning leaders (Murphy, 2002).

Increasingly, states have now adopted or adapted the new standards in establishing requirements for an administrator's license (Murphy, 2002). These standards are being used in

different ways in different states. School districts and professional associations are using the standards to help design programs to foster the development of potential school leaders. Some states have created new guidelines for the evaluation of principals by aligning their evaluation standards with the ISLLC standards (Murphy, 2002). States such as Delaware and Ohio led the way in implementing these new evaluative standards. Preparation programs are being redesigned, and standards-based portfolios are being created based on the standards. One of the most noticeable uses of the standards has been in the area of assessment for licensure. Some states have partnered with the Educational Testing Service to develop comprehensive performance-based examinations for licensure—the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) (Murphy, p. 6).

ISLLC standards update for school administrators. Since 1996, when ISLLC standards were approved in final form, surveys reflect expanded implementation and significant changes in school administration. This influence was due, in part, to the fact that the ISLLC strategy of standards-driven reform was in line with the larger reform agenda on the national scene. Additional impact can be connected to an explicit and proactive plan to bring the standards to life (Murphy, 2003).

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) conducted a survey in 2005, which found that forty-six states have leadership standards for administration certification, and forty-one states had adopted or aligned ISLLC standards with state standards (Sanders & Simpson, 2005). An effective collaborative activity at the national level resulted in the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) adopting the ISLLC standards for the accreditation of preparation programs in school administration. In addition, ISLLC contracted

with Educational Testing Service to develop an exit examination for prospective principals (Latham & Pearlman, 1999).

It has been reported that states have asked the Council to update the ISLLC standards, to reflect a decade of policy experience and the significant changes implemented since they were published in 1996. In response, the Council is working with the NPBEA to update the standards, providing guidance from members of the Interstate Consortium on School Leadership (ICSL). The group convened in Washington, D.C., on October 25-26, 2005, to begin updating the wording of the ISLLC standards and plan the development of additional standard-based products. The draft work plan is to update and clarify the wording of each main ISLLC standard, and address key issues affecting administration, such as increased accountability, greater requirements for community engagement, and cultural competencies (CCSSO, 2006).

No Child Left Behind. The reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 resulted in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), signed into law by President George W. Bush in January 2002. This act marked a significantly different role for the federal government in education and refocused the law on four principles:

1. accountability for student achievement of academic standards
2. increased flexibility and local control
3. a greater role for parents in their children's education program, and
4. a greater emphasis on use of scientifically based instruction.

An underlying factor in the NCLB plan is the assurance that all children are educated to their full potential. Although much of the legislation is directed to state departments of education or school districts, there is definitely a significant impact on the principal. In fact, the role and

responsibilities of the principal have greatly increased because of the specific language and wording of NCLB.

NCLB adds substantially to the principal's responsibilities and accountability for student achievement, staff quality, the quality and legitimacy of the school's curriculum and instruction, and so forth. Moreover, the positive and negative consequences of this new accountability and these new responsibilities are most dramatically felt at the school level. Failure to show "adequately yearly progress" in student achievement can result in a schools being reconstituted—essentially re-staffed. On a more positive note, those schools that succeed in showing this adequate yearly progress become eligible for "academic achievement awards" (NAESP, ERS, NASSP, p. 2).

An additional responsibility for principals is the new set of federally mandated requirements, which create an environment where they are accountable to all the school stakeholders. Not only is the school accountable for the academic progress of its students, but the mandate "specifies the area of schooling to which the principal must attend to ensure this process; the manner in which progress will be measured; and how indicator data such as test scores will be analyzed, disaggregated, and publicized" (NAESP, ERS, NASSP, p. 3).

Realizing the complexities and multidimensional tasks associated with NCLB, the National Association of Elementary School Principals issued the *K-12 Principal Guide to No Child Left Behind* to serve as a reference for elementary and secondary principals, focusing on aspects that directly affect principals' responsibilities and work.

Correlation of ISLLC standards and principal performance evaluations in the Commonwealth. In a study by Catano (2002), the congruence of principal evaluation instruments in Virginia with ISLLC standards was determined. The study analyzed principal performance

evaluation documents from the 132 school divisions in Virginia. Content analysis was used to analyze the data. The data showed that four of the five categories derived from the ISLLC standards had a high correlation with principal evaluation instruments. Attention to organizational management and instructional program was the greatest. School budgets and school facilities are included in this category. These categories strongly matched the principal evaluation instruments. Facilities maintenance was reflected less often in evaluation instruments. The categories of community relations and facilitation of vision were also reflected highly within principal evaluation instruments. Facilitation of vision was reflected in 70 division evaluation instruments. That number was significant, and established that the conditions under which Virginia principals are evaluated are greatly influenced by these standards (Catano, 2002).

The category of responsibility to the larger society was present in slightly less than half of the evaluation instruments analyzed. Catano believed that because less attention was focused on this category, perhaps those divisions expected principals to remove themselves from political, social, and legal responsibility.

Catano (2002) concluded that school divisions' evaluation instruments include language that would influence principals to demonstrate behaviors that are research based and developed by professional educators.

Assessment Methods for Principal Evaluation

Assessing the work of today's principals is a daunting experience. The job is much more complex and demanding, is often ambiguous, and doesn't always lend itself to precise analysis.

Present day principals balance a seesaw. On one end are stacked the needs and expectations of teachers, pupils, and parents; on the other, the needs and expectations of district administrators, the school board, and, by extension, state and federal

governments. The challenging socioeconomic conditions that affect students and their families in many communities, as well as by increasingly standards-driven expectations layered on by districts and states (Green, 2004, p. 2).

Lashway (1999) acknowledged that there is no shortage of commercial leadership assessments available; however, only a few were specifically designed for school leaders, and none could measure job performance. The detailed checklist of skills, which has been the most popular form of assessing performance of educational professionals, has been a practical one. However, it is limited in the sense that it identifies and observes select and possibly isolated leadership skills. Some school districts are beginning to look at less traditional methods of assessing the principal's performance. In a review of literature conducted on performance appraisal of public school principals by Romanik (2002), it was noted that six such practices for evaluation are being used. They include (a) principal peer evaluation, (b) portfolio assessment, (c) performance assessment aligned with student achievement, (d) paper-and-pencil tests, (e) assessment centers, and (f) standards-based assessment.

Richard Flanary, Director of the Center for Principal Development of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (Appendix C), contends that the most current method used for principal evaluation is for a principal to develop objectives, and those objectives are then reviewed by an evaluation person. The criteria for principal evaluations vary throughout the country.... However, I do hear more and more that the evaluative criteria are based on the ISLLC standards. The most effective models use criteria that measure what is important in schools, that being student performance. "What gets measured gets done" is an important concept—when applied, it generates results. Principals who are held to high standards that are clearly delineated and

coherent generally produce results that improve the performance of students in their schools (personal communication, December 2005).

Peer evaluation. The Chula Vista Elementary School District is an example of a district that has stepped out of the box and is implementing a new form of evaluation. Keeping in mind that the challenge of public education today is to increase student achievement, and that principals are more accountable for process and outcomes, this district has replaced an evaluation system that had little relevance to principals' leadership performance with peer group evaluations (Gil, 2001).

“Peer evaluation is like a dance: a rhythmic and dynamic event in which everyone can participate at various stages, in tune with external or internal music” (Gil, 2001, p. 1). Chula Vista Elementary School District is the largest kindergarten through sixth grade educational district in the state of California. In the fall of 1993, the superintendent conducted interviews with all principals to find out important issues facing the district. She discovered that one of the top three concerns was the performance evaluation process for school principals. The principals felt that the process was a “dog and pony show” (p. 7) with little or no relevance to leadership, performance, or student achievement. Their evaluation model was the traditional one, addressing management performance categories and giving little emphasis to the need for changing leadership expectations.

With the new system, principals reported directly to the superintendent in the fall for conferences. Through self-selection, peer groups were formed. The groups ranged from four to seven members and met monthly throughout the school year. This process provides ongoing principal support that has allowed the superintendent and assistant superintendent to focus on individuals with the greatest needs (Gil, 2001).

According to feedback from the principals involved in the process, peer evaluation is both positive and risky. It gives them a better support system of mentoring principals who are committed to helping them succeed through coaching and ongoing interactions. It also compels them to expand their professional repertoire. When they meet as a group, they must be able to contribute to the discussion about improving student achievement or other issues that are important and help to build competent leaders (Gil, 2001).

Several principals who participated in the process commented that the development of trust in the groups was very beneficial. This enabled the principals to be more comfortable with sharing their concerns. It also provided an outlet for sharing a part of themselves as individuals. Another principal said that the process was valuable because it encouraged them to think out of the box. A 23-year veteran principal said that the peer evaluation goes one step further, by providing an ongoing learning experience for all of the participating administrators. They all commented that it was a great way to learn from one another (Gil, 2001).

These new systems of appraisal helped principals discover that to be more effective leaders, individuals should not work in isolation. Instead, they should have a shared purpose or common vision to effectively address the needs of students (Gil, 2001). However, some who oppose this method of evaluation stress that principals may be reluctant to offer criticism of fellow principals (Romanik, 2002).

Portfolio assessment. In an effort to provide a more meaningful assessment and provide a system where principals could experience professional growth, the Judson Independent School District (ISD), in suburban San Antonio, Texas, agreed that a change was needed in the way they evaluated administrators. They selected the Administrator Portfolio Appraisal System (APAS)

(Brown et al., 1998) because it was developed in response to the concerns and needs of its administrators. The APAS system is based on several assumptions:

1. The principal's practice influences school outcomes.
2. The principal's productivity can be evaluated.
3. The principal's leadership expectations should be understood by all.
4. The principal should engage in the development of his or her own evaluation system.
5. The principal's performance should be measured against agreed-upon standards of excellence.
6. The principal's performance is improved through active reflection.
7. Principals benefit from mentoring and coaching.
8. Principals know best what concrete representations of their accomplishments demonstrate established district leadership standards/criteria.
9. The appraisal of principals should focus on improved principal performance and improved schools (Brown et. al., 1998, p. 19).

The APAS includes four essential components: (a) self-assessment, (b) evaluation, (c) refocusing and planning, and (d) informed practice. Central to the APAS is the administrative portfolio (Brown & Irby, 1998). It is a collection of artifacts and reflective entries that are selected purposefully to represent an administrator's growth. Principals stated that the APAS system was a great improvement over the old checklist system. They noted that it took more time to implement, but it was worth it. They also commented that it promoted communication and a sense of cohesiveness and collegiality among administrators at both the central and school levels. "We [principals] have never had the opportunity to have this kind of dialogue about decisions so close to us," (Brown & Irby, p. 21). Based on other comments, it was determined that this new

system made the appraisal process more relevant; it began a process that supported professional growth in leadership, and empowered principals to have some control over their evaluation.

Some principals viewed the portfolio method as somewhat subjective. However, they also stated that it forces evaluators to examine specific data items during the evaluation (Romanik, 2002).

Performance contracts for principal evaluation. Similar efforts to improve the evaluation process were taken in the state of Texas when Rod Paige, former superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, moved the district from a decentralized decision-making system to one that stressed professional performance. Performance contracts were offered to superintendents and principals. In the beginning of this transition the contracts were offered on a voluntary basis. This proved to be a popular option, as 95% of the administrators accepted the pay performance contracts (Paige, Sclafani & Jimenez, 1998).

The big question to be asked when determining the effectiveness of the administrator was, “How do I know whether my supervisor thinks I am doing a good job?” (Paige et al., p. 33). This meant that there had to be open communication between the administrator and the evaluator. Strong emphasis was placed on the collection of school data that included student achievement based on the passing rate for the state-mandated student assessments, student attendance rates, drop-out rates, and increased parent involvement (Paige et al.). Principals were only required to choose from this list the objective areas for their performance review with the district superintendent. Throughout this year-long process, discussions took place periodically between the principal and superintendent. These discussions were deemed one of the most important components of the evaluation.

The Houston evaluation process was reported to be very successful. Indicators for success included higher test scores for every grade level, an improvement in the annual drop-out

rate, and focused improvement on curriculum alignment. All of this was done without increasing the tax rate in the previous five years. The communication and accountability that are an integral part of the performance contract evaluation were reported to also boost public confidence (Paige et al., 1998).

The consensus of articles used by Reeves (2002) in his review was that principal evaluations should be data driven. However, Shipman (2001) cautions systems about this form of evaluation. Holding principals accountable for students' progress in school places them under enough stress. Testing kids is not a problem; but making test scores the major factor in principals' assessment is a problem. Reeves (2002) stated that test scores should be balanced with other indicators.

Assessment centers. Paper-and-pencil tests for the evaluation of principals are actually the largest category of assessment procedures. These tests are fairly easy to administer. Test-takers are usually asked to agree or disagree with statements about their leadership beliefs and behaviors. Grouping their responses into related themes then develops a profile, which indicates their strengths and weaknesses in areas such as communication, vision, and team building. A 360-degree perspective supplements the test and is composed of responses by supervisors, subordinates, and peers (Lashway, 1998).

This technique of seeing administrators in action appears to be one of the best ways to assess administrators (Lashway, 1998). Principals are tasked with issues that they face every school day. Assessors with school leadership experience assign scores. These assessment centers are good for assessing skills related to a school setting. However, the cost and time involved in administering the test is a real disadvantage. One of the best-known centers is run by the National Association of Secondary Principals, which measures a variety of skills over a two-day

period. The National Association of Elementary School Principals' Development Inventory administers a similar one-day experience (Lashway, 1998).

This process of assessing principals provides a snapshot of leadership skills. However, measured results are missing. These tests do not provide the accountability needed to document a principal's strengths or weaknesses. This is the least popular among publishers, and they discourage the use of this method for evaluation (Lashway, 1998).

This method of evaluation observes principals in action. They respond to "in-basket tasks" that administrators might face on a daily basis. A practicing principal scores the assessment. Romanik (2002) found that this method was time consuming, expensive, and not practical to use in a school district with 300 or more principals.

Flannery (2005) believes the skills assessment centers are on the rise again:

This program seems to ebb and flow over the years. Most organizations are using the multiple skills assessment models in their principal development programs that focus on developing a cadre of talent for school leadership positions. We have a number of university-based programs that use the skills assessment in conjunction with preparing for an internship. We do not have any states currently using the skills assessment as we did in the past. Previously, prior to the ISLLC Standards, we had five states that required the NASSP skills assessment as part of the state licensure program [South Carolina, Missouri, Maryland, Kentucky, and New Jersey]. The School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) replaced the assessment center (R. Flannery, personal communication, 2005).

Table 2 describes the existing methods of principal evaluation provided in Romanik's (2002) literature review.

Table 2

Existing Methods of Principal Evaluation

Method	Description	Assessment of methods
Peer group evaluation process	Uses a variety of approaches to observe and provide feedback, classroom observation, and formal interviews with key staff and discussions with parent leaders.	<i>Strength:</i> Interaction with other principals leads to new relationships and principals find support when dealing with different issues. <i>Disadvantage:</i> Principals are reluctant to offer criticism to fellow principals.
Assessment centers	Principal in action “In-basket task” requires that administrators respond to everyday situations principal may confront on daily basis.	<i>Strength:</i> Responses scored by experienced principal. <i>Disadvantage:</i> Time-consuming, expensive, and impractical in divisions with over 300 principals to evaluate.
Portfolio	Principal is required to provide specific documentation relating to a variety of performance indicators.	<i>Strength:</i> Forces evaluator to examine concrete data. <i>Disadvantage:</i> Can be less objective than other methods.
Paper and pencil tests	Skill checklists Principal’s self-evaluation Stakeholder responses	<i>Strength:</i> Ease of administration and scoring; costs are moderate. <i>Disadvantage:</i> Tests do not measure real-life performance of the principal.

Table 2 continued

Method	Description	Assessment of methods
Student performance data	Principal evaluations are data-driven, and based on scores generated by students' test performance.	<p><i>Strength:</i> The use of test performance is valuable when balanced with other indicators.</p> <p><i>Disadvantage:</i> Judging principals on the basis of pupil test scores may be invalid if no correction is made for initial differences.</p>
Standards-based assessment	Uses a standards-based system established by the Interstate Leadership License Consortium (ISLLC).	<p><i>Strength:</i> Evaluation instrument uses standards which relate to the specific leaders qualities that are critical for success.</p> <p><i>Disadvantage:</i> Currently, standards framework is incomplete and in various states of implementation.</p>

Note: Table adapted from “Literature review performance appraisal of public school principals,” by D. Romanik, 2002, *Information Capsule 0201*, pp. 1-4.

