

A National Study of  
The Urban High School Principalship

by

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(ABSTRACT)

This study was conducted to obtain the views and recommendations of urban high school principals regarding the principals themselves, their schools, students and communities, and the professional growth needs of the principals. The study will also serve as a resource for the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Urban Schools Committee as it develops programs and activities to assist urban high school principals.

Eight hundred fifteen of 1,259 urban high school principals responded to a survey. Descriptive research methodology was used in the study of the principals from the one hundred largest cities, according to population, in the nation.

The majority of the principals were white males who averaged 50 years in age. There are more black and female high school principals in the urban districts (26% and 22.1% respectively) than there are in rural and suburban districts (3.8% and 12% respectively). These principals view student

absenteeism as the greatest hindrance to academic achievement. They believe they have moderate authority over what takes place in their buildings and tend to be satisfied with their positions. The urban principals believe their students' academic competencies are average to below average. They also believe 80% or more of the students are having their needs met by teachers who they consider to be above average.

The majority (74.5%) are members of NASSP. The results of the study indicate NASSP should initiate professional growth programs that bring recognition to urban high school principals and meet their unique needs.

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**DEDICATION**

To

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

A principal of a middle class suburban high school, upon meeting a principal of a high school located in the heart of the nation's third largest city, asks, "Considering all of the problems the city schools have, how do you urban high school principals survive?"

The urban principal very quickly proceeds to tell about all the positive activities that go on in his school, but admits he has problems and he needs help. The suburban principal asks why those who work outside of the cities seem to know so little about the challenges and needs of urban high school principals. The big city principal's response is, "No one asks."

What are urban principals like? What do they like about their positions? What are their challenges and needs? Urban principals, like their suburban and rural counterparts, are being told what is wrong with their schools and what must be done to improve them. As a result of studies such as A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983); High School (Boyer, 1983); Horace's Compromise (Sizer, 1984); A Place Called School (Goodlad, 1984); and An Imperiled Generation (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of

Teaching, 1988) high school principals are confronted with lists of recommendations and mandates coming from researchers, educators, and politicians. However, there is little evidence that there are lists of needs and recommendations coming from the principals. This is especially true in the case of urban high school principals.

A lack of information may be part of the reason. Some Americans may still be operating from a "blackboard jungle" myth of urban education, completely unaware that the video terminal has replaced many of the blackboards, and that the only jungle is in the vocational horticulture program (Council of Great City Schools, 1987). A lack of information about the views of urban principals is the basis for this study.

In May of 1988, the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Board of Directors authorized an Urban Schools Committee. The charge to this committee was to advise the Board of Directors regarding the professional needs of urban administrators, and to suggest specific professional growth activities. While it was understood that letters, telephone calls, and informal surveys would be part of a continuous data gathering system, the NASSP Executive Director and Board of Directors concurred with the NASSP Director of Urban Services' belief that a descriptive study of the urban high school principalship was in order.

This study identifies the problems, priorities, needs, and role perceptions of urban high school principals. The study also serves as a reference for the leadership and staff of the National Association of Secondary School Principals as they plan and implement programs for urban high school principals.

In addition, the study represents a collaborative effort by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the National Association of Secondary School Principals to produce a relevant and useful dissertation within the parameters of acceptable scholarship.

### Statement of the Problem

Recent studies indicate many urban high schools, have problems that must be brought under control or eliminated if these schools are to become effective learning institutions. Studies such as A Nation at Risk (1983), High School (1983), and An Imperiled Generation (1988) suggest schools--including urban schools--need strong leadership in order to succeed. The literature indicates very little effort has been made to solicit the opinions, suggestions, frustrations, limitations, and goals and objectives of the principals. This is particularly true as far as urban high school principals are concerned.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals, a major provider of professional growth opportunities for high school principals, seeks to become better informed about the professional needs of urban high school principals by asking the principals themselves. At the present time, little research is available which reflects the views of practicing urban high school principals regarding their professional development needs.

### Statement of Purpose

The study will provide the National Association of Secondary School Principals with a body of knowledge that will enable its newly formed Urban Schools Committee to plan programs and services that are related to the data acquired by this study. Although NASSP recently completed a study of the high school principalship, High School Leaders and Their Schools (1988), there was only a superficial investigation of the urban high school principalship. Of the 4,719 administrators surveyed in the study, 655 identified themselves as working in an urban school setting. The unique characteristics that might have existed within the group of urban administrators were lost when their responses were aggregated.