Multidimensional leadership assessment. Drawing on current research, theory, and best practices of leadership, organizational performance, and personnel evaluation, Reeves (2004) provides a blueprint for creating a leader evaluation system that is fair and consistent. His book, *Assessing Educational Leaders*, demonstrates a new form of leadership evaluation for all leaders in the field of education.

The Multidimensional Leadership Assessment (MLA) model is based on the best practices in performance assessment. MLA requires frequent feedback with multiple opportunities for continuous improvement. Rather than providing performance levels, MLA describes in specific terms the difference between performance that is proficient, progressing, or failing to meet standards. MLA can be used to improve the performance of veteran leaders as well as train new leaders and identify prospective leaders. In addition, MLA forces school systems to establish clear, coherent, and fair expectations for present and future leaders (Reeves, pp. 8-9).

According to G. Tirozzi (2004), executive director of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reeves “makes a compelling case for transforming leadership evaluation from perfunctory to a focus on performance, reflection and results.” (Review from Reeves, 2004).

School districts leading the way in principal evaluation reform. School districts throughout the country are working on ways to improve their principal evaluation procedures. Table 3 highlights five school districts that were identified by Romanik (2002) in his literature review.

Table 3

Principal Evaluation Plans from Other School Districts

School system	Areas of evaluation	Description	Appraisal
Alabama	Leadership Management Communication Community relations	A 360 degree evaluation model is used. A self-assessment is completed by the principal. A formal interview is held with the principal. The principal's immediate supervisor completes a Supervisor's Review Form.	An evaluation summary report is completed, which constitutes a compilation of all the evaluations material collected. This form lists areas for improvement and whether or not the principal met performance standards.
Chicago	Students' test scores Attendance Other statistical measures	Principals receive "grades" of exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations.	A performance level of 15% is set to receive a rating of "meets expectations."
Milwaukee Public Schools	System-wide goals School-based goals School narrative	Each school site selects five school-based goals that focus on specifics.	The system provides credit based exclusively on improvement.

Table 3 continued

School system	Areas of evaluation	Description	Appraisal
North Carolina Public Schools	Meeting the school's vision Meeting growth standards Maintaining a safe and secure and school environment	The evaluation system adopted by the State Board of Education applies to both principals and assistant principals.	Principal evaluation is based on North Carolina ABC's of Public Education model.
South Carolina Rock Hill School District	Standards include: instructional leadership; effective management; school community relations; ethical behavior; interpersonal skills; staff development; principal's professional development.	Evaluation forms contain operational definitions for a rating of "proficient" and "improvement needed" for each of the nine standards.	Principals are rated by indicating the principal's performance level based on the accomplishment of each standard.

Note: Table adapted from "Literature review performance appraisal of public school principals," by D. Romanik, 2002, *Information Capsule 0201*, pp. 1-4.

The Intermountain Center for Education Effectiveness (ICEE) conducted a study and prepared a report at the request of the Idaho Association of School Administrators entitled *Current Practices of Evaluating Superintendents and Principals in a Standards-Based Environment* (2002-05). The objective of the report was to determine if evaluation practices, procedures, processes, and formats have changed with the initiation of standards-based, assessment-driven education systems in over 40 states.

The researchers found that educational reform has altered the evaluation measurement of administrators and teachers based on the achievement and success of students. Evaluations should be aligned with the standards to accurately determine the effectiveness of the administrators.

The ICEE study examined the evaluation of superintendents and principals separately. Because states have recognized that the stakes are high with standards and accountability, they now see the need to revamp their evaluation practices.

This study addressed issues involved in formulating an administrator evaluation in a standards-based environment. The issues consist of (a) methodology of forming a different type of evaluation, (b) the components of an administrator evaluation, (c) the “best practice” examples (states and districts), and (d) the final conclusion of the need for an administrator evaluation that reflects the educational climate. Numerous contacts were solicited to help determine the types of administrator evaluations that are currently in use. These contacts included the state departments of education; regional labs; ERIC; professional associations; and individual school districts recommended by various sources. The ICEE (2002-05) believes that if a state has an effective accountability system, then the standards-based administrator evaluation should also be in use (p. 13). The study determined that since standards and accountability play

such a pivotal role currently in education, it is essential to make sure that the evaluation will be an effective and useful tool in measuring the progress of the district, as well as the administrator. It was discovered that states are currently using three main types of evaluation: checklists/rating scales, written evaluations, and management by objectives evaluations. Table 4 describes each type of evaluation tool (ICEE, 2002-05).

Table 4

Evaluations Used by States

Type of evaluation	Frequency of use	Description
Checklist/ratings scale	Most commonly used. Popular because it is less time-consuming to review and can be administered quickly.	It is criterion-referenced in composition and objective in the type of scale used.
Written evaluations	More detailed information is obtained, but it is more time-consuming to review.	Generally used in conjunction with checklist/ratings evaluations to produce a more accurate evaluation.
Management by objective	The latest type of evaluation; quickly growing in popularity; deals specifically with what, how, and when the expected goals will be achieved.	Appears to be a direct response to the need for a different type of evaluation in the standards-based environment. Projected to become the most widely used type of evaluation because it joins student achievement with teacher and administrative accountability.

Note: Table adapted from *Current practices of evaluation for superintendents and principals in a standards based environment*, Intermountain Center for Education Effectiveness (2002-05), Pocatello, ID: Idaho State University, College of Education.

Principal evaluation policy and procedures in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Born (1988) described principal evaluation procedures currently in place in Virginia's school divisions, and compared them with "state of the art" recommendations. The data for the study were collected through a questionnaire sent to personnel officers in all 131 public school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and compared to best practices described in extant literature. His findings indicated that about 70% of the public school divisions do not have a regular procedure for reviewing and revising policies and procedures. However, over 50% of divisions reported a need to update their documents and indicated that their policies and procedures had been updated in the last three years.

In Born's study, about 85% of the divisions used evaluation instruments. The same instruments were used to evaluate elementary, middle, and high school principals in almost all divisions. No division personnel officer reported that the instrument was individualized. Born noted that "the statistics revealed in this research for written evaluation policy and procedures seemed particularly low considering that principal evaluation was mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1972" (Born, p. 121).

Professional Development for Principals

Over the last decade, professional development for principals has emerged as a major initiative of reform in public education. Sprading (1989) characterizes the assessment element of the professional development process as a "blueprint" to follow, based on the specific problems and attitudes the individual brings to the job. Thomas R. Gutskey (1995), University of Kentucky, said that "every modern proposal to reform, restructure, or transform schools must emphasize professional development as a primary vehicle in efforts to bring about needed change" (p. 39). Although some school systems had previously implemented professional

development programs, they basically consisted of courses and conferences. In fact, it could be called the “Sears Roebuck model” of professional development: the staff development department gathers ideas and produces a catalogue, from which staff members select their courses (Killion, 2005).

Conferences were designed to inspire transformation, so that principals would return to their schools and effect change. However, once they returned, principals lost many of the details and methodologies from the conferences, and soon realized that what they remembered did not necessarily meet their needs (Haar, 2004).

Current researchers describe professional development as the key to developing and maintaining the type of leadership that improves teaching and learning opportunities. They suggest a new approach that is more focused and encompasses both communication and organization (Leithwood, Stanis, & Montgomery, 1984). The training should not be fragmented, but should occur continuously throughout the principal’s career and should be related to personal and school needs (Daresh & Playko, 1992).

According to Haar (2004), principals must recognize the importance of their own professional development, as well as improvements in teacher and student learning. A similar view was expressed by Bennis and Nanus (1985), who indicated that “the possibility of significant impact on schools and the wide variation among principals in the amount of impact they have to provide is a strong acquirement for attending to the nature and effect of in-service training provided to principals” (p. 50).

The expected replacement of more than 60% of principals over the next five years makes it critical that districts, associations, states, and other organizations offer carefully designed professional development for principals. Peterson (2002) researched professional development

programs throughout the country, and provides a sample of some exemplary programs on the district, state, and national levels. These programs provide insights into innovative practices for the professional development of principals.

Gheens Academy. In the 1980s, a partnership between the Gheens Foundation and the Jefferson County Public School System created the Gheens Academy, which provided professional development for educators in the district. A principal chosen by current principals in Jefferson County coordinates the program, which includes evaluation training for new principals, mentorship opportunities for newly appointed principals, and individual assistance for experienced principals. The leadership curriculum focuses on instructional leadership and general management. Participants in the core program meet regularly for three to six weeks, and aspiring principals meet for six to eight weeks. The participants review readings, case studies, and group projects, with few if any lectures.

Ohio Principal Leadership Academy. The Ohio Principal Leadership Academy (OPLA) is a portfolio-driven, job-embedded program of leadership development. It is regionally distributed across Ohio, and is one of the most closely linked with state preparation programs. The core of the academy for new principals is a two-year program based on the ISLLC standards. The content is organized to match topics covered in preparation programs, and each participant is assigned an experienced administrator during the two-year period. The program for experienced principals requires two years with 28 days of professional development using Internet-based learning to enhance face-to-face sessions (Peterson, 2002).

Professional development in national reform programs. National reform programs that have spread to many districts have started to incorporate professional development efforts for principals (Kelley & Peterson, 2000; Peterson, 1995). These organizations view principals as

important to the implementation of the reform model. Five examples of selected national reform models were cited. The Accelerated Schools support the need for training and implementation of the Accelerated School Model at the site level. The ATLAS Communities Project, which develops professional training, is designed to examine critical issues related to systematic approaches to reform through collaboration. The Comer School Development Program helps principals understand the structure of the model and develops skills in working with families and staff members. Success for All (SFA) provides training focused on implementation of SFA, rather than broader leadership skills. The Modern Red School House offers principal professional development using a leadership assessment instrument that identifies strengths and weaknesses, and then offers coaching for the school. These programs are rarely linked to preparation programs or specific district initiatives, but instead foster commitment to the reform program and its values (Peterson, 2002).

National principal academies. Principal institutes, offered by a number of different organizations, have been around for 20 years. They began as approaches to leadership development for large groups of principals. Most follow a common format, with each institute providing a unique approach to working with school leaders. Kelley and Peterson (2000, 1995) identified some of the most visible institutes in the country.

The Harvard Principals' Center Academy. The Harvard Principals' Center Academy, initiated in 1981, provides development opportunities for hundreds of school leaders from around the world. Participants examine critical issues related to leading successful schools, address issues of race and gender, learn about team building, staff development, and managing change, and address ways of dealing with the complexities of school leadership. The advanced program on leadership addresses current issues related to leadership and vision, such as

transformational learning, creating a vision for one's school, inclusive education, and advanced examination of key topics of the initial institute.

The Vanderbilt International Principals' Institute. Established in 1981, this institute trains approximately 25 leaders in 10 days, in an intensive experience for principals from the United States and abroad. The principals address topics from instructional leadership to managing change. A mix of pedagogical approaches is used, including problem-based learning, lectures, leadership simulations, personal writing, and computer simulation of decision-making during school improvement. Many of the topics are related to the ISLLC Standards, but do not link to preparation programs.

The principal academies take place primarily during the summer and focus on leadership. These programs do not offer substantial training in administrative skills specific to a state or district, nor do they address the specific culture or history of a district. Principals find these programs helpful and rewarding (Peterson, 2002).

Comprehensive programs. Peterson (2002) cites two comprehensive approaches that incorporate well-designed structural arrangements with strong cultural elements: the California School Leadership Academy (CSLA), a statewide program that has served thousands of principals for more than 10 years, and CLASS, which serves principals in Chicago.

The CSLA offers carefully crafted professional development programs for principals, school teams, and other administrators. Considerable attention is paid to shared leadership and to the principal as the instructional leader in a standards-based system. The program's ability to build a strong network and cohesive professional culture across the state is unique among the programs (Kelley & Peterson, 2000; Peterson, 1995).

The Chicago Principals and Administrators Association, in cooperation with the Chicago Public Schools, provide one of the most comprehensive approaches. This set of coordinated programs, called CLASS, offers training that is sequenced, in depth, and continuous. Designed to help Chicago develop the ability to work within the governance reform of the 1990s, it is standards based and conceptually related to the ISLLC Standards. In addition, the programs build a professional community through the use of cultural elements that reinforce core values and norms (Peterson, 2002).

Although there are numerous case studies that demonstrate different approaches to training school leaders, the above cases suggest that there are many opportunities for professional development. However, most programs remain independent and loosely linked to preparation programs with little attention to coordinated, long-term learning. These programs illustrate that collaboration across program boundaries could help develop a high-quality, seamless web of learning that begins with preparation and continues throughout the leader's career (Peterson, 2002).

LIFT program. The LIFT program is designed primarily for development and support of first-year principals. It provides training, coaching, problem-solving, and a variety of learning and sharing experiences over a one-year period. LIFT provides numerous opportunities to network, build professional friendships, and develop a shared sense of commitment. The program components provide a useful model of professional development for beginning principals (Peterson, 2002).

Professional development studies. McGough (2003) reports on a research project that explored how veteran school principals become aware of and committed to new perspectives and

practices. In this study, he used personal stories of formative and transformative change from the careers of 23 school principals, which were collected and analyzed comparatively.

Three research questions provided the basis for this study:

1. What are common pathways to the principalship?
2. What are the patterns of influence affecting principals' perspectives?
3. How are identified patterns of influences manifested in a principal's practice?

The first step in the research design directed the use of in-depth interviews. This procedure involved asking open-ended and probing questions about a principal's experience with novel problems—those for which he or she had no previous experience. The second step involved a comparative case study approach, providing the opportunity for either a cross-case investigation of particular variables or the in-depth consideration of individual idiosyncrasies. The third step of the study design, employing a natural history approach, entailed rereading each participant's story set through the framework of the revealed outline of career progression and patterned learning influences.

Participants for the study were proportionately recruited from three typical school environments: urban, suburban, and rural/small town. Participation was also balanced by school level (elementary, middle/junior high) and gender.

The findings of this study present evidence that the professional perspectives of the veteran school principal have a foundation in childhood exposures, have been affected by an identifiable set of influences through specific phases of a professional development sequence, and have been shaped by an underlying story about oneself as a learner that threads through one's experiences and provides a sense of coherence over time.

McGough's (2003) broad message for educational policymakers is that authentically assessing and refining the work of school principals requires an appreciation for the idiosyncratic nature of their approaches to their work. However, McGough says that an appreciation of the idiosyncratic nature of a professional's approach does not mean that little can be said about professional learning and development at the level of theoretical abstraction. Instead, it suggests that the theoretical constructs devised to inform us about the nature of the human enterprise must be fashioned in dynamic, open-ended, and inclusive arrangements.

Petzko advances the idea of collaboration in professional development for principals that extends through pre-service, induction, career changes, and retirement (NASSP, 1992). Underlying this type of professional development is the belief that support for principals must be ongoing, tailored to their individual needs, and crafted for every stage of professional development. Concurring with this assertion, Daresh and Playko (1992) state that training should not be fragmented but continuous throughout the career stages of the principal.

Professional support must be consistent with what is known about how adults learn, and professional development must take place within a delivery system that is supportive of adult learning theory. The adult learner must be actively involved in the process, and new knowledge must be tied to prior learning. The approach must be job-specific and continuous to effectively support principals and their professional development (The National Staff Development Council, 2001).

Elsberry (1993) conducted a study of first-year principals in three states to identify the induction practices they considered most effective. Participating in the study allowed principals to learn about the job without the stress of daily school operations.

Summer induction conferences were rated as most effective. Principals said that these experiences enabled them to learn about their job without the stress associated with their school responsibilities (Elsberry, 1993). The second most effective support practice indicated in Elsberry's study was mentoring. Hopkins-Thompson defines mentors as those who "support the being of protégés, providing advocacy, counseling, support and protection—feedback and information they would otherwise not have" (Hopkins-Thompson, 2000, p. 30).

Walker and Scott (1994) suggest that "the success of a mentoring program depends on the knowledge and expertise of the mentors, as well as their understanding of the role and its expectations, communication and feedback skills, and sensitivity to the politics and the formal and unwritten agendas of the school district" (p.73).

Even though many of the studies of the effectiveness of mentoring are limited to the novice, Daresh and Playko (1989) maintain that "mentoring is a beneficial form of professional development for both the novice and the mentor.... It may also be viewed as something that can happen throughout a professional lifetime" (p. 2).

A study by Ginty (1995) identified the need for a new system of support with other administrators. Ginty recommended that professional development programs "promote peer interaction and collegiality among beginning administrators and a strong desire to come together periodically to share common problems, gain peer support, and acquire additional insights from colleagues" (p. 40).

Weaknesses noted in this type of program by Brown (2001) included a lack of time to meet, an unwillingness to offer criticism, and a lack of consistency in expectations. However, the program was still considered effective and was credited with "providing an effective structure for

continuous principal support, allowing the superintendent and assistant superintendent to focus on the individual with greatest needs” (Brown, 2001, p. 30).

Reflective practice has also been suggested as a method to support change and foster professional growth. Osterman (1998) advocates reflective practice as a way of changing behavior through analysis of a person’s beliefs and actions that leads to new understanding and strategies. There are many ways for reflective practices to be incorporated into professional development, including journals, small group discussions, and daily reflection. “The reflective process forces individuals to critique the assumptions upon which an action was taken, challenge those assumptions, evaluate the action taken as well as its results, and design alternatives. Stepping back, analyzing, reconceptualizing, and then designing better strategies are fundamental to reflective practice and serve as an important means of professional development for school leaders” (Osterman and Kottcamp, 1993, p. 63).

Flanary (2005) states that “one of the current initiatives for professional development focuses on the Balanced Leadership frame work that was done by Marzano, Waters, and McNulty at MCREL in Denver, Colorado. This research identifies 21 behaviors that when demonstrated effectively raise student achievement. This research has clearly shown the impact that principals have on student achievement.”

Professional development in Virginia. Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) received a generous five-year grant from the Wallace Foundation in 1999 to become part of Project LEAD—Learning, Empowering, Assessing, and Developing leaders in Fairfax County Public Schools. This grant was awarded to school divisions around the country. However, Fairfax County Public Schools is the only Virginia division participating in LEAD. This project was established to attract, develop, and support the next generation of FCPS leaders, including

assistant superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and teacher leaders, resulting in increased student achievement. The program was conceived in response to a study revealing that up to 70 percent of the school system's current leadership may need to be replaced by the 2006-07 school year. As part of the LEAD Fairfax program, these leaders will also be prepared to provide leadership for FCPS's changing student demographics (LEAD Fairfax, 2002).

Schools participating in the program were identified based on the number of students who are economically disadvantaged (20 percent or more of students receiving free and reduced price meals). The participants in the program were required to follow a focused individual development plan, which included site-based professional development embedded in daily practice, distance learning opportunities, and interaction with partners and outside resources to extend knowledge of leadership in the areas of influencing others and instruction (LEAD Fairfax).

In January 2006, the School Leaders' Catalog: Resources for Leadership, or "va-Lead," was made accessible on-line for Virginia's school leaders. The catalog includes 130 professional development programs that are keyed to the Virginia Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers, Administrators, and Superintendents. This on-line program is a new venture between e-lead and the Virginia State Action for Education Leadership Project, designed to help practicing school leaders attain the Virginia performance standards (Wright, 2006).

A variety of Virginia programs, listed in the catalog, address individual needs, school-site needs, and division-wide needs. These programs range from those suitable for faculty meeting presentations to ongoing mentoring and coaching for individuals and groups. Administrators can also find programs to recommend to their faculties, geared to specific topics, local and state departments, and varied groups (Wright, 2006).

This catalog was funded by the Wallace Foundation through the Virginia State Action for Education Leadership Project (SAELP), and is located at e-lead, a project housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). Va-Lead is the first state directory of leadership programs featured on e-lead. However, IEL hopes to add catalogs for the other 49 states.

This project originated under the leadership of Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, recently retired Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Dr. William C. Boshier, Jr., Executive Director of the Commonwealth Educational Policy Institute (CEPI) at Virginia Commonwealth University. In a conversation with Dr. Boshier in June 2006, he stated that “Southern Regional Educational Board, National Institute for School Leaders, and others have developed modules for professional development, but there is no consistent application or verification.” He continues to direct SAELP on educational leadership, and they are looking at several models that they hope can be applied in Virginia. He also noted that “North Carolina has had a Leadership Academy since 1984... we do not have one” (Boshier, 2006).

Evaluation of Marginal or Low-performing Principals

While the literature contains studies of behaviors or characteristics of high- and low-performing principals, there was a dearth of information regarding interventions for low-performing principals and opportunities for high-performing principals to share their best practices. As there is a preponderance of literature surrounding the evaluation of teachers and helping marginal teachers, little has been written about principal evaluation and interventions for the marginal or low-performing principal. Fisher (2003) determined in her dissertation that there are only three studies that address this subject.

The evaluation of principal performance remains a priority in school divisions throughout the Commonwealth. However, identifying strengths and weaknesses of principals has been

problematic because of the long-standing debate over the designation of principals as managers or instructional leaders (Fisher, 2001). Even though effective leadership has been identified as perhaps the single most determinant of success, little attention has been focused on supporting school leaders once they assume these roles. Knuth (2004) points out that “when a principal fails, it comes at a great social cost to the school’s students and families, at significant economic and often political cost to the school district, and at extreme personal cost to the principal” (p. 1). Yet research shows that principals do fail, and at alarming rates. In a study conducted by Coutts (1997), 56.8% of Indiana’s 283 superintendents describe principals that had been recently removed.

Research conducted by Matthews (2002) indicated that over 40 percent of principals have left the profession over the last 10 years, a turnover rate that is likely to continue into the next decade. She conducted a study surveying superintendents and direct supervisors to determine deficiencies of principals they have supervised, what happens to those perceived as being at risk, and what principals might do to overcome their deficiencies. Results of this study showed that face-to-face conferencing ranked highest as the most important intervention for at risk principals, followed by setting improvement goals, and establishing peer groups. However, it was reported that even after using these intervention strategies, only 20 percent of the principals had been kept on the job. Another 30 percent had been transferred to teaching positions, while the remaining 50 percent had been removed through dismissal, resignation, retirement, transfer, or non-renewal.

A 2001 national survey of school superintendents (Farkas et. al, 2001) conducted by Public Agenda found that 48% of respondents voiced dissatisfaction with their current principals’ job performance, and 7 percent were extremely dissatisfied. It became a matter of great concern that so many principals failed when all involved parties had such a vested interest

in their success. Experience and study by Knuth and Banks (2006) led them to conclude that “the success rate with intentional applications of a practical framework that established a common language for effective school leadership makes explicit an order of operations for prioritizing leadership tasks, balancing and integrating the diverse critical dimensions of effective school leadership” (p. 67).

The authors introduced the Essential Leadership Model (ELM), which they indicated would support principals in identifying the critical needs of a school and the leadership, knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet this need. This model assumes an order of operation that effective principals employ to create preconditions or structures that facilitate meaningful school improvement.

Raisch and Rogus (1994) offer the following guidelines for providing support to the marginal or at-risk principal:

1. Effective support programs derive from the assumption that principals do the best they can. Plans developed from this assumption allow those who are trying to assist to behave as helpers rather than as critics.
2. Helping efforts are most effective when they are carried out in a supportive ethos wherein the presence of problems is considered normal, and problem identification is prized.
3. The earlier that signs of marginal behavior are identified, the greater is the probability that helping efforts will be effective.
4. The most powerful form of help is self-help. The most effective approach to promoting self-help is making available to those in need the services of a trusted colleague.

5. When one-to-one helping efforts are less than effective, other approaches such as peer supervision need to be considered (p. 53).

Interventions for low-performing principals revealed that most superintendents used “conferencing, goal-based evaluation, counseling, probation, developing an improvement plan, salary freeze, shadowing the unsuccessful principal and leave without pay” (Martin 1991, p. 103).

DeLuca (1995) confirmed Martin’s (1991) findings, and stated, “Overwhelmingly, the respondents ranked ‘conference with the principals’ as the most effective intervention activity” (p. 117). Also direct, personal contact that included specific goal-setting produced the most successful results in DeLuca’s study. An underlying assumption by many central office personnel is that principals are able to self-motivate and self-evaluate as a result of their professional qualities (Raisch & Rogus, 1994).

Mark Warner, former governor of Virginia, emphasized the need for leadership development and school improvement. During his term as governor, he implemented a Turnaround Specialist Program in Virginia, addressing the needs of principals who serve in struggling schools. The turnaround specialist concept, borrowed from the business community, is being implemented in seven selected public schools throughout the Commonwealth (The LEADing Edge, 2004). Dr. Bill Boshier (June 2006 conversation) stated that “the turnaround specialist puts strong principals in schools that need improvement... and the assistant principals are rewarded with benefits and released from certain regulations. Mentoring is being used in many districts, and in one of those districts a strong principal is released for a year to work with new principals, as well as those who need help.” Boshier added that Fairfax, Newport News, Hampton, Norfolk, and Roanoke Public Schools have all been involved with the State Action for

Education Leadership Project (SAELP), funded by a Wallace Foundation grant, in an attempt to train and sustain leadership (2006).

Evaluation of High-performing Principals

Look and Manatt (1984) conducted a study examining both instructional leadership and managerial responsibilities. They identified the behaviors of the high-performing principal: “sets instructional strategies and emphasizes achievement, supports teachers, coordinates instructional programs, provides an orderly environment, promotes professional growth, maintains plant facilities, maintains school-community relations, evaluates principal growth, maintains plant facilities, maintains school-community relations, evaluates pupil progress, and supervises student personnel” (p. 80).

McEwan (2003) conducted her first research on the role of principals in the fall of 1984. However, in seeking a more global perspective, she expanded the concept of the principalship and focused on defining traits of highly effective principals in the age of accountability. It was recognized that teachers, tests, and textbooks can not produce results without highly effective principals to facilitate, model, and lead. McEwan’s (2003) research led to the publication of *10 Traits of Highly Effective Principals*. This book sets forth the characteristics of effective principals as compiled from input by principals, teachers, central office administrators, school board members, university professors and parents. The following traits emerged as the ten most important traits of highly effective principals: (a) the Communicator, (b) the Educator, (c) the Envisioner, (d) the Facilitator, (e) the Change Master, (f) the Cultural Builder, (g) the Activator, (h) the Producer, (i) the Character Builder, and (j) the Contributor.

“While all of the ten traits need not be developed to the same degree of complexity and maturity, they must be present for some extent in order to be highly effective,” according to McEwan (p. 164).

Seremet et. al (2003) developed *The Performance Indicators for Effective Principal Leadership* to provide clarity and specificity about the skills, beliefs and knowledge a principal needs to demonstrate effective leadership in improving student achievement. The authors identified five performance areas as the critical leadership skills a principal must demonstrate to effectively lead a school in improving student achievement:

1. Collecting, analyzing and using school data to identify school needs.
2. Using data to identify and plan for needed changes in the institutional program.
3. Promoting collaborative problem solving and open communication.
4. Implementing and monitoring the school plan.
5. Using systems thinking to establish a clear focus on attaining student achievement. (p.1).

In addition to the performance areas, performance indicators were identified to help successful principals keep the focus on school improvement efforts and align time, money, and staff development opportunities with the improvement goals.

Covey (2003) in his book, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, presents a similar point of view. He notes that “principals need to lead their school through the process of identifying school improvement goals and objectives in alignment with school district and state standards, and of determining the strategies that will promote the attainment of these goals” (p. 4).

Schmoker (1999) offers the combination of three concepts that constitute the foundation for positive improvement results: meaningful teamwork; clear, measurable goals; and the regular

collection and analysis of performance data. He notes that principals must also ensure that staff development needs are identified in alignment with school improvement practices and that these needs are addressed with appropriate professional learning opportunities.

Summary

A comprehensive review of literature was conducted to explore principal evaluation and its effect on the quality of education in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The dimensions of evaluation included many definitions, from simple to complex, and from many different perspectives. Simply stated, evaluation has been defined as the assessment of merit. More expansive definitions in the literature cite evaluation as the systematic collection and interpretation of evidence as part of the process to judgment of value, with a view to action. It is viewed as a continuous and ongoing process that results in judgment about an individual's performance, made in relation to the goals of the institution. Regardless of variations in context and language, researchers agreed that evaluation is an essential element in the success of any school or school district.

As the educational pendulum swings back and forth through the years, augmented by increasing scrutiny from legislators, policymakers, and citizens at large, it is not surprising that "reform" surfaced in the educational arena. Educational reform is an all-encompassing concept, which impacts almost every component of the educational process.

As the attempts to improve public education focused on change in existing organizational patterns and instructional practices, the role of the principal was propelled into the national spotlight. Lessons from the past were reminders that schools cannot be improved without improving the skills and abilities of those who teach and lead. Current researchers have focused on change as an individual process with the need to invest in the intellectual capital of those who

staff our schools. Therefore, the multidimensional role of the principal becomes paramount in any consideration of reform in public schools.

Historically, the literature suggests that principal evaluation was rather sporadic in Virginia until the early 1970s. It was during this period that the Commonwealth of Virginia mandated evaluation of all school personnel. Standards of Quality were adopted with the requirement that they be reviewed and revised biennially. School divisions were given state-approved models for administrator evaluation, and manuals to give direction for implementation of the models and the new standards.

Public demand for educational accountability increased significantly and resulted in political influences over which school divisions had no control. Considering the intervention of legislative mandates and pressures from parents, the community, and professional organizations, it seems likely that internal and external politics will continue to influence public education and have a significant effect on evaluation of public school personnel.

Performance standards are also identified in the literature as critical to the evaluation process for principals. Researchers presented various positions and descriptions of formative and summative evaluation. However, there was agreement that both are needed and serve very different purposes.

In the review of literature on the broad spectrum of professional development, many variations in programs and procedures were noted. Some school districts still used the old approach that uses courses, summer workshops, and on-the-job in-service programs. However, an increased number of school districts offered carefully developed professional development programs that were research-based and designed to facilitate optimum student achievement and high standards of learning and development.

The literature presents a strong case for assessment of principal performance. It was acknowledged that, traditionally, commercial leadership assessments were readily available. However, very few were designed specifically for school leaders, and none could measure job performance. Recent demands for increased accountability in public education resulted in the development and implementation of several meaningful assessment systems in which principals could experience professional growth. One such initiative used performance contracts for principal evaluation. Other methods include peer group evaluation, portfolio assessment, peer evaluation, and several centers and systems specifically designed to promote professional performance. The literature review suggests that the renewed interest in educational accountability will be sustained, as will the trend toward standards-based evaluation and professional development for principals.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Design Methods and Procedure

This descriptive study encompassed both qualitative and quantitative methods. The examination of documents for research purposes is often guided by content analysis methodologies. Content analysis enables researchers to sift through large volumes of data with relative ease in a systematic fashion (GAO, 1996). It can be a useful technique for discovering and describing the focus of individual, group, institution, or social attention (Weber, 1990). Inferences can be made, which can then be corroborated using other methods of data collection. In addition, content analysis is useful for examining trends and patterns in documents.

Qualitative research examines traits of individuals and settings that cannot easily be described numerically. The emphasis is on verbal information, collected through observation, description, and recording (Charles, 1995). Quantitative research, on the other hand, explores traits and situations from which numerical data can be obtained, with an emphasis on measurement and statistics (Charles, 1995). A mixed design, employing both methodologies, will be used to respond to proposed research questions.

A study was conducted of all 132 Virginia school divisions. Because the target population was all-inclusive, a sample population was not necessary. Fowler (1993) explained that survey response rate is calculated by determining the number of people in the study population “who were selected but did not respond for whatever reason: refusals, language problems, illness, or lack of availability” (p. 39). Of the 132 surveys mailed, a response rate of 70% (97 surveys) would be a desirable response rate, based on a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 10%. According to the response levels outlined by Krejcie and Morgan

(1970), a 39% response rate (52 surveys) is acceptable for this study. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the Human Subjects Protection Committee, at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Data Collection

A cover letter (Appendix D) and survey (Appendix F) were mailed to the Office of Human Resources in each school division in the Commonwealth of Virginia, requesting a copy of the principal performance evaluation policies and procedures and any forms currently being used to support the evaluation process. The letter explained that this was a dissertation study, and that individual school divisions would not be identified. Respondents were offered an executive summary of the study, outlining key findings. Coding was used to track responses, and a second contact was made by letter or follow-up phone call where necessary (Appendix E).