This study was designed to obtain responses from urban principals regarding the following:

1. The demographic profile of the urban high school principal;
2. the demographic profile of urban schools and the students they serve;
3. the problems and challenges facing urban high schools;
4. recommendations for affecting positive change in urban high schools;
5. respondents' views of their status, authority job satisfaction and the status of their schools, school districts, and communities; and
6. the professional development needs of urban high school principals.

#### Significance of the Study

This study represents the first major effort, by a national educational organization, to obtain the views of urban high school administrators during the current decade. The literature review reveals no evidence that a national survey of the professional needs and school improvement suggestions of urban high school principals has been conducted during the past 10 years.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals, while interested in the needs of urban high school principals, has never conducted a national survey of these administrators. It was anticipated the study would produce the

data which are needed to design and implement programs and services specifically for urban high school principals. The study should also serve as a resource for persons seeking the views of practicing administrators' regarding the urban high school principalship.

### Definitions

Urban Community. A land mass, usually but not exclusively called a city, that contains a high density population which tends to be multicultural and multi-racial; containing a wide range of social economic levels among the populous; and differs from that which is customarily referred to as being suburban and rural.

Inner City. A portion of a city or urban community that is usually identified, with a high concentration of minority groups (as opposed to the peripheries); high levels of poverty; low educational levels among adults; high crime rates and little upward mobility among the residents.

Urban High School. A secondary school that has a graduating twelfth grade class and exists in that which has been defined as an urban community.

Urban High School Principal. The chief executive in charge of a high school that exists in an urban community as previously defined.

NASSP. The National Association of Secondary School Principals, a professional growth organization composed of approximately 40,000 members who are mainly, but not exclusively, high school and middle school principals and assistant principals.

### Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited because there is no similar study to which the new findings can be compared.
2. The applicability of the findings may be limited because a clear and nationally accepted definition of an urban high school does not exist at this time.

### Organization of the Study

This study of the opinions of urban high school principals and their schools is divided into five chapters.

Chapter one contains an introduction, statement of problem, statement of purpose, significance of the study, definitions, and limitations of the study.

Chapter two contains a review of the literature relevant to urban communities and the schools, urban school reform efforts, and the high school principalship.

Chapter three provides a description of the research methodology used in the study. This describes development

of the instrument, selection of population, data collection procedures, and methods of analysis.

Chapter four describes the findings of the survey and provides an analysis of the data.

Chapter five contains the summary, conclusions, and the recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to present a review of the literature related to urban communities and their schools; urban school reform; and the urban high school principalship.

#### Urban Communities and Their Schools

From its very beginning, urban education has been viewed as that which is essentially for the poor. Carl Kaestle (1983), in describing the evolution of urban schools, indicates that as early as 1791, New York City had a concern about the poor children whose parents could not send them to the "independent pay" schools. This desire to educate the masses was not born of men's love of his fellow man, however. As industrialization increased in the cities, churches and the elite populous saw education as means of social stability and proper behavior.

Kaestle reported:

Even before the 1830s, despite the fact that a majority of the working class was still native-born, the rhetoric and mission of the school movement in the coastal cities were heavily influenced by the fear of immigrant vice, infidelity, and crime (1983, p. 36).

During the industrialization period of America's growth, there was a tremendous influx of non-Protestant immigrants from Ireland, Germany, Italy, and several Slavic nations. These immigrants and their children created fear among conservative citizens in cities such as New York and Boston (Tyack, 1974, pp. 32-33). The conservatives worried about ethnic and religious riots, social outbursts, and maintenance of traditional control. Thus, as the concern for educating the new immigrant children grew, the desire for organized police forces in the cities also grew. The creation of efficient and uniformed police paralleled the movement to standardize schooling. Both were, in part, responses to the immigrant poor (Tyack, 1976, p. 33).

Urbanization of the nation occurred at its fastest rate during the period from 1820 to 1860. During this period, the number of people living in urban settlements grew from 693,255 to 6,216,518. Elementary schools, for certain portions of these years, had student-teacher ratios of one teacher for every 100 students (Tyack, 1974, pp. 30-31).

During the 1800s, high schools were viewed as being for middle class children. The United States Bureau of the Census in 1870 indicated only two percent of the population graduated from high school (16,000). By 1890, 3.5 percent graduated (43,731); and in 1900, 6.4 percent (94,883) finished high school. These small percentages of graduates re-

presented mainly the middle class students (Tyack, 1974, p. 57).

Large portions of the working class student population did not continue their education into the high school ranks. For example, in 1880, in St. Louis, only 31.7 percent of the children of working class parents, ages 13 to 16, were in school. However, 64.1 percent of the children of white collar families and 80 percent of the professional family students were enrolled in high schools (Tyack, 19794, p. 58).

Both Carl Kaestle and David Tyack have suggested early urban education was consumed with the need for morality and order among the new ethnic groups who had settled in America. Race issues as we now know them (white versus black and brown) were not high priority items. However, the matter of educating free blacks in the North existed even in the eighteenth century.

Religious groups assumed a major portion of the burden of educating the poor and black children. The Quakers played a major role in educating black children in cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York. The success of African free schools of the late 1700s and the early 1800s demonstrated to some whites the fallacy of the widespread belief in Negro inferiority. Black students, when given the opportunity, proved their competency in the classroom (Kaestle, 1983, pp. 37-38).

As early as 1897, W. E. B. DuBois, a black scholar, reported 85 percent of the "Negro" children aged 6 to 13 in Philadelphia's seventh ward, attended school for at least part of the year. The illiteracy rate for the black youth aged 10 to 20 years was only four percent (Tyack, 1974, p. 123). In spite of the biases exhibited toward immigrant children and the segregation of black students before and after the Civil War, some education was occurring.

Thomas Hunt (1976) identified a number of similarities among immigrant and black Americans:

1. There was a large immigration to the cities by whites and a huge out-migration from the South by blacks.
2. The immigrants and the blacks were considered undesirable by other whites in the cities.
3. Housing conditions were poor and crowded.
4. Serious communication problems existed because of the immigrants' inability to use the English language adequately.
5. Immigrants and blacks had lower IQ scores than other city dwellers.
6. Immigrants and blacks were unable to do well on standardized tests.
7. A social gap between teachers and immigrant and black students.
8. Immoral behavior was alleged to occur among immigrants and blacks.
9. Trade unions, fearing low pay scales due to a large labor market, excluded these workers.
10. School bureaucracies impeded the educational experiences of immigrant and black children.

11. The Americanization of immigrant and black children frequently occurred at the expense of their cultures and personal dignity (Hunt, 1976, pp. 424-428).

The major differences prevailing between the groups as cited by Hunt were:

1. Blacks are held back because of objections to their race. Many whites view blacks as less than capable of serving adequately on their own.
2. Blacks cannot assimilate into the white community because of skin color.
3. Blacks still carry the legacy of slavery.

Hunt's contention is supported by David Tyack:

Despite frequent good intentions and abundant rhetoric about equal educational opportunity, schools have rarely taught the children of the poor effectively--and this failure has been systematic, not idiosyncratic (1976, p. 11).

These three authors (Hunt, Keastle, and Tyack) agree that urban education in the past represented a means of providing basic educational skills to poor immigrant children and eventually to free African American children. The goals of those providing the education seemed directed more toward producing orderly and responsible citizens who were capable of serving as good employees in the urban factories than toward promoting scholarship.

Although the 1954 Supreme Court decision, Brown v. Topeka Board of Education, struck down segregation in public schools (Alexander, Corns, & McCann, 1976, pp. 641-647), urban schools and their communities still tend to be consumed

by matters of class and race. This is especially true in northern cities. Heightened residential segregation in Boston, Washington, New York, and Chicago, which was exacerbated by the flight of affluent white people to private parochial, and suburban public schools, has deepened the isolation of the poorest children (Kozol, 1989, p. 7). In addition, these cities' school districts have student enrollments whose majorities are those persons who are labeled "minorities" (mainly black and hispanic) (National School Boards Association, 1988, p. 12).

An early commentary on the conditions and needs of the nation's inner-cities was made by James B. Conant (Slums and Suburbs, 1961). The former president of Harvard University compared the life-styles and schools of those who lived in the suburbs with those who lived in city slums. In his description of urban slums, he cited, poverty, lack of jobs for blacks, defacto segregation in school districts and individual schools (especially the high schools), inadequate state funding of urban schools, and the small numbers of poor and minority students moving on to higher education.