The two-page survey was developed to determine the extent to which other assessment practices were being used. The researcher incorporated some strategies used by Dillman (2000) regarding general procedures for writing questions, constructing questionnaires, and developing an implementation system for surveys. The use of surveys is a practical means of describing the characteristics of people and collecting information from individuals about their perceptions, ideas, and experiences (Fowler, 1993). As commonly used, a survey is a research methodology designed to collect data from a specific population, or sample from that population, and typically uses a questionnaire or interview as the survey instrument (Robson, 1993). Surveys are used to obtain data from individuals about themselves, their households, or larger social institutions.

The first section of the survey for this study requested demographic data, i.e., school levels, size of division (number of students enrolled), geographic type (rural, urban, or suburban), number of principals employed, and number of schools for reporting purposes. The

second section included a list of evaluation practices used (taken from the literature review), and included an open field to identify any process not listed. The survey was field-reviewed prior to distribution by 15 educational peers, an outside professor working in the field of education leadership and policy, a member of NASSP, and a panel of experts consisting of three human resource directors not in the state of Virginia who reviewed this survey for clarity. Feedback from the review of those participants was incorporated into development of the survey.

Data Analysis

Table 5 Data Analysis Description outlines the analysis that was conducted in response to each research question. The primary methods used to analyze data were descriptive statistics, comparative analysis, and content analysis. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the fundamental features of the data in a study (Trochim, 2001). They include the collection, presentation, and description of sample data. Descriptive statistics provide a very meaningful summary that may enable comparisons across people or other units. The data analysis consisted of examining principal evaluation procedures from the responding divisions, to determine the process being used and the professional standards reflected in principal evaluations across the state. This was conducted by coding and keying data into a database in *The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)* and performing an analysis of descriptive responses according to frequency distributions and descriptive statistics.

Table 5

Data Analysis Description

Question	Data collection	Methodology
1. What process do school divisions use to evaluate principal performance?	Human Resource local policies and procedures for principal evaluation; descriptions of procedures	Content and comparative analysis
2. How does the evaluation process vary by school level, size, and division type?	Survey for human resources directors; local policies and procedures for principal evaluation; descriptions of procedures	Content and comparative analysis
3. What strategies are used to support principals who are evaluated as needing improvement?	Survey for Human Resources Directors, Item #10	Descriptive analysis
4. What structures are in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices?	Survey for Human Resources Directors, Item #9	Descriptive analysis

The researcher was looking for trends and patterns in principal performance evaluations by examining performance evaluation documents. The core of a content analysis is the coding of the document's messages into categories (Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J., 1996). Coding, categorizing, classifying, comparing, and concluding data about the content are the basic components of content analysis (Marten, 2003). These components were used to analyze the principal evaluation documents and to show how they correlate with the standards by which principals are evaluated in Virginia. Primary steps in the content analysis for this study were (a) the identification of the unit of analysis, (b) development of the categories of analysis, and (c) calculation of frequencies. Limitations of the analysis were acknowledged.

Content analysis has been defined as “a research technique for the objective, systematic, quantitative description of the manifest content of communication” (Berelson, 1952, p. 18). Content analysis in a more traditional sense has been referred to as conceptual analysis. In conceptual analysis, a concept is chosen for examination, and the analysis involves quantifying and tallying its presence. Conceptual analysis begins by identifying research questions and choosing a sample or samples. The selection of text to use is categorized with a word, set of words, or phrases that the researcher can focus on, and code from specific words or patterns that indicate the research question (Colorado State Educational References, 2003). Content analysis was conducted to answer the research question, what process do school divisions use to evaluate principal performance, Primary steps in the content analysis for this study were (a) the identification of the unit of analysis, (b) development of the categories of analysis (themes), and (c) calculation of frequencies by theme. Comparative analysis (ANOVA) was used to analyze the question, to what extent do principal performance evaluation processes vary by school levels, size, and division type?

Limitations

The purpose of this study was to examine the status of principal performance evaluation in Virginia by reviewing principal evaluation systems. One of the limitations of the research was that the analysis was done for school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia, which limited how much its results could be generalized to other states. The extent to which the categories created for this study reflect the constructs to be compared might prove a further limitation.

Chapter 4

Results

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected from school divisions across the Commonwealth of Virginia on principal performance evaluation. Data were collected through a questionnaire mailed in May 2005 to the Office of Human Resource in 132 Virginia school divisions. In addition, respondents were asked to send a copy of their division's principal evaluation policy and procedures. The questionnaire data were compiled and computed into frequencies and percentages and a one-way analysis of variance. The documents received were reviewed and analyzed using content analysis.

The first section of the survey presents demographic information as shown in Table 6. Ninety-one (72%) of the surveys were returned. According to the response levels outlined by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a 39% response rate (equal to 52 surveys in this study) is acceptable. The respondents represented school divisions with 1,407 principals and 812,211 students in Virginia. It was interesting to note that the largest number of school divisions (61, or 68.5%) designated their school divisions as "rural"; 10 (11.2%) were "urban"; 13 (5.6%) were "suburban"; and 5 (5.6%) indicated other designations.

Table 6

Demographic Characteristics of Responding School Divisions

Question	Response choices	N	%
Which descriptor best describes the characteristics of your school district?	Rural	61	68.5
	Urban	10	11.2
	Suburban	13	14.6
	Other	5	5.6
	Missing	2	

The survey questions were used to organize the data. In responding to each research question, a series of sub-questions were included in the survey and categorized as reported in Tables 6-29.

Research Question 1: What procedures do school districts use to evaluate principal performance?

Survey question 1. Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?

Table 7 provides data on the procedure for review of principal evaluation procedures. More school divisions responded yes than no to this question. Sixty-one (68.5%) indicated that a procedure was in place for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures. However, it should be noted that 30 school divisions (33%) indicated that there was an absence of regular review periods.

Twenty-five (27.5%) school divisions with written procedures conducted their evaluations once yearly. Six (6.6%) evaluated twice yearly, and six (6.6%) evaluated every two

years. Nineteen (20.9%) indicated various times, but no regular or consistent periods for principal evaluation. Thirty-five (38.5%) did not respond to the item.

Table 8 denotes responses from the “other” category listed. There were six responses for the overall theme of “as needed/when necessary.” The other specific time frame was every five years, and yearly for three and then every 3rd year. Although 19 respondents in Table 7 indicated that they followed an “other” frequency for reviewing their evaluation procedures, only 12 respondents provided a description of the “other” frequency.

The category “other,” in which respondents indicate a need to revise the document, varies depending on certain factors. Those factors are noted in Table 9. Six school districts indicated that their documents are revised based upon need, and seven stated that revising their evaluation procedures varies based upon law or policy changes (i.e. mandates, district and state policy changes, revised to align with ISLLC, licensure regulations). Not all 19 respondents who indicated “other” in Table 7 provided an explanation as to what factors influenced the variation.

Table 7

Frequencies and Percentages of Evaluation Review Procedures

Question	Response choices	<i>N</i>	%
Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?	Yes	61	67.0
	No	30	33.0
If yes, how often?	Left blank	35	38.5
	Once yearly	25	27.5
	Twice yearly	6	6.6
	Every two years	6	6.6
	Other	19	20.9

Table 8

Responses from the “Other” Category on Frequency of Evaluation

Theme	Number of Responses	Example
As needed/when necessary	7	As appropriate; as needed; as policies change
Other specific time frame	5	Every 5 years; yearly for 3, then every 3rd year

Table 9

Factors in the Need to Revise the Evaluation Procedure

Theme	Number of Responses	Example
Need	7	Need; need for change
Law/policy	7	Mandates; district and state policy changes; revised to align with ISLLC; licensure regulations

Survey Question 2. Do you see a need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?

Table 10 illustrates that the preponderance of the respondents (62, or 68.1%) stated there is no need to update principal evaluation policy and procedures for their division. Twenty-nine (31.9%) indicated there is a need.

Table 10

Frequencies and Percentages of Needs for Updating Evaluation Policy

Question	Response choices	N	%
Do you see a need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?	Yes	29	31.9
	No	62	68.1

Survey Question 3. What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?

The data in Table 11 show considerable variation in methodology used in the principal evaluation process. A clear majority of respondents (82, or 90.1%) indicated goal setting was a method currently being used, followed by observations, interviews, and record reviews. Used less frequently were shadowing or teacher and parent focus groups. Respondents were given the option to write in additional methodologies in an “Other” category. They included surveys (10), test data (8), Virginia Performance Standards (2), self evaluation (2), portfolio assessment (2), growth plan (1), and 360 degree assessments (). Since respondents could mark all that apply, the percentage for each method is calculated independently. Therefore, the percentages will sum to greater than 100 percent.

Table 11

Frequencies and Percentages of Current Methods of Principal Evaluation

Question	Response choices	<i>N</i>	%
What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Teacher focus groups	1	1.1
	Interviews	59	64.8
	Observations	72	79.1
	Record reviews	43	47.3
	Shadowing	8	8.8
	Goal setting	82	90.1
	Parent focus group	1	1.1
	Other	26	28.6

Survey Question 9. What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?

Table 12 reveals that all public school divisions in the Commonwealth of Virginia use some type of evaluation instrument for principal evaluation. Data on the use of instruments in the evaluation process indicated that written assessment (61, or 67%) and checklists (58, or 63.7%) were used most frequently. Fifteen (16.5%) use surveys. Only two (2.2%) use peer evaluation. Responses from the “other” category account for 19 (20.9%) of the total responses. The other responses include growth plan/goal setting (4), Unified Performance Standards (3), evaluation model (1), narrative feedback (1), note summary (1), rating scale (1), school data (1), and self assessment (1). Respondents could also mark all that apply. The percentage for each method is calculated independently.

Table 12

Frequencies and Percentages of Current Instruments of Principal Evaluation

Question	Response choices	<i>N</i>	%
What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Checklist	58	63.7
	Peer evaluation	2	2.2
	Surveys	15	16.5
	Written assessment	61	67.0
	Other	19	20.9

Survey Question 10. How frequently are principals with one to three years of service evaluated?

Table 13 indicates that 67 school divisions, 67 (73.6%) principals with one to three years of service conducted their evaluation once a year. Twenty (22%) of the respondents evaluate twice yearly, and one (1.1%) evaluates every two years. Three (3.3%) indicated “other.” Table 14 indicates sixty-two (68.8%) principals with four or more years of service were evaluated once yearly. Thirteen (14.3%) principals with four or more years of service were evaluated twice yearly. Six (6.6%) were evaluated every two years, and 10 (11.0%) fell in the “other” category. “Other” includes, for example, “evaluated as needed,” “as the policy changes,” “every five years,” and “yearly for three years, then every third year.”

Table 13

Frequency and Percentages of Principal Evaluation by Career Stage, 1-3 years

Question	Response Choices		
		<i>N</i>	%
How frequently are principals with 1-3 years of service evaluated?	Once yearly	67	73.6
	Twice yearly	20	22.0
	Every two years	1	1.1
	Other	3	3.3

Table 14

Frequency and Percentages of Principal Evaluation by Career Stage, 4 or more years

Question	Response Choices	<i>N</i>	%
How frequently are principals with 4 or more years of service evaluated?	Once yearly	62	68.1
	Twice yearly	13	14.3
	Every two years	6	6.6
	Other	10	11.0

Survey Question 10(c). Are there different evaluation procedures for different career stages?

An overwhelming number of respondents did not change their evaluation process according to the career stage of the principal. Table 15 provides data showing that 85 (93.4%) of school divisions made no differential changes, regardless of the career level of the principal. Only six (6.6%) varied their evaluation.

Table 15

Frequency and Percentage of Different Evaluation Processes by Career Stage

Question	Response choices	<i>N</i>	%
Are there different evaluation procedures for these career stages?	Yes	6	6.6
	No	85	93.4

Survey Question 11. Are elementary, middle, and high school principals evaluated using the same process?

As presented in Table 16, the results of this inquiry indicate very little change in evaluation procedures in elementary, middle, or high school. Eighty-seven (95.6%) used the same evaluation procedure regardless of school level. Only four (4.4%) made changes according to level of school.

Table 16

Frequencies and Percentages of Evaluation Process by School Level

Question	Response choices	<i>N</i>	%
Are elementary, middle, and high school principals evaluated using the same process?	Yes	87	95.6
	No	4	4.4

Survey Question 13. Is there a process in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?

The responses concerning processes for high-performing principals to share effective practices are presented in Table 17. Fifty-four (57.3%) of school divisions indicated that a process was in place to give high-performing principals the opportunity to share effective practices with their peers. Thirty-seven (40.7%) did not have such a process. Three themes emerged that comprised opportunities to share practices, as indicated in Table 18.

Table 17

Frequencies and Percentages for Sharing Effective Practices

Question	Response choices	<i>N</i>	%
Is there a process in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?	Yes	54	59.3
	No	37	40.7

Table 18

Frequencies and Percentages for Methods of Sharing Effective Practices

Themes	<i>N</i>	%
Administrative team meeting	41	75.9
Presenting at workshops	11	20.3
Mentoring	9	16.7

Survey question 14. What types of developmental opportunities does your school district have in place for high performing principals, if any?

Survey question 14 was an open-ended question. Content analysis yielded 8 themes across the responses. The themes and associated frequencies are provided in Table 19.

Table 19

Themes and Frequencies of Developmental Opportunities

Theme	<i>N</i>	Example
Attend conferences/meetings	23	In-service opportunities, attend workshops, national and state conferences,
Pursue advanced degree	9	Advanced degree – tuition reimbursement
Give presentations	8	Conference presentations, presenters at Futures Now Academy
Central Office position	3	
Mentor	3	
Serve on committees	2	
Recruit	2	
Travel to see best practices	1	

Survey Question 15. Is your evaluation document available on line?

The majority of respondents (86.8%) did not have the evaluation document on line (see Table 20).

Table 20

Frequencies and Percentages of Online Availability of Evaluation Documents

Question	Response choices	N	%
Is your evaluation document available on line?	Yes	12	13.2
	No	79	86.8

Research Question 2

To what extent does the evaluation process vary by school levels, size, and division type?

School Level. The majority (96%) of school divisions did not vary their evaluation process by school level. Moreover, this question on the survey only allowed the disaggregation of data by those who varied and those who did not. It did not give the respondent an opportunity to provide the data for each school level. Therefore, it was not possible to disaggregate data by school level.

Size. When the data are disaggregated by school division size and location, as noted in Table 21, the data indicate few statistically significant differences. School division size was determined by categorizing school divisions based on the number of students served, as reported by the respondent. A frequency was run on the number of students served. The range was first cut into three equal groups. Then the cut points were adjusted by looking for natural breaks in the data to assign the size groups. This was done to ensure that the size groups made logical sense, not just statistical sense. If the first grouping was used, a division with 2,600 students would have been classified as small, while the next division, with 2610 students, would have been classified as moderate.

Table 21

Descriptive Statistics by Student Population Size

	Small <i>n</i> =35	Moderate <i>n</i> =35	Large <i>n</i> =18
Average # Principals	4	12	46
Range # Principals	2-10	4-66	13-234
Average # Students	1,651	4,856	32,470
Range # Students	295–2,610	2,697–8,700	9,300–163,534

Overall, there were few significant differences when the survey data were analyzed by system size. The one item that yielded significant differences was the use of surveys as an instrument in the principal evaluation process. Large systems reported using surveys more frequently than either moderate or small systems (44% vs. 11% and 3%, respectively). The size of the system and the number of principals for whom evaluations are to be completed may dictate instrumentation use in smaller systems. Given that larger systems do not report a significantly different process in terms of frequency, this may have led to the difference in instrumentation.

Table 22

Analysis of Variance of Principal Evaluation Process by Student Population Size

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Small		Moderate		Large	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?	Yes = 1	1.493	.230	35	.60	34	.69	18	.83
	No = 0								
If yes, how often?	Once yearly = 1	2.2	.117	35	1.31	35	1.23	18	2.11
	Twice yearly = 2								
	Every two years = 3								
	Other = 4								
Do you see a need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?	Yes = 1	.545	.582	35	.26	35	.34	18	.39
	No = 0								

Table 22 continued

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Small		Moderate		Large	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Teacher focus groups	.753	.474	35	.00	35	.03	18	.00
	Interviews	.626	.537		.57		.66		.72
	Observations	.249	.781		.80		.80		.72
	Record reviews	.455	.636		.40		.51		.44
	Shadowing	2.378	.099		.03		.17		.06
	Goal setting	.085	.919		.89		.91		.89
	Parent focus group	.753	.474		.00		.03		.00
	Other	1.464	.237		.23		.26		.44

Table 22 continued

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Small		Moderate		Large	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Checklist	.485	.617	35	.57	35	.69	18	.61
	Peer evaluation	.858	.428		.03		.00		.06
	Surveys	10.06	.000		.03		.11		.44
	Written assessment	1	.412		.60		.74		.72
	Other	.896	.390		.20		.17		.33
		.952							
How frequently are principals with 1-3 years of service evaluated?	Once yearly =1	2.363	.100	35	1.23	35	1.54	18	1.22
	Twice yearly = 2								
	Every two years = 3								
	Other = 4								

Table 22 continued

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Small		Moderate		Large	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
How frequently are principals with 4 or more years of service evaluated?	Once yearly = 1 Twice yearly = 2 Every two years = 3 Other = 4	1.971	.146	35	1.31	35	1.71	18	1.78
Are there different evaluation procedures for these career stages?	Yes = 1 No = 0	2.821	.065	35	.00	35	.09	18	.17
Are elementary, middle, and high school principals evaluated using the same process?	Yes = 1 No = 0	.186	.831	35	.97	35	.94	18	.94
Is there a process in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?	Yes = 1 No = 0	3.017	.054	35	.66	35	.46	18	.78
Is your evaluation document available on line?	Yes = 1 No = 0	2.516	.087	35	.03	35	.14	18	.22

Table 23

Frequencies and Percentages of Principal Evaluation Process by School Division Location

Question	Response choices	Small		Moderate		Large	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Which descriptor best describes the characteristics of your school district?	Rural	30	88.2	27	79.4	2	11.1
	Urban	1	2.9	2	5.9	6	33.3
	Suburban	2	5.9	3	8.8	8	44.4
	Other	1	2.9	2	5.9	2	11.1
Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?	Yes	21	60.0	24	68.6	15	83.3
	No	14	40.0	11	31.4	3	16.7
If yes, how often?	No response	15	42.9	15	42.9	3	16.7
	Once yearly	10	28.6	10	28.6	5	27.8
	Twice yearly			3	8.6	3	16.7
	Every two years	4	11.4	1	2.9	1	5.6
	Other	6	17.1	6	17.1	6	33.3

Table 23 continued

Question	Response choices	Small		Moderate		Large	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Do you see a need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?	Yes	9	25.7	12	34.3	7	38.9
	No	26	74.3	23	65.7	11	61.1
What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process? ^a	Teacher focus groups	0	0.0	1	2.9	0	0.0
	Interviews	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0
	Observations	20	57.1	23	65.7	13	72.2
	Record reviews	28	80.0	28	80.0	13	72.2
	Shadowing	14	40.0	18	51.4	8	44.4
	Parent focus group	1	2.9	6	17.1	1	5.6
	Goal setting	31	88.6	32	91.4	16	88.9
	Other			1	2.9		44.4
		8	22.9	9	25.7	8	

^a Respondents could mark all that apply. The percentage for each method is calculated independently.

Table 23 continued

Question	Response choices	Small		Moderate		Large	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Checklist	20	57.1	24	68.6	11	61.1
	Peer evaluation	1	2.9	0	0.0	1	5.6
	Surveys	1	2.9	4	11.4	8	44.4
	Written assessment	21	60.0	26	74.3	13	72.2
	Other	7	20.0	6	17.1	6	33.3
How frequently are principals with 1-3 years of service evaluated?	Once yearly	29	82.9	21	60.0	14	77.8
	Twice yearly	5	14.3	11	31.4	4	22.2
	Every two years	0	0.0	1	2.9	0	0.0
	Other	1	2.9	2	5.7	0	0.0
How frequently are principals with four or more years of service evaluated?	Once yearly	29	82.9	21	60.0	11	61.1
	Twice yearly	3	8.6	7	20.0	3	16.7
	Every two years	1	2.9	3	8.6	1	5.6
	Other	2	5.7	4	11.4	3	16.7

Table 23 continued

Question	Response choices	Small		Moderate		Large	
		<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Are there different evaluation procedures for these career stages?	Yes	0	0.0	3	8.6	3	16.7
	No	35	100.0	32	91.4	15	83.3
Are elementary, middle, and high school principals evaluated using the same process?	Yes	34	97.1	33	94.3	17	94.4
	No	1	2.9	2	5.7	1	5.6
Is there a process in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?	Yes	23	65.7	16	45.7	14	77.8
	No	12	34.3	19	54.3	4	22.2
Is your evaluation document available on line?	Yes	1	2.9	5	14.3	4	22.2
	No	34	97.1	30	85.7	14	77.8

Location. Analyses based on location were conducted using the respondent’s description of the location. Data from the five respondents who selected “Other” as a description and did not use the three primary classifications were not used for these analyses. Table 24 contains the demographic information for rural, suburban, and urban division. On average, rural school divisions are smaller than both suburban and urban school divisions with only 3,281 students. Urban divisions are slightly larger than suburban school divisions with 29,060 students compared to 21,742 students in suburban school divisions. A similar pattern exists for the average number of principals.

Table 24

Descriptive Statistics by School Division Location

	Rural <i>n</i> =61	Urban <i>n</i> =10	Suburban <i>n</i> =13
Average # Principals	8	35	43
Range # Principals	2 - 22	4 - 81	4 - 234
Average # Students	3,281	21,742	29,060
Range # Students	295 – 11,000	2,600 – 66,147	1,836 – 163,534

Based on the analysis of data by reported location in Table 25, there are few differences in principal evaluation processes by location. However, suburban school divisions are more likely to vary the process by career stages than rural or urban systems (23% vs. 3% and 0%, respectively). Although not statistically significant based on an alpha level of .05, suburban and urban school divisions are more likely to use surveys as an instrument in the evaluation process than rural systems (p-value=.067). While not tested by these analyses, there may be differences in school size by location. Rural systems may be smaller than urban or suburban divisions, and

Table 25 continued

that may have led to the difference seen here. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for group differences.

Table 25

Analysis of Variance for Principal Evaluation Process by School Division Location

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?	Yes = 1	.546	.581	61	.62	10	.70	13	.77
	No = 0								
If yes, how often?	Once yearly = 1	.751	.475	61	1.28	10	1.90	13	1.54
	Twice yearly = 2								
	Every two years = 3								
	Other = 4								
Do you see a need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?	Yes = 1	1.218	.301	61	.25	10	.30	13	.46
	No = 0								

Table 25 continued

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Teacher focus groups	.185	.832	61	.02	10	.00	13	.00
	Interviews	.114	.892		.64		.70		.69
	Observations	.584	.560		.84		.70		.77
	Record reviews	.527	.592		.46		.60		.38
	Shadowing	.022	.979		.08		.10		.08
	Goal setting	.022	.979		.92		.90		.92
	Parent focus group	.185	.832		.02		.00		.00
	Other	2.232	.114		.25		.30		.54
What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Checklist	.081	.923	61	.66	10	.60	13	.62
	Peer evaluation	.971	.383		.02		.00		.08
	Surveys	2.794	.067		.10		.30		.31
	Written assessment	.119	.888		.67		.60		.69
	Other	.276	.759		.20		.30		.23

Table 25 continued

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
How frequently are principals with 1-3 years of service evaluated?	Once yearly =1	.405	.668	61	1.36	10	1.20	13	1.46
	Twice yearly = 2								
	Every two years = 3								
	Other = 4								
How frequently are principals with 4 or more years of service evaluated?	Once yearly =1	.523	.595	61	1.54	10	1.70	13	1.85
	Twice yearly = 2								
	Every two years = 3								
	Other = 4								
Are there different evaluation procedures for these career stages?	Yes = 1	43.94*	.015	61	.180	10	.000	13	.439
	No = 0								
Are elementary, middle, and high school principals evaluated using the same process?	Yes = 1	.561	.573	61	.97	10	.90	13	.92
	No = 0								

*(p<.05).

Table 25 continued

Question	Response choices	F	p- value	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
				N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
Is there a process in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?	Yes = 1 No = 0	.460	.633	61	.57	10	.50	13	.69
Is your evaluation document available on line?	Yes = 1 No = 0	.727	.487	61	.11	10	.20	13	.23

Table 26

Frequencies and Percentages of Principal Evaluation by School Division Location

Question	Response choices	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
		<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?	Yes	38	62.3	7	70.0	10	76.9
	No	23	37.7	3	30.0	3	23.1
If yes, how often?	Left blank	27	44.3	2	20.0	5	38.5
	Once yearly	16	26.2	3	30.0	3	23.1
	Twice yearly	3	4.9	2	20.0	1	7.7
	Every two years	4	6.6			1	7.7
	Other	11	18.0	3	30.0	3	23.1
Do you see a need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?	Yes	15	24.6	3	30.0	6	46.2
	No	46	75.4	7	70.0	7	53.8

Table 26 continued

Question	Response choices	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
		<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Teacher focus groups	1	1.6				
	Interviews	39	63.9	7	70.0	9	69.2
	Observations	51	83.6	7	70.0	10	76.9
	Record reviews	28	45.9	6	60.0	5	38.5
	Shadowing	5	8.2	1	10.0	1	7.7
	Goal setting	56	91.8	9	90.0	12	92.3
	Parent focus group	1	1.6				
	Other	15	24.6	3	30.0	7	53.8

Table 26 continued

Question	Response choices	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
		<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?	Checklist	40	65.6	6	60.0	8	61.5
	Peer evaluation	1	1.6			1	7.7
	Surveys	6	9.8	3	30.0	4	30.8
	Written assessment	41	67.2	6	60.0	9	69.2
	Other	12	19.7	3	30.0	3	23.1
How frequently are principals with 1-3 years of service evaluated?	Once yearly	44	72.1	8	80.0	9	69.2
	Twice yearly	14	23.0	2	20.0	3	23.1
	Every two years	1	1.6				
	Other	2	3.3			1	7.7
How frequently are principals with 4 or more years of service evaluated?	Once yearly	43	70.5	6	60.0	8	61.5
	Twice yearly	9	14.8	2	20.0	1	7.7
	Every two years	3	4.9	1	10.0	2	15.4
	Other	6	9.8	1	10.0	2	15.4

Table 26 continued

Question	Response choices	Rural		Urban		Suburban	
		<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent	<i>N</i>	Percent
Are there different evaluation procedures for these career stages?	Yes	2	3.3			3	23.1
	No	59	96.7	10	100.0	10	76.9
Are elementary, middle, and high school principals evaluated using the same process?	Yes	59	96.7	9	90.0	12	92.3
	No	2	3.3	1	10.0	1	7.7
Is there a process in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?	Yes	35	57.4	5	50.0	9	69.2
	No	26	42.6	5	50.0	4	30.8
Is your evaluation document available on line?	Yes	7	11.5	2	20.0	3	23.1
	No	54	88.5	8	80.0	10	76.9

Research Question 3

What strategies are used to support principals who are evaluated as needing improvement?

For this survey item, as seen in Table 27, respondents provided open-ended descriptions of the strategies used to support principals who were evaluated as needing improvement.

Content analysis was used to derive themes in the data. Responses were classified by theme, and frequencies calculated. Based on the content analysis by theme, an improvement or action plan was the most common form of support for principals who needed improvement. Coaching or mentoring by the superintendent or other administrative/central office staff were also mentioned frequently.

Table 27

Themes and Frequencies of Principals Evaluated as Needing Improvement

Theme	No. of Responses	Example
Improvement/action plan	45	Plan of action, improvement plan, course of correction put in writing
Goal setting	9	Annual goal setting, goals and objectives
Coaching/mentoring	28	Coaching by other principals, by superintendent, partnering with a successful principal in their deficit area
Cross visitation	9	
Workshops/seminars/classes	11	Leadership academy, workshops, classes
Meetings with administration/ superintendent	18	Conference with superintendent, quarterly review meetings with superintendent, central office supervision

Research Question 4

What structures are in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices?

As with the previous question, respondents were asked to provide open-ended descriptions of structures in place to share effective practices. Content analysis was used to

derive themes in the data shown in Table 28. By far, administrative meetings of various sorts were the primary mechanism for sharing effective practices. The names of the meetings varied, but the common component was a regular meeting frequency (monthly, bimonthly) and a target audience of principals and other administrative staff. Mentioned less frequently were presentations at conferences and mentoring of novice principals.

Table 28

Themes and Frequencies of Sharing Effective Practices

Theme	No. of Responses	Example
Administration meetings	41	Share at monthly principals' meetings, bimonthly leadership team meetings, administrative team meetings
Present at workshops, seminars, conferences	11	Present at best practices day each March, at administrative conference before school starts, demonstrations to other principals
Mentoring	9	Serve as mentor for less experienced principals, mentoring programs, informal mentoring

In addition to the survey questionnaire, respondents in the school divisions were requested to send a copy of their principal performance evaluation policies and any forms that are currently being used to support the evaluation process. Documents were received from a total of sixty-one respondents. These documents were reviewed to determine the extent to which evaluation policies were in line with the prototypes provided by the Virginia Department of Education. For the purpose of this study, three categories were used to designate the policies that (a) exceeded the domains and standards as outlined in the prototypes, (b) met the domains and standards adequately, and (c) failed to meet the domains and standards as indicated in the prototypes. School divisions that exceeded the standards of the prototypes added other components to the existing standards, such as student achievement, technology, annual yearly

progress, or creating a document using the multi-dimensional assessments. School divisions that met the domains and standards included the standards as indicated in the prototypes. School divisions that failed to meet the domains and standards did not address one or more of the domains and standards addressed in the prototypes.

Five school divisions exceeded the standards of the prototype, 42 met the standards adequately, and 14 did not meet the standards. Of this number, two school divisions indicated that their evaluation document is currently being updated to reflect the ISLLC standards. The review also looked at how recently the documents were revised or adopted. Of those who reported dates, 25 policies were updated as of 2000 and one had not been updated since 1985. Sixteen of the policies and evaluation documents did not indicate the year of the last revision or adoption.

Chapter 5

Findings, Implications, and Recommendations

The principal purpose of this study was to describe the evaluation process of principals in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The study (a) describes what procedures school districts used to evaluate principal performance, (b) determines how the evaluation process varied by district type, i.e., suburban, urban, and rural, (c) identifies the structures in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices, (d) determines the strategies used to support principals who are evaluated and results suggest a need for improvement, and (e) analyzes documents which cover policies and procedures governing principal evaluation. This chapter presents a summary and analysis of data with implications for further research.

To provide a knowledgeable basis and gain greater insight regarding principals' evaluation, an intensive review of the literature was conducted to explore the dimensions of principal evaluation and its effect on the quality of education in Virginia. The review focused primarily on (a) the historical perspectives of principal evaluation, (b) performance standards and evaluation criteria for principals, (c) the politics of principal evaluation, (d) standards and performance assessment, (e) correlation of ISLLC standards with principal performance evaluation, (f) evaluation of low and high-performing principals, and (g) professional development in natural reform programs. The literature review suggests that the renewed interest in accountability will be sustained, as will the trend toward standards based evaluation and professional development of principals.

In order to procure data from this study, a letter was sent to the Director of Human Resources in each school district in Virginia, requesting a copy of the principal performance

evaluation policies and any forms currently being used to support the evaluation process. A survey questionnaire was also sent to gain information regarding other assessment practices being used and documents were requested to review policies and procedures. Additionally, two interviews were held with administrators who served in policymaking positions in the Commonwealth.

Survey returns yielded data from school districts representing a wide geographical distribution; specifically, 91 questionnaires and 61 principal evaluation documents were returned and analyzed. The demographics of school divisions represent 1,407 principals and 812,211 students. The information accumulated through the use of questionnaires and the analysis of data resulted in the findings which are presented below.

Findings

1. The demographic information describing school district characteristics indicated that the largest number of school districts (68.5%) designated their school districts as “rural,” (11.2%) were “urban,” (5.6%), “suburban,” and (5.6%) indicated other designations.

2. Human resource directors reported overwhelmingly that the superintendent was the sole evaluator of school principals. The only other evaluator of significance was the assistant superintendent. While this finding is comparable to most formal evaluation plans found in the literature, some school districts now use the team approach, which allows parents, students, teachers, and staff at the school site to have a meaningful voice in the process (Green 2002).