Thus, it was 28 years ago that Conant cited the importance of considering the aptitude and background of black urban students when assessing scholastic achievement:

A very important fact not to be overlooked is that the comparison of average scores leaves out of account the overlap of scores that, as far as I know, is found whenever such comparisons are made. There are always some Negroes who score better than most whites and some

whites who score lower than most Negroes. Important too, is the fact that such a test correlates highly with reading ability. Children who for one reason or another have learned to read will do better on this kind of test (S.A.T.) than children who have not learned. In the suburban school practically all the children read well; in the slum few do (1961, p. 13).

Recently, Johathan Kozol, in his article, "A Report Card on Schools After 20 Years," reported that in many instances, conditions have worsened (1989). Kozol stated:

Reduced federal expenditures for public education, diminished funding for compensatory programs (e.g., Head Start and Chapter I), and the diminished local tax base of the poorest districts, have led to a deterioration both of faculty morale and essential infrastructive--buildings and classroom materials--in most inner-city schools (1988, p. 7).

During the 1970s, in the book Urban Education in the 1970s, Kozol warned:

An ominous cloud hangs over the major cities of America: It is the danger that our ghetto schools, having long ceased to educate children entrusted to their care, will shortly cease to function altogether (1971, p. 3).

As one examines urban schools and their communities, it is important to remember James Conant's contention that all ethnic groups have varying degrees of academic ability. The major factors contributing to low achievement in schools are being disadvantaged economically, educationally, and socially. Robert Havighurst has argued there is no single ethnic group of any size that can be said to be disadvantaged educationally and economically as a total group.

Poor people are found in practically all ethnic groups, but the highest proportions of the poor are found among

Caucasians, Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Mexican-Americans, and American Indians (Havighurst, 1971, p. 46).

The poor education provided in many of the nation's urban schools has also been well documented. As early as 1971, Kenneth B. Clark suggested we have "talked the issue to death." Clark also indicated:

No school boards, no educational officials from the rank of superintendent of schools to classroom teacher can now deny that there is inefficient education for lower-status, low income, and minority group youngsters in urban public schools (1971, p. 95).

More than a decade ago, in the book Urban Education in the 1970s (1971), Harry Passow, a professor of education and chairman of the Committee on Urban Education at the Teachers College Columbia University; Kenneth Clark, a professor of psychology at the City University of New York; Henry Levin, a professor of education at Stanford University; and others called for urban school reform. This was well before the highly publicized reform efforts that were initiated in 1983.

### Urban High School Reform Efforts

Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform initiated national concern and became the most influential document of the recent national reform effort (Apple, 1988, p. 272). This national report presented findings that continue to promote school reform at the state and local district levels.

Most of the reform efforts suggested by the Nation at Risk report were related to a desire to keep the United States internationally competitive and a recognition of the need to develop a more literate and technically skilled populous in order to maintain world leadership. Very early in the report there is mention of the United States lagging behind Japan in making automobiles more efficiently, Korea in having the world's most efficient steel mill, and Germany producing better tools. The document stated:

Knowledge, learning, information, and skilled intelligence are the raw materials of international commerce and are today spreading throughout the world as vigorously as miracle drugs, synthetic fertilizers, and blue jeans did earlier. If only to keep and improve on the slim competitive edge we still retain in world markets, we must dedicate ourselves to the reform of our educational system for the benefit of all--old and young alike, affluent and poor, majority and minority. Learning is the indispensable investment required for success in the "information age" we are entering (Nation at Risk, 1983, pp. 6-7).

The report expressed a national desire to promote educational excellence at the "individual learner level" in ways that test and push back personal limits, in school and in the workplace. The need for this promotion of excellence was documented. Deficiencies in secondary school curricula, course selection, homework students are required to complete; adult literacy; declining expenditures for education; length of school years; teacher preparation; and time management were cited (pp. 18-23), and recommendations for improvement were provided (pp. 23-26). Yet, the long existing defi-

ciencies in urban schools, which according to the United States Department of Education enroll 30% of the nation's 11,849,669 students (Johnson, 1989, p. 6) were addressed by only one reference to the poor and to minorities.

Demographic data suggest poverty, class, and race are analogous to most urban school districts. As white students move out of the cities, the majority populations of the nation's large school systems are composed of minorities--i.e., African-Americans, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians. Cities such as Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, and Washington, D.C. have majority-minority student populations. In fact, by 1980, of all the blacks (88%) and hispanics (71%) living in metropolitan areas, 81% and 50%, respectively, lived in the inner cities (Usdan, 1984, pp. 399-414).