3. There is agreement among researchers and policymakers that an evaluation process must be in place in order to have effective principals and thus effective schools. The data in this study showed that more than half of respondents (67%) had procedures in place for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures. However, 33% of school divisions did

not have procedures in place. This is a sizable number, and a matter of concern, since principal evaluation has been mandated by the Commonwealth of Virginia since 1972.

4. In responding to the regularity of the review procedure of the principal evaluation procedures, the largest number of respondents (38.5%) left the item blank. Legislation passed by the Virginia General Assembly required performance objectives for public schools and recommended review at least every two years to keep pace with changing expectations and new knowledge in the science and process of education. Likewise, it is necessary to review procedures regularly in order to maintain alignment with state standards. Twenty-eight percent of respondents in this study conducted a yearly review, and 21 percent indicated various times, but with no regular or consistent periods for principal evaluation.

5. More than half of the respondents—62, or 68.1%—did not see a need to update their principal evaluation policy and procedures. Only (31.9%) indicated a need for change. In addition, the data showed very little difference in frequency of evaluation for principals with one to three years of experience and principals with four or more years of experience. Both indicated that principals were evaluated once yearly, regardless of the number of years in position. Other evaluation periods for principals with one to three years of experience and principals with four or more years of experience were conducted twice a year.

6. Two administrator evaluation prototypes were created and distributed to school districts throughout Virginia. The prototypes combined criteria with best practices, research, and stakeholder input to guide school division personnel in designing performance evaluation tools for administrators. These prototypes appeared to have a major influence in formulating principal evaluation procedures in the school divisions. In analyzing the 61 documents sent by school divisions, the majority of school divisions incorporated at least one of the administrator

prototypes for principal evaluations. The prototypes included a mix of formative and summative evaluation data to be collected.

7. Considerable variation was found in methodology used in the principal evaluation process. A clear majority of respondents, 90.1 percent, indicated goal setting as a method currently being used, followed by the use of observations, interviews, and record reviews. Other methods used less frequently included focus groups, surveys, test data, self-evaluation, and portfolio assessment.

8. The literature suggests that paper and pencil tests for the evaluation of principals are actually the largest category of assessment procedures. The study substantiated this notion and found that 61 percent of school districts used written assessments in the principal evaluation process. The use of checklists followed as the second most widely used method of assessment. A small number of districts indicated a variety of other processes, including uniform performance standards, documentation, portfolios, and self-evaluation.

9. In responding to career stages of principals, an overwhelming majority, 93.4 percent, indicated that no differences existed in evaluation, regardless of career stages of principals. Only 6.6 percent used different procedures according to career stages of principals. A similar pattern emerged in evaluation of elementary, middle, and high school principals. Only 4.4 percent differentiated their process according to school level, and 95.6 percent evaluated principals using the same process regardless of school level. A few school districts varied procedures using more innovative techniques. The findings indicated that Virginia appears to be in tandem with the country in terms of evaluating principals by school levels. It appears that majority of the school divisions do not distinguish a principal's performance based on whether the principal is an elementary, middle, or high school principal.

10. Few significant differences were indicated for principal evaluation when school division size and location were analyzed. However, suburban school divisions are more likely to vary the process by career stages than rural or urban systems (23% vs. 3% and 0%, respectively). Although not statistically based on an alpha level of .05, large systems reported using surveys more frequently than either moderate or small systems. Similarly, there were few differences in principal evaluation processes by location.

11. In providing open-ended descriptions of strategies used to support principals who needed improvement, based on the content analysis by theme, the most frequently mentioned strategy (45 responses) was the use of an improvement action plan, which puts in writing the weaknesses and the corrective actions needed. Coaching or mentoring by administrative/central staff was also mentioned frequently. Other responses included annual goal setting, cross visitation, workshops, and meeting with administration.

12. Data on structures in place for high-performing principals to share effective practices revealed that sharing at monthly meetings and administrative team meetings (41 responses) was the primary mechanism for sharing effective practices. While mentoring was listed in the literature as one of the most effective practices, only nine (9) responses indicated that high-performing principals mentor less experienced or low-performing principals. The other approach shared was the presentation of best practices at administrative conferences, usually at the beginning of the new school year.

13. Greater accountability in principal evaluation is needed at the state level. Currently, the “validation” is simply a signature from the superintendent’s office.

Implications

1. Due to increased scrutiny and calls for accountability in public education, it is imperative that reform initiatives in principal evaluation be a continued as a part of principal evaluation process.
2. School divisions must provide greater opportunities for high-performing principals to share best practices.
3. In accordance with the state recommendation, evaluation procedures should be updated at least every two years to keep pace with changing expectations and new knowledge in the science and process of education.
4. School districts must recognize the role of professional development in effecting positive change, and therefore use professional development as a primary vehicle to develop and maintain the type of leadership necessary to improve teaching and learning opportunities.
5. It is incumbent upon school districts to explore new and innovative methodologies to provide greater variety, rather than continue to rely on traditional methodologies in evaluation of principals.
6. It appears that additional strategies should be developed to support principals who are evaluated as needing improvement in their performance.
7. Changes in evaluation instruments and procedures should evolve as new processes are used to replace limited or out-dated evaluation procedures.

Recommendations

1. The principal evaluation process in the Commonwealth has improved since the 1972 mandate was put into effect by the Virginia General Assembly. However, there should be greater accountability to determine compliance with state requirements regarding principal evaluation.

2. The role of the principal has changed dramatically and new standards have been put in place. Therefore, there is a need to look at different types of principal evaluation methods and incorporate more innovative practices and procedures to address those standards.

3. The primary purpose of principal evaluation is to improve the performance of the principal. Research indicates overwhelmingly that principal leadership is paramount to the success of the school. Professional development needs to be promoted as an avenue for principals to continue to develop skills.

4. Principal evaluation processes are essentially the same for evaluating all principals, regardless of whether they serve at the elementary, middle, or high school levels. The jobs are different, and the process for reviewing these principals should be different. There should be greater differentiation according to school levels in process and procedures, because of the wide variations in the nature of the job and responsibilities for finances and program implementation.

5. Principal evaluation should become a major focus for school systems, just as teacher evaluation has been for years. Every district should have a written policy governing principal evaluation.

6. While local autonomy is critical in Virginia, the State Department of Education needs to put in place a system of audits against the process and the documents used for principal evaluation.

Further Research

1. Additional research is needed on the national level, where little is still known about principal evaluation. However, the literature review demonstrates that the reform movement is causing states to look more closely at principal evaluation.

2. An examination of the principals' perceptions of the evaluation process in Virginia should be studied.

3. Since the majority of Virginia school divisions use an improvement action plan as the primary intervention for low-performing principals, research is needed to determine the effectiveness of this intervention in improving principal performance.

4. There is a need for more research about high-performing principals to determine how they can maintain and improve their exemplary performance, as well as share their practices with others.

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Appendix A

Conversation with Dr. Thomas Elliott

A conversation was held with Dr. Thomas Elliott to get direct information on principal evaluation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. He currently serves as assistant superintendent for teacher education and professional licensure, Virginia Department of Education. The conversation was held on February 18, 2005. The conversation was recorded in the following field notes.

Question 1. How has the evaluation of principals changed since 1972, when the Standards of Quality were established by the General Assembly?

Reponse: There have been some changes since the Standards of Quality were established in 1972. There was an expressed need for greater uniformity among school districts. As a result, the Virginia Board of Education adopted the *Guidelines for Unified Performance Standards and Evaluation*. Stronger school systems used the guidelines to improve significantly what was already a good system. The weaker school systems, before standards, tended to remain the same.

Question 2. How are school divisions monitored in terms of being in compliance with state department mandates for principal assessments?

Response: The General Assembly and the [state] constitution give the authority for oversight to the Board of Education and to local school boards. The State Board of Education has the authority and responsibility for designing all the regulations, licensure, and programs relating to school personnel. Therefore, our office is not responsible for monitoring. We would be in

violation of the Code of Virginia. Our direct contact with local school systems would deal with grievance procedures for school personnel.

Question 3. What guidelines are in place for school districts to follow in assessing principals?

Response: School divisions had received criteria for evaluation in 1999. However, they asked for some instruments and assistance in using the guidelines. The state did not have the authority to do that, but we were able to pay for someone to come up with an evaluation prototype for teachers, principals, and superintendents. This was accomplished through consultants from the College of William and Mary, the University of Virginia Curry School of Education, and the Virginia Department of Education. They offered training workshops and assisted school personnel in operationalizing the guidelines.

Question 4. Are the same criteria expected to be used for principal evaluation in rural, suburban, and urban school districts?

Response: In the rural areas, evaluation is primarily between the principal and the superintendent on a one-to-one basis. In the larger school systems, evaluation is done by assistant superintendents and other central offices personnel. However, I am not sure that the end result is any different: it just depends on the effectiveness of the principal.

Question 6. How does the state view student achievement and principal assessment?

Response: I feel that student achievement is paramount in light of principal assessment. In this age of accountability, it is imperative that principals become instructional leaders, as well as managers. That is why there is renewed interest in principal preparation programs and how

they can deliver what the state requires. High-stakes testing is indeed a reality, and student achievement mirrors the effectiveness level of the instructional leaders.

Question 7. What do you see as the biggest problem with principal evaluation, and what has been done to address the situation?

Response: As I see it, one of the biggest problems in the past has been the lack of attention and resources for professional development. However, due to state and federal mandates, the Department of Education is awarding \$100,000 grants to selected leadership preparation partnerships. This collaborative project provides principals and school leaders with training and mentoring to become instructional leaders, as well as administrators. We should no longer rely on our colleges and universities to train our principals, but school divisions should work cooperatively with our institutions of higher learning in order to develop new programs and models for effective leadership.

Appendix B

Administrative Prototypes 1 and 2

Note: Reprinted from Administrator Prototypes I and II from the document, *Sample Evaluation Prototypes for Teachers, Administrators and Superintendents*, found at:

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/newvdoe/prototypes.html>

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**ADMINISTRATOR
EVALUATION
PROTOTYPE 1**

**◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
ANNUAL GOAL FORM**

Administrator's Name _____ **Academic Year** _____

Position/School _____

•**Focus** The four areas required by law (assessment of administrators' skills and knowledge, student academic progress, school gains in learning, effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline) are incorporated in the five domains (planning and assessment, instructional leadership, safety and organizational management for learning, communication and community relations, and professionalism). Goals should incorporate the five domains. This may be achieved through one or more goal statements.

•**Baseline Data** (Status at beginning of evaluation period)

• **Goal Statement** (Desired results)

• **Strategies for Improvement** (Activities to accomplish goals)

Administrator's Signature

Date

Evaluator's Signature

Date

◆ **ADMINISTRATOR** ◆
Categories of Primary Responsibilities
Domains ◆ Standards ◆ Indicators

Sample performance indicators are included to help document the performance of job standards; however, the administrator is evaluated on the five domains and the related performance standards, not the performance indicators.

Domain 1: Planning and Assessment

Standard 1: The administrator effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision making.

Indicators: Applies current research related to effective techniques for gathering data from individuals, groups, and programs. Gathers and analyzes data on student academic achievement through standardized test results and other student performance sources. Identifies strengths and weaknesses in programs and practices in order to ensure continuous improvement. Applies and communicates statistical findings. Plans and implements changes in programs and/or curricula based on data. Conducts annual analyses of school's test and sub-test scores by grade and discipline.

Standard 2: The administrator collaboratively develops and implements a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning.

Indicators: Ensures the development and implementation of a biennial school plan approved by the superintendent. Works collaboratively with faculty and staff to develop a vision and mission statement consistent with the division strategic plan. Supports the mission by identifying, articulating, and planning to meet the educational needs of students, staff, and other stakeholders. Works collaboratively to develop long- and short-range goals and objectives consistent with needs assessment data. Evaluates the effects of changes on student achievement and provides feedback on goal achievement and needs for improvement. Keeps abreast of current literature regarding school reform. Supports staff through the stages of the change process. Maintains stakeholders' focus on long-range mission and goals throughout the implementation process.

Standard 3: The administrator plans, implements, supports, and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and student achievement of the *Standards of Learning*.

Indicators: Demonstrates a working knowledge and understanding of the *Standards of Learning* and school division curricular requirements. Articulates curricular goals and objectives to staff and other stakeholders. Assists with the development of a comprehensive curriculum utilizing goals and objectives in alignment with the *Standards of Learning*. Works with staff to plan, implement, evaluate, and revise the curriculum on a systematic ongoing basis. Demonstrates

knowledge of and applies current research related to best practices in curriculum and instruction. Provides resources and materials to accomplish instructional goals for all students. Facilitates program/curricular changes to meet state or federal requirements. Monitors and assesses the effect of the programs and/or curricular on student achievement. Implements division testing program for students. Uses varied assessment data to ensure that instructional programs are responsive to students' academic needs.

Standard 4: The administrator develops plans for effective allocation of fiscal and other resources.

Indicators: Meets and works collaboratively with appropriate staff to determine budget needs and priorities. Prioritizes budget requests to meet the needs of assigned curriculum/program(s). Meets and works collaboratively with appropriate staff to determine priorities for effective allocation of space as well as human and other resources. Monitors and assesses resource allocation. Revises resource allocation plans based on implementation data.

Domain 2: Instructional Leadership

Standard 1: The administrator communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.

Indicators: Articulates a vision and works collaboratively to develop a mission and programs consistent with the division's strategic plan. Emphasizes positive student achievement and continuous improvement. Analyzes current academic achievement and teaching methods to make appropriate educational decisions and improve classroom instruction. Monitors the delivery of appropriate remediation and intervention for students. Explores, disseminates, and applies knowledge and information about new or improved methods of instruction or related issues. Shares evaluation data and subsequent plans for continuous improvement with staff, students, and other stakeholders. Commits resources to the achievement of the mission and goals. Demonstrates strong motivation and high standards and models self-evaluation. Communicates commitment to protecting academic instructional time. Recognizes, encourages, and celebrates excellence among staff and students.

Standard 2: The administrator supervises the alignment, coordination, and delivery of assigned programs and/or curricular areas.

Indicators: Works with staff to develop a written plan for the coordination and articulation of curricular goals. Meets and works with staff on a regular basis to identify needs and determine priorities regarding program delivery. Provides direction and support in planning and implementing activities and programs consistent with continuous improvement efforts and attainment of instructional goals. Monitors coordination of instructional programs with state and local standards. Demonstrates and applies knowledge of effective instructional models and

strategies. Identifies best instructional practices for student groups with identified needs. Provides instructional resources, material, training, and support to accomplish instructional goals.

Standard 3: The administrator selects, inducts, supports, evaluates, and retains quality instructional and support personnel.

Indicators: Maintains and disseminates a current handbook of personnel policies and procedures. Establishes and uses selection procedures that ensure fairness and equity in selecting the best candidates. Makes recommendations regarding personnel decisions consistent with established policies and procedures. Establishes and implements formal and informal induction procedures to promote assistance for and acceptance of new employees. Sets high standards for staff performance. Evaluates performance of personnel consistent with division policies, provides formal and informal feedback, and maintains accurate evaluation records. Evaluates instructional alignment with the *Standards of Learning* to ensure students' successful attainment of the knowledge and skills indicated. Evaluates classroom practices and methods for improvement of instruction. Provides support and resources for staff to improve job performance, and recognizes and supports the achievements of highly effective staff members.

Standard 4: The administrator provides staff development programs consistent with program evaluation results and school instructional improvement plans.

Indicators: Leads the development and implementation of a systematic professional development plan for individuals and for the school. Involves school staff in identifying staff development needs based on student achievement data. Provides staff development that supports effective instruction. Shares knowledge and information about new, improved, or alternative methods of instruction and related issues. Meets with instructional teams and teachers regularly to assess ongoing school improvement efforts. Shares program evaluation results and demonstrates connection of results to ongoing staff development efforts. Disseminates information about conferences, course work, and membership in professional organizations. Supports staff participation in internal and external professional development opportunities as appropriate.

Standard 5: The administrator identifies, analyzes, and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques.