Recently, demographic researchers such as Linda Darling-Hammond (1985) and Harold Hodgkinson (1985) have provided statistics regarding the current status and future conditions in large cities. Their findings support the need for urban education reform. In a 1985 report entitled, Equality and Excellence: The Educational Status of Black Americans, Darling-Hammond indicated:

- In 1982, 49 percent of the black children in the nation lived with one parent and 8 percent lived with neither parent.
- In 1982 nearly half (47.6 percent) of all black children 18 years of age and under lived in house-

holds below the poverty line. This compares to only 17 percent of white children.

- Black students, on average, receive educational programs and offerings that differ in kind and content from those of white students. These differences in the substance of education have grave implications for educational achievement and career options.
- Black students are disproportionately more likely to be enrolled in special education programs and less likely to be enrolled in programs for the gifted and talented than are white students.
- At the high school level, blacks are underrepresented in academic programs and overrepresented in vocational education where they receive less educational preparation in areas such as English, mathematics, and science.
- Among college bound seniors in 1981, most black students had taken fewer years of coursework in mathematics, physical sciences, and social studies than their white counterparts.
- In 1982, 42 percent of black college students were enrolled in two-year colleges.
- Students in low income and predominantly minority schools have less access to microcomputers, and teachers trained in the uses of computers (Darling-Hammond, 1985, pp. 1-3).

Linda Darling-Hammond has also suggested:

Excellence for black students will not become a reality unless and until they receive enriched curricular opportunities in elementary and secondary schools, sufficient financial assistance to pursue higher education opportunities, and instruction from well-qualified teachers (p. 4).

Harold Hodgkinson informs us that of every 100 children born today:

- Twelve will be born out of wedlock,

- Forty will be born to parents who divorce before the child is 18,
- Five will be born to parents who separate,
- Two will be born to parents of whom one will die before the child reaches 18, and
- Forty-one will reach age eighteen normally (All One System, 1985, p. 3).

Hodgkinson also notes:

- Ninety percent of the increase in children born into poverty is from households headed by a female black or hispanic.
- Although two of three poor children are white, the percentage of black children living with one parent who is poor is much higher, and most children who stay in poverty for more than four years (only one in three children does) are black.
- Today (1985), we are a nation of 14.6 million Hispanics and 26.5 million blacks. But by the year 2000, we will be a nation of 44 million blacks and 47 million Hispanics.
- The task will be not to lower the standards but to increase the effort.
- There has been a rapid increase in minorities among the youth population. Because their numbers are now so large, if they do not succeed, all of us will have diminished futures. That is the new reality (p. 18).

Jeannie Oakes (1987) reviewed the urban education reform picture in her report entitled Improving Inner-City Schools:

- The challenges to urban education have increased over the past decade. Dramatic population shifts, including the out-migration of many middle-class minorities from central cities and an influx of poor Hispanic immigrants, have effected a greater isolation of low-income and minority children in the poorest neighborhoods.

- Efforts to increase the "effectiveness" of schools, curricula, and instruction. Based largely on the findings of "effective-schools" and "effective-teaching" research, this type of reform includes policies aimed at creating "effective" school climates and strengthening curricula and instruction. Specific approaches include site-based school-improvement projects; efforts to focus curriculum more squarely on basic skills and to match curriculum objectives with student assessment; and in-service training programs to help teachers upgrade their instructional skills.
- Alternative delivery systems. Many districts are attempting to provide special academic or vocational opportunities to a subpopulation of students. These efforts include reorganizing school calendars into year-round schedules (primarily to maximize the use of facilities and time); the creation of special programs and schools (e.g., magnet schools); and voluntary desegregation plans.
- Early childhood programs. These efforts build on the past success of Head Start programs and represent district-level efforts to intervene early to prevent future educational difficulties.
- Social supports. Social support programs attempt to prevent "at risk" students from dropping out. Most prominent among such programs are school-based health and contraceptive clinics, substance-abuse programs, and special schools and child-care services for teenage mothers.
- Cooperative partnerships. Urban districts are attempting to go beyond traditional relationships with business, community groups, and universities to garner additional support and resources for a wide array of schooling goals. These programs include business/school partnerships, university/school-district collaborations, and joint projects of community groups and school districts (Oakes, 1987, p. v).

In addition, Oakes also states:

General knowledge of the educational needs of low income and minority children and past research suggest a number of promising directions, including the provision of rich curricula and challenging instruction; stress-

ing prevention rather than remediation; structuring supportive school communities; and providing students with tangible evidence that effort at school can result in real-world rewards.

Moreover, other research suggests that these strategies are most likely to be developed and implemented successfully when urban districts increase the capacity of the staffs at individual schools; provide greater incentives to principals and teachers to alter traditional practices; and foster relationships among schools, parents, and communities that can provide support for these efforts (Oakes, p. vii).

Ernest Boyer in the culminating chapter of his report, High School, presented 12 priorities for improving high schools:

1. A high school must have a clear mission that is shared by teachers, students, administrators, and parents.
2. Schools are obligated to assist all students in becoming proficient in the written and oral use of the English language.
3. There should be a core curriculum that extends beyond the specialties and focuses on more transcendent issues, moving from courses to coherence (foreign language, the arts, civics, non-western studies, technology, the meaning of work, and the importance of health).
4. High schools should help all students move with confidence from school to work and further education.
5. There should be a new Carnegie unit as part of a requirement that all high school students involve themselves in volunteer work in the schools or in their communities.
6. The teaching profession should be renewed by limiting teachers to four classes per day; increasing salaries by 25 percent; creating a competitive grant fund for teachers; and the elimination of routine lunchroom and hall monitoring duties.
7. Teachers should use a variety of teaching styles.

8. Every school district should have technology usage policies.
9. Greater flexibility in the use of time and school size will help schools achieve their educational goals for all students.
10. High school principals should be well prepared for the position and have greater control over the hiring and firing of teachers and their school budgets. Every principal should have a School Improvement Fund, discretionary money to provide time and materials for program development and for special seminars and staff retreats.
11. There should be stronger relations between high schools, colleges, and the business world.
12. The total public has to make a commitment to improve schools (Boyer, 1983, pp. 301-319).

These priorities are directed toward high schools in general. Thus, they address only some of the needs of urban high students, teachers, and administrators.

However, Oakes suggested specific policy considerations for improving urban schools. She said, "The most promising strategies for urban districts attempting to help inner-city students break the cycle of school failure, unemployment, and social disintegration are those that will:

- Build capacity at local sites
- Provide school autonomy and flexibility in designing and implementing improvement plans
- Take a broad rather than a narrow view of curriculum and instruction
- Reorganize classroom teaching and learning to promote urban children's positive self-perceptions, effort, and school performance

- Provide real-life incentives for urban children to achieve at school
- Coordinate efforts with the self-interests of other institutions and agencies to provide social and economic opportunities beyond the reach of the school (Oakes, 1987, p. 50).

Oakes also indicated these strategies are not out of reach. There is knowledge available upon which to base interventions.

These promising strategies diverge from traditional urban school practice, and their widespread implementation will require urban educators to assume new roles and responsibilities and to restructure schools and learning. The potential problems of current reform efforts are perhaps not surprising, since the most promising strategies directly challenge long-standing, systemic features of urban school districts. The magnitude of current problems and the limits on resources also make it difficult for districts to undertake the sweeping reforms needed to improve academic and social outcomes for students in the most troubled central and city neighborhoods (p. ix).

Although further documentation of the need for urban education reform at all levels does not seem necessary, reports on urban schools continue to be presented. This contention is supported by examples such as the staff of the Chicago Tribune's self-explanatory publication, Chicago Schools: Worst in America (1988) and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching's report, An Imperiled Generation: Saving Urban Schools (1988), which made suggestions for improvement that were quite similar to those made by Ernest Boyer in High School.

The current state of many urban high schools is aptly described in Gene Maeroff's Withered Hopes, Stillborn Dreams: The Dismal Panorama of Urban Schools (1988). He suggests:

What is clearly needed is a fresh approach to urban education, involving smaller learning units and a different philosophy of instruction. The goal must be to create within each learning unit a sense of community and a desire on the part of the students to belong to that community (Kappan, 1988, p. 634).