Indicators: Identifies, analyzes, and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques. Identifies and addresses problems in a timely and effective manner. Demonstrates fairness in identifying multiple points of view around problem situations. Involves stakeholders in analyzing problems and developing solutions. Monitors implementation of problem resolutions. Provides shared leadership and decision-making opportunities for staff that promote a climate of collaboration and collegiality. Delegates responsibility appropriately

to staff members. Maintains focus on school and division missions and goals. Promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy.

Domain 3: Safety and Organizational Management for Learning

Standard 1: The administrator maintains effective discipline and fosters a safe and positive environment for students and staff.

Indicators: Ensures a safe, secure, orderly, clean, and attractive school environment. Communicates expectations regarding behavior to students, staff, and parents in a clear manner. Communicates procedures for handling disciplinary problems in a clear manner. Implements and enforces the school division code of conduct and appropriate disciplinary procedures in a timely and consistent manner. Establishes effective programs through which students develop self-discipline and conflict resolution skills. Manages emergency situations calmly and effectively. Addresses potential problem situations proactively. Conveys mutual respect, concern, and high expectations to students, staff, and parents on a consistent basis. Recognizes students and staff for their academic, co-curricular, personal, and professional achievements.

Standard 2: The administrator effectively coordinates the daily operation of the assigned area of responsibility.

Indicators: Organizes staff to conduct daily routines efficiently, uses space effectively, and ensures appropriate instructional time. Publicizes routines and procedures through handbooks, orientation sessions, and other means. Protects academic instructional time from unnecessary interruptions. Organizes schedule to keep time students are out of class to a minimum. Monitors and provides supervision for all programs and activities. Oversees the general maintenance, upkeep, and appearance of the school (*building administrators only*).

Standard 3: The administrator effectively manages human, material, and financial resources to ensure student learning and to comply with legal mandates.

Indicators: Follows federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures. Plans and prepares a fiscally responsible budget to support the organization's mission and goals collaboratively with staff. Establishes and uses accepted procedures for receiving and disbursing funds. Maintains records of receipts and disbursements of all funds handled. Keeps staff informed about status of budget requests, equipment purchases, and materials ordered. Monitors the efficient use of instructional resources. Works with staff to establish an effective schedule for use of shared resources. Maintains accurate personnel records. Maintains current record of licensure, endorsement, and in-service training completed by staff. Adheres to established evaluation schedules, timelines, and procedures.

Standard 4: The administrator demonstrates effective organizational skills to achieve school, community, and division goals.

Indicators: Demonstrates and communicates a working knowledge and understanding of school division policies and procedures. Ensures compliance and follow-through regarding policies and procedures. Uses personal time to the best advantage, manages scheduling effectively, and follows task to completion. Performs duties in an accurate and timely manner. Maintains accurate student records to ensure that criteria for promoting/placement/instructional intervention are included. Prioritizes and addresses multiple issues and projects efficiently and appropriately. Maintains an acceptable workspace.

Domain 4: Communication and Community Relations

Standard 1: The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with students and staff.

Indicators: Promotes a climate of trust and teamwork within the school. Facilitates constructive and timely communication. Initiates communication and facilitates cooperation among staff regarding curriculum or program initiatives. Models professionally appropriate communication skills, interpersonal relations, and conflict mediation. Maintains visibility and accessibility to staff. Solicits staff input to discuss issues and goals and to promote effective decision-making. Establishes and maintains a collaborative relationship with classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators in promoting the division's mission and in communicating expectations.

Standard 2: The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with parents and other community members.

Indicators: Communicates school and division goals, objectives, and expectations to stakeholders. Maintains visibility and accessibility to parents and the community. Uses multiple modes of communication to notify stakeholders of issues, events, and useful information regarding curriculum and programs in a timely manner. Clarifies collaborative roles of school and home in promoting student learning and meeting curricular goals. Communicates evidence of progress towards goals and objectives. Monitors the development and distribution of staff and student handbooks. Uses acceptable written and oral language.

Standard 3: The administrator works collaboratively with staff, families, and community members to secure resources and to support the success of a diverse student population. Indicators: Plans for and solicits parent and community member input. Promotes the development of community partnerships. Encourages parental and community involvement in promoting school goals. Collaborates with staff, families, and community

leaders and responds to identified needs of individual students and groups of students. Treats people with respect. Models and promotes multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the appreciation of diversity in the school-community. Promotes the value of understanding and celebrating school and community cultures.

Domain 5: Professionalism

Standard 1: The administrator models professional, moral, and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions.

Indicators: Relates to co-workers, staff, customers/clients, and others in an ethical and professional manner. Represents the school/office/program favorably in the school division/community. Resolves concerns and problems in an appropriate manner. Respects and maintains confidentiality and assumes responsibility for personal actions and those of subordinates. Maintains a professional demeanor and appearance appropriate to responsibilities.

Standard 2: The administrator works in a collegial and collaborative manner with other administrators, school personnel, and the community to promote and support the mission and goals of the school division.

Indicators: Demonstrates flexibility and a collaborative attitude in supporting colleagues/work teams. Supports the division and advances its mission/goals. Supports division-wide programs and activities and makes a positive contribution to the overall climate of the school and division. Maintains effective working relationships with other administrators and staff. Shares ideas and information and considers the interests and needs of staff members and community stakeholders in promoting and supporting district goals and services.

Standard 3: The administrator takes responsibility for and participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning.

Indicators: Participates in professional growth activities, including conferences, workshops, course work, and/or membership in professional organizations at the district, state, and/or national level. Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strength and weakness related to professional skills and their impact on student learning. Sets goals for improvement of skills and professional performance. Maintains a high level of personal knowledge regarding new developments and techniques, including technology, in one's own field of professional specialization. Comprehends and applies current research of educational issues, trends, and practices. Networks with colleagues to share knowledge about effective educational practices and to improve and enhance administrative knowledge, skills, and organizational success. Maintains proper licensure and certification.

**◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
INTERIM REVIEW**

Administrator's Name _____ **Academic Year** _____

Position/School _____ **Evaluator** _____

Directions: Evaluators may use this form to maintain records throughout the evaluation cycle in preparation for the summative evaluation. This form serves as a running record for documenting performance of the administrator from all pertinent data sources. Evaluators should document areas of concern and/or strengths in the comment section referencing the specific standards being addressed. Evaluators should place a ✓ (check mark) in the area indicated informing the administrator of satisfactory progress or indicating that improvement is needed.

Domain 1: Planning and Assessment

Progressing Satisfactorily

Improvement Needed

Comments:

Domain 2: Instructional Leadership

Progressing Satisfactorily

Improvement Needed

Comments:

Domain 3: Safety and Organizational Management for Learning

Progressing Satisfactorily

Improvement Needed

Comments:

Domain 4: Communication and Community Relations

Progressing Satisfactorily

Improvement Needed

Comments:

Domain 5: Professionalism

Progressing Satisfactorily

Improvement Needed

Comments:

Summary Comments:

Administrator's Signature Date

Evaluator's Signature Date

**◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
INTERIM REVIEW**

Administrator's Name _____ Academic Year _____
Position/School _____ Evaluator _____

Directions: Evaluators are to indicate the administrator's progress on the performance standards listed. Progress that requires improvement should include a comment that will provide direction for the administrator's Annual Goals during the succeeding school year. Performance standards marked as "Improvement Needed" on the Interim Review that show no improvement at the time of the Summative Evaluation will be marked as Unsatisfactory.

Domain 1: Planning and Assessment

Standard 1: The administrator effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision making.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 2: The administrator collaboratively develops and implements a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 3: The administrator plans, implements, supports, and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and student achievement of the *Standards of Learning*.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 4: The administrator develops plans for effective allocation of fiscal and other resources.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Domain 2: Instructional Leadership

Standard 1: The administrator communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 2: The administrator supervises the alignment, coordination, and delivery of assigned programs and/or curricular areas.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 3: The administrator selects, inducts, supports, evaluates, and retains quality instructional and support personnel.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 4: The administrator provides staff development programs consistent with program evaluation results and school instructional improvement plans.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 5: The administrator identifies, analyzes, and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Domain 3: Safety and Organizational Management for Learning

Standard 1: The administrator maintains effective discipline and fosters a safe and positive environment for students and staff.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 2: The administrator effectively coordinates the daily operation of the assigned area of responsibility.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 3: The administrator effectively manages human, material, and financial resources to ensure student learning and to comply with legal mandates.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 4: The administrator demonstrates effective organizational skills to achieve school, community, and division goals.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Domain 4: Communication and Community Relations

Standard 1: The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with students and staff.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 2: The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with parents and other community members.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 3: The administrator works collaboratively with staff, families, and community members to secure resources and to support the success of a diverse student population.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Domain 5: Professionalism

Standard 1: The administrator models professional, moral, and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 2: The administrator works in a collegial and collaborative manner with other administrators, school personnel, and the community to promote and support the mission and goals of the school division.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 3: The administrator takes responsibility for and participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Standard 4: The administrator provides service to the profession, the division, and the community.

Exceeds Criteria Meets Criteria Requires Improvement Unsatisfactory

Comments:

Administrator's Summary of Progress (Documentation of progress to reach stated goal(s):

Evaluator's Comments:

Administrator's Signature Date

Evaluator's Signature Date

ADMINISTRATOR'S SIGNATURE ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT OF THIS FORM.
WRITTEN COMMENTS MAY BE ATTACHED.

COMMENTS ATTACHED: YES NO



**ADMINISTRATOR
EVALUATION
PROTOTYPE 2**

**◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
ANNUAL GOAL FORM**

Administrator's Name _____ Academic Year _____

Position/School _____

-Focus The four areas required by law (assessment of administrators' skills and knowledge, student academic progress, school gains in learning, effectiveness in addressing school safety and enforcing student discipline) are incorporated in the five domains (planning and assessment, instructional leadership, safety and organizational management for learning, communication and community relations, and professionalism). Goals should incorporate the five domains. This may be achieved through one or more goal statements.

•**Baseline Data** (Status at beginning of evaluation period)

-**Goal Statement** (Desired results)

-**Strategies for Improvement** (Activities to accomplish goals)

Administrator's Signature Date **Evaluator's Signature** Date

*Attach Categories of Primary Responsibilities to Annual Goal Form

◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
Categories of Primary Responsibilities
Domains • Standards • Indicators

Sample performance indicators are included to help document the performance of job standards; however, the administrator is evaluated on the 20 performance standards, not the performance indicators.

Domain 1: Planning and Assessment

Standard 1: The administrator effectively employs various processes for gathering, analyzing, and using data for decision making.

Indicators: Applies current research related to effective techniques for gathering data from individuals, groups, and programs. Gathers and analyzes data on student academic achievement through standardized test results and other student performance sources. Identifies strengths and weaknesses in programs and practices in order to ensure continuous improvement. Applies and communicates statistical findings. Plans and implements changes in programs and/or curricula based on data. Conducts annual analyses of school's test and sub-test scores by grade and discipline.

Standard 2: The administrator collaboratively develops and implements a school improvement plan that results in increased student learning.

Indicators: Ensures the development and implementation of a biennial school plan approved by the superintendent. Works collaboratively with faculty and staff to develop a vision and mission statement consistent with the division strategic plan. Supports the mission by identifying, articulating, and planning to meet the educational needs of students, staff, and other stakeholders. Works collaboratively to develop long- and short-range goals and objectives consistent with needs assessment data. Evaluates the effects of changes on student achievement and provides feedback on goal achievement and needs for improvement. Keeps abreast of current literature regarding school reform. Supports staff through the stages of the change process. Maintains stakeholders' focus on long-range mission and goals throughout the implementation process.

Standard 3: The administrator plans, implements, supports, and assesses instructional programs that enhance teaching and student achievement of the *Standards of Learning*.

Indicators: Demonstrates a working knowledge and understanding of the *Standards of Learning* and school division curricular requirements. Articulates curricular goals and objectives to staff and other stakeholders. Assists with the development of a comprehensive curriculum utilizing goals and objectives in alignment with the *Standards of Learning*. Works with staff to plan, implement, evaluate, and revise the curriculum on a systematic

ongoing basis. Demonstrates knowledge of and applies current research related to best practices in curriculum and instruction. Provides resources and materials to accomplish instructional goals for all students. Facilitates programs/curricular changes to meet state or federal requirements. Monitors and assesses the effect of the programs and/or curricular on student achievement. Implements division testing program for students. Uses varied assessment data to ensure that instructional programs are responsive to students' academic needs.

Standard 4: The administrator develops plans for effective allocation of fiscal and other resources.

Indicators: Meets and works collaboratively with appropriate staff to determine budget needs and priorities. Prioritizes budget requests to meet the needs of assigned curriculum/program(s). Meets and works collaboratively with appropriate staff to determine priorities for effective allocation of space as well as human and other resources. Monitors and assesses resource allocation. Revises resource allocation plans based on implementation data.

Domain 2: Instructional Leadership

Standard 1: The administrator communicates a clear vision of excellence and continuous improvement consistent with the goals of the school division.

Indicators: Articulates a vision and works collaboratively to develop a mission and programs consistent with the division's strategic plan. Emphasizes positive student achievement and continuous improvement. Analyzes current academic achievement and teaching methods to make appropriate educational decisions and improve classroom instruction. Monitors the delivery of appropriate remediation and intervention for students. Explores, disseminates, and applies knowledge and information about new or improved methods of instruction or related issues. Shares evaluation data and subsequent plans for continuous improvement with staff, students, and other stakeholders. Commits resources to the achievement of the mission and goals. Demonstrates strong motivation and high standards and models self-evaluation. Communicates commitment to protecting academic instructional time. Recognizes, encourages, and celebrates excellence among staff and students.

Standard 2: The administrator supervises the alignment, coordination, and delivery of assigned programs and/or curricular areas.

Indicators: Works with staff to develop a written plan for the coordination and articulation of curricular goals. Meets and works with staff on a regular basis to identify needs and determine priorities regarding program delivery. Provides direction and support in planning and implementing activities and programs consistent with continuous improvement efforts and attainment of instructional goals. Monitors coordination of instructional programs with state and local standards. Demonstrates and applies knowledge of effective instructional models and

strategies. Identifies best instructional practices for student groups with identified needs. Provides instructional resources, material, training, and support to accomplish instructional goals.

Standard 3: The administrator selects, inducts, supports, evaluates, and retains quality instructional and support personnel.

Indicators: Maintains and disseminates a current handbook of personnel policies and procedures. Establishes and uses selection procedures that ensure fairness and equity in selecting the best candidates. Makes recommendations regarding personnel decisions consistent with established policies and procedures. Establishes and implements formal and informal induction procedures to promote assistance for and acceptance of new employees. Sets high standards for staff performance. Evaluates performance of personnel consistent with division policies, provides formal and informal feedback, and maintains accurate evaluation records. Evaluates instructional alignment with the *Standards of Learning* to ensure students' successful attainment of the knowledge and skills indicated. Evaluates classroom practices and methods for improvement of instruction. Provides support and resources for staff to improve job performance, and recognizes and supports the achievements of highly effective staff members.

Standard 4: The administrator provides staff development programs consistent with program evaluation results and school instructional improvement plans.

Indicators: Leads the development and implementation of a systematic professional development plan for individuals and for the school. Involves school staff in identifying staff development needs based on student achievement data. Provides staff development that supports effective instruction. Shares knowledge and information about new, improved, or alternative methods of instruction and related issues. Meets with instructional teams and teachers regularly to assess ongoing school improvement efforts. Shares program evaluation results and demonstrates connection of results to ongoing staff development efforts. Disseminates information about conferences, course work, and membership in professional organizations. Supports staff participation in internal and external professional development opportunities as appropriate.

Standard 5: The administrator identifies, analyzes, and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques.

Indicators: Identifies, analyzes, and resolves problems using effective problem-solving techniques. Identifies and addresses problems in a timely and effective manner. Demonstrates fairness in identifying multiple points of view around problem situations. Involves stakeholders in analyzing problems and developing solutions. Monitors implementation of problem resolutions. Provides shared leadership and decision-making opportunities for staff that promote a climate of collaboration and collegiality. Delegates responsibility appropriately to staff members. Maintains focus on school and division missions and goals. Promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect and courtesy.

Domain 3: Safety and Organizational Management for Learning

Standard 1: The administrator maintains effective discipline and fosters a safe and positive environment for students and staff.

Indicators: Ensures a safe, secure, orderly, clean, and attractive school environment. Communicates expectations regarding behavior to students, staff, and parents in a clear manner. Communicates procedures for handling disciplinary problems in a clear manner. Implements and enforces the school division code of conduct and appropriate disciplinary procedures in a timely and consistent manner. Establishes effective programs through which students develop self-discipline and conflict resolution skills. Manages emergency situations calmly and effectively. Addresses potential problem situations proactively. Conveys mutual respect, concern, and high expectations to students, staff, and parents on a consistent basis. Recognizes students and staff for their academic, co-curricular, personal, and professional achievements.

Standard 2: The administrator effectively coordinates the daily operation of the assigned area of responsibility.

Indicators: Organizes staff to conduct daily routines efficiently, uses space effectively, and ensures appropriate instructional time. Publicizes routines and procedures through handbooks, orientation sessions, and other means. Protects academic instructional time from unnecessary interruptions. Organizes schedule to keep time students are out of class to a minimum. Monitors and provides supervision for all programs and activities. Oversees the general maintenance, upkeep, and appearance of the school (*building administrators only*).

Standard 3: The administrator effectively manages human, material, and financial resources to ensure student learning and to comply with legal mandates.

Indicators: Follows federal, state, and local statutes, regulations, policies, and procedures. Plans and prepares a fiscally responsible budget to support the organization's mission and goals collaboratively with staff. Establishes and uses accepted procedures for receiving and disbursing funds. Maintains records of receipts and disbursements of all funds handled. Keeps staff informed about status of budget requests, equipment purchases, and materials ordered. Monitors the efficient use of instructional resources. Works with staff to establish an effective schedule for use of shared resources. Maintains accurate personnel records. Maintains current record of licensure, endorsement, and in-service training completed by staff. Adheres to established evaluation schedules, timelines, and procedures.

Standard 4: The administrator demonstrates effective organizational skills to achieve school, community, and division goals.

Indicators: Demonstrates and communicates a working knowledge and understanding of school division policies and procedures. Ensures compliance and follow-through regarding policies and procedures. Uses personal time to the best advantage, manages scheduling effectively, and follows task to completion. Performs duties in an accurate and timely manner. Maintains accurate student records to ensure that criteria for promoting/placement/instructional

intervention are included. Prioritizes and addresses multiple issues and projects efficiently and appropriately. Maintains an acceptable workspace.

Domain 4: Communication and Community Relations

Standard 1: The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with students and staff.

Indicators: Promotes a climate of trust and teamwork within the school. Facilitates constructive and timely communication. Initiates communication and facilitates cooperation among staff regarding curriculum or program initiatives. Models professionally appropriate communication skills, interpersonal relations, and conflict resolution. Maintains visibility and accessibility to staff. Solicits staff input to discuss issues and goals and to promote effective decision-making. Establishes and maintains a collaborative relationship with classroom teachers, specialists, and administrators in promoting the division's mission and in communicating expectations.

Standard 2: The administrator promotes effective communication and interpersonal relations with parents and other community members.

Indicators: Communicates school and division goals, objectives, and expectations to stakeholders. Maintains visibility and accessibility to parents and the community. Uses multiple modes of communication to notify stakeholders of issues, events, and useful information regarding curriculum and programs in a timely manner. Clarifies collaborative roles of school and home in promoting student learning and meeting curricular goals. Communicates evidence of progress towards goals and objectives. Monitors the development and distribution of staff and student handbooks. Uses acceptable written and oral language.

Standard 3: The administrator works collaboratively with staff, families, and community members to secure resources and to support the success of a diverse student population.

Indicators: Plans for and solicits parent and community member input. Promotes the development of community partnerships. Encourages parental and community involvement in promoting school goals. Collaborates with staff, families, and community leaders and responds to identified needs of individual students and groups of students. Treats people with respect. Models and promotes multicultural awareness, gender sensitivity, and the appreciation of diversity in the school-community. Promotes the value of understanding and celebrating school and community cultures.

Domain 5: Professionalism

Standard 1: The administrator models professional, moral, and ethical standards as well as personal integrity in all interactions.

Indicators: Relates to co-workers, staff, customers/clients, and others in an ethical and professional manner. Represents the school/office/program favorably in the school division/community. Resolves concerns and problems in an appropriate manner. Respects and maintains confidentiality and assumes responsibility for personal actions and those of subordinates. Maintains a professional demeanor and appearance appropriate to responsibilities.

Standard 2: The administrator works in a collegial and collaborative manner with other administrators, school personnel, and the community to promote and support the mission and goals of the school division.

Indicators: Demonstrates flexibility and a collaborative attitude in supporting colleagues/work teams. Supports the division and advances its mission/goals. Supports division-wide programs and activities and makes a positive contribution to the overall climate of the school and division. Maintains effective working relationships with other administrators and staff. Shares ideas and information and considers the interests and needs of staff members and community stakeholders in promoting and supporting district goals and services.

Standard 3: The administrator takes responsibility for and participates in a meaningful and continuous process of professional development that results in the enhancement of student learning.

Indicators: Participates in professional growth activities, including conferences, workshops, course work, and/or membership in professional organizations at the district, state, and/or national level. Evaluates and identifies areas of personal strength and weakness related to professional skills and their impact on student learning. Sets goals for improvement of skills and professional performance. Maintains a high level of personal knowledge regarding new developments and techniques, including technology, in one's own field of professional specialization. Comprehends and applies current research of educational issues, trends, and practices. Networks with colleagues to share knowledge about effective educational practices and to improve and enhance administrative knowledge, skills, and organizational success. Maintains proper licensure and certification.

Standard 4: The administrator provides service to the profession, the division, and the community.

Indicators: Serves on division, state, and/or national committees and maintains an active role in professional organizations. Contributes to and supports the development of the

profession by serving as an instructor, mentor, coach, presenter, researcher, or supervisor. Organizes, facilitates, and presents at local, state, and/or national conferences. Supports and participates in efforts to align school and division goals and activities with community endeavors.

The Categories of Primary Responsibilities and sample performance indicators have been reviewed. Evaluators will document areas of concern and/or strengths in the comment section on the Interim Review.

Administrator's Signature

Date

Evaluator's Signature

Date

**◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
INTERIM REVIEW**

Administrator's Name _____ Academic Year _____

Position/School _____ Evaluator _____

Summary of Progress Related to Strategies for Improvement:

Evaluator's Comments:

Administrator's Signature Date

Evaluator's Signature Date

**◆ ADMINISTRATOR ◆
SUMMATIVE EVALUATION**

Administrator's Name _____ Academic Year _____

Position/School _____ Evaluator _____

Administrator's Summary of Progress (Documentation of progress to reach stated goals. Include impact on student performance):

Evaluator's Comments:

Administrator's Signature Date

Evaluator's Signature Date

ADMINISTRATOR'S SIGNATURE ACKNOWLEDGES RECEIPT OF THIS FORM.
ADDITIONAL COMMENTS MAY BE ATTACHED.

COMMENTS ATTACHED: ___ YES ___ NO

Appendix C

E-mail Conversation with Dick Flanary

December 2005

Question 1. How many state legislatures mandate principal evaluations?

Response: I don't have this information.

Question 2. What are the most current methods or models used for principal evaluation? What seems to be the most popular? Most effective?

Response: The most common method is for a principal to develop objectives and those objectives are reviewed by an evaluating person. The criteria for principal evaluations vary throughout the country. I'm not sure there is any one set of criteria. I do hear more and more that the evaluative criteria are based on the ISLLC Standards. The most effective models use criteria that measure what is important in schools-student performance. What gets measured gets done, is an important concept when applied and generates results. Principals who are held to high standards that are clearly delineated and coherent generally produce results that improve the performance of students in their school.

Question 3. What are the current initiatives for professional development of principals?

Response: One of the current initiatives focuses on the Balanced Leadership framework that was done by Marzano, Waters and McNulty at McREL [Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning] in Denver, Colorado. This research identifies 21 behaviors that when demonstrated effectively raise student achievement. This research has clearly shown the impact

that principals have on student achievement. Ken Leithwood found that leadership is second only to teacher performance in improving student achievement.

Unfortunately, because of the accountability pressure, principals and districts are intent on fixing aspects of the school, and it is important to fix many things in school. Districts and schools focus on improving the drop-out rate, increasing advanced placement courses, improving 9th grade transition, etc. These are important things to focus on; however, organizations tend to lose sight of building capacity to deal with current and future issues. This goes back to the Covey idea about dealing with urgency and forgetting about importance.

Question 4. To what extent and how are states using the National Assessment Center? What is the impact or significance of this service?

Response: The Skills Assessment Center usage is back on the rise again. This program seems to ebb and flow over the years. Most organizations are using the multiple skills assessment models in their principal development programs that focus on developing a cadre of talent for school leadership positions. We have a number of university-based programs that use the skills assessment in conjunction with preparing for an internship. We don't have any states currently using the skills assessment as we did in the past. Previously, prior to the ISLLC Standards, we had five states that required the NASSP skills assessment as part of the state licensure program (South Carolina, Missouri, Maryland, Kentucky, and New Jersey). The School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) replaced the assessment center.

We have a new on-line skills assessment soon to hit the market in early spring 2006. This skills assessment model is directed toward the beginning end of the experiential continuum. The

Individual Professional Skills Assessment (IPSA) is designed for individuals or cohort group. The instrument can be self-scored, or scored by peers or by professional assessors.

Question 5. Have you noted any data or information regarding low-performing and high-performing principals, in terms of what is available to them for improvement and growth?

Response: I haven't seen much that differentiates the professional development that principals of high-performing schools versus low-performing schools have had. We've had conversations with Linda Darling Hammond at Stanford about this very topic. We want to backward map the training and development that very successful leaders have had to see what sets them apart from principals leading low-performing schools. Our Breakthrough High Schools project is a prime example of principals leading schools that are beating the odds, yet student performance is strong. We are interested in looking specifically at the leadership in each of these 26 schools nationally.

Appendix D

Letter of Introduction and Cover Letter

April, 2005

Dear Director of Human Resources:

The importance of the principal's role in improving teaching and learning has never been greater—which leads to many questions about how to assess principal performance. Therefore, it is important to document how principals are being evaluated and supported in areas needing improvement. This is the focus of my doctoral dissertation at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University. My dissertation is entitled *A Study of Principal Performance Evaluation Process in the Commonwealth of Virginia*.

This letter comes to request:

- A copy of the policy and procedures that guide the evaluation of principals in your school district
- A copy of any instruments that support this process, i.e., principal evaluation forms, portfolio guidelines.
- An email address where documents may be downloaded if posted on the Internet.

In addition, I have enclosed a brief survey to be used to report pertinent information and demographic data from your district. Please complete the form and return with the requested documents by May 11, 2005.

The Human Subjects Protection Committee at Virginia Polytechnic Institute & State University has approved this project, and the information will be reported collectively and anonymously. Upon completion, this survey will be available on line for your review on the University web site.

I am hopeful that you will agree to participate in this endeavor and appreciate your support of my dissertation. Should you have questions, I can be reached at (703) 323-5371. Please mail documents to the address provided below. A pre-addressed envelope has been included for your convenience.

Again, many thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Benita Toler
6121 Eagle Landing Road
Burke, Virginia 22015

Enclosures

Appendix E
Follow-up Letters

Benita Toler
6121 Eagle Landing Road
Burke, Virginia 22015-2527

May 31, 2005

Greetings,

Recently, a packet was sent requesting your involvement in research I am conducting concerning principal evaluation in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The information gathered from the questionnaire and the documents that describe your current practice will contribute greatly to the authenticity and merit of this study.

I would deeply appreciate your assistance and ask that you take a few minutes to send to me the following:

- **A copy of the policy and procedures that guide the evaluation of principals in your school district**
- **A copy of any instruments that support this process, i.e., principal evaluation forms, portfolio guidelines**

They may be mailed to:

6121 Eagle Landing Road
Burke, VA 22015-2527

or e-mailed to: Benita.toler@fcps.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the above e-mail address, or by phone at 703-246-4520 or 703-323-5371.

I value your comments and look forward to receiving the information about your unique school system.

If you have already returned your packet to me, I thank you.

Sincerely,

Benita Toler

Benita Toler
6121 Eagle Landing Road
Burke, Virginia 22015-2527

April, 2005

Greetings,

Thank you for participating in my study of the principal evaluation process in the Commonwealth of Virginia by returning the questionnaire about your school district.

When reviewing the contents of your package, I noticed that you sent information for the teacher evaluation process. This research project however, is about the principal evaluation process.

I would deeply appreciate your assistance and ask that you take a few minutes to complete and return to me the following:

- **Questionnaire**
- **A copy of the policy and procedures that guide the evaluation of principals in your school district**
- **A copy of any instruments that support this process, i.e., principal evaluation forms, portfolio guidelines**

They may be mailed to:

6121 Eagle Landing Road
Burke, VA 22015-2527

or e-mailed to: Benita.toler@fcps.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at the above e-mail address, or by phone at 703-246-4520 or 703-323-5371.

I value your comments and look forward to receiving the information about your unique school system.

Sincerely,

Benita Toler

Appendix F
Questionnaire

**A Study of Principal Performance Evaluation Process
In the Commonwealth of Virginia
School District Survey**

1. Title of person completing survey: _____
2. Which descriptor best describes the characteristics of your school district?
 Rural Suburban
 Urban Other _____
3. Total number of principals in the school division: _____
4. Total number of students in the school division: _____
5. Position title(s) of person(s) who conduct principal evaluation:

6. Is there a procedure for regularly reviewing and revising principal evaluation procedures?
Yes No
If Yes, indicate how often:
Once yearly Twice yearly Every two years
Other _____
Varies depending on these factors: _____

7. Do you see a current need to update your principal evaluation policy and procedures?
Yes No
8. What methods are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?
 Teacher focus groups Interviews Observations
 Record reviews Shadowing Goal setting
 Parent focus groups Other
9. What instruments are you currently using in your principal evaluation process?
(Check all that apply)
 Checklist Peer Evaluation Surveys
 Written Assessment Other _____
10. How frequently are the following groups of principals evaluated?
 - a. Principals with 1-3 years of service
 Once yearly Twice yearly Every two years
 Other _____
 - b. Principals with 4+ years of service
 Once yearly Twice yearly Every two years
 Other _____

c. Are there different evaluation procedures for these career stages?

Yes

No

If the answer is Yes, please explain.

11. Are elementary, middle and high school principals evaluated using the same process and documents?

Yes

No

If the response is No, please explain how they differ or reference your attached policies and procedures.

12. Describe strategies used to support principals evaluated as needing improvement?

For example, mentoring, cross visitation, improvement plan, etc.

13. Is there a process in place for high performing principals to share effective practices with their peers?

Yes

No

If Yes, please explain.

14. What type(s) of developmental opportunities does your school district have in place for high performing principals, if any?

15. Is your evaluation document accessible on line?

Yes

No

If Yes, please provide link to web site: _____

VITA

BENITA B. TOLER

6121 Eagle Landing Road
Burke, Virginia 22015
(703) 323-5371
e-mail:Benita.Toler@fcps.edu

EDUCATION

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Major: Education Administration
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Degree: Ed.D., Fall 2006

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Major: Education Administration
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
Degree: Ed.S., May 2000

St. Louis University, St. Louis, MI (1977)

Major: Urban Education
Degree: Master of Education

Hampton University, Hampton, VA (1973)

Major: Elementary Education
Degree: Bachelor of Arts

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

Current Hearing Officer for the Superintendent (Fairfax County Public Schools)
(2003-present)

Previous Assistant Principal—Annandale High School (FCPS), International
Diploma Program School (2000-2003)
Teacher—Alternative Learning Center (FCPS), Grades 6-8 (1995-2000)
West Springfield Elementary School (FCPS) —Grade 6 (1989-1995)
Department of Defense Schools, Mons, Belgium—Grades 2 and 5
(1986-89)
Hephzibah Middle School, Hephzibah, GA—Grade 7 (1984-1986)
Hampton Institute Non-Graded Laboratory School, Hampton, VA
(1977-79)

McCollum Elementary School, Wichita, KS (Developed and Piloted
Gifted and Talented Resource Program) Grades K-5, (1976-1977)
MacArthur Elementary School, Wichita, KS, Grade 2, (1975-76)

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

Virginia State Postgraduate Professional Certification in Administration and Supervision:
PreK-12

Virginia State Postgraduate Professional Certificate:
Early Education NK-4, Middle
Education Grades 4-8