Maeroff makes a number of points:

- The inner city has long been populated by poor people, but what makes the situation different today--and exacerbates the isolation--is the flight of middle class blacks and the virtual abandonment of entire black neighborhoods to the poorest of the poor. Schools in big cities must do more to lure poor minority youngsters into the mainstream by counteracting the isolation of their lives. Urban black students are surrounded by failure, both in and out of school. Their sense of the future is stunted, unlike more advantaged youngsters, it does not include academic achievement in any way. Hopes wither; dreams are stillborn.
- In big city schools accumulated academic neglect is abundantly evident. As a result, most graduates of urban high schools serving primarily impoverished minority students have not read and explored the same literature, science, mathematics, foreign languages and social studies as their suburban and small town counterparts.
- The possibility of pursuing careers in mathematics and science is foreclosed for most urban minority students long before they finish high school. The result is that, in the entire United States in 1986, of the 3,003 doctorates in the physical sciences awarded to American citizens, only 25 were awarded to blacks and 53 to hispanics. Of the 1,379 doctorates in engineering awarded to Americans, only 14 were awarded to blacks and 25 to Hispanics.
- Part of the difficulty lies in the teaching. For every student inspired by a teacher, too often

there is another turned off by a teacher unequipped to deal with the needs of disadvantaged children. High schools in the inner city must become more like elementary schools, proffering supportive environments that bolster the confidence of students. The schools should present themselves to students not as places where they can work for a better "tomorrow" but as places where they can create a better "today."

- Urban schools have no monopoly on uninspired teaching, but it takes a terrible toll on students who are already unmotivated (Kappan, 1988, pp. 634-638).

Urban education is not at all gloom and doom. The Council of Great City Schools, in Challenges to Urban Education: Results in the Making, reports the nation's largest cities are making progress, but much is to be done. The report suggests urban education is everyone's business.

It quotes James Baines of William Patterson College:

No institution in society is working harder to realize the promise of our Constitution and our commitment to justice and equity than are the urban schools. Let those condemn them make half the effort and we would be a new society tomorrow (1987, p. 1).

The State of New Jersey has initiated a plan for assisting urban school districts that includes steps for the state taking control of local school districts "that fail to meet minimum state standards after repeated levels of monitoring and assistance" (Urban Education in New Jersey, 1988, p. 7). Portland, Oregon, published a plan for Increasing the Achievement of Black Male Students (1988); and Denver, Colorado, drafted a Strategic Plan for 1989-1994 that lists 15 specific activities for improving its schools.

These state and local district reform efforts are also supported by the educational excellence research of Ronald Edmonds (1979), Michael Rutter (1979), and Lawrence Lazotte (1980).

While the findings of these three researchers were not identical, five consistent correlates for elementary schools emerged from the studies:

1. Strong principal leadership;
2. A safe school climate conducive to learning;
3. A curriculum emphasizing the basic skills;
4. Teachers with high expectations for all of their students; and
5. A system for mentoring and assessing student performance (Yin & White, 1986, p. 66).

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation sponsored a program that resynthesized the available effective schools literature, creating a list of 14 correlates of effective high schools which included the main correlates for elementary schools. The synthesized correlates, which were used as criteria by the U.S. Department of Education in 1982-84 to carry out a high school recognition program included:

1. The principal as an instructional leader
2. A safe, orderly climate
3. An emphasis on basic skills
4. Teachers with high expectations for the achievement of all students

5. A system for monitoring and assessing school performance
6. The pronouncement of clear academic goals
7. A sense of teacher efficacy over the conduct of the school
8. The existence of rewards and incentives for individual teachers and students
9. The development of community support for the school
10. Concentration on academic learning time
11. Emphasis on frequent and monitored homework
12. A coordinated curriculum
13. The use of a variety of teaching strategies
14. Opportunities for student responsibilities in school affairs (Yin & White, 1986, p. 67).

As one examines the literature of urban school reform, the importance of leadership at the building level is apparent. Boyer writes of "The Principal as Leader" who must be properly prepared for the job; have greater authority over the functions for which they are responsible; and be recognized for their service to students and staffs (High School, pp. 219-229).

### The Urban High School Principalship

The school reform movement initiated by the Nation at Risk report has had an effect on the urban principalship as

well as rural and suburban principals. Urban principals have been told to become educational leaders.

It has been suggested that times have changed from the period of which Edwin Bridges writes:

The urban principal spends the day countering the initiatives of others. Upon entering the schoolhouse door, the principal confronts a steady flow of problem situations. Regardless of the school's socio-economic setting, the urban principal is apt to encounter roughly one hundred problems daily (1978, p. 13).

Urban principals, regardless of their personal and professional characteristics, face fundamental role tasks; that is, problematic issues with which each executive must deal in seeking to make productive use of himself and his organizational position (Bridges, 1978, p. 8). Essentially, the urban high school principalship entails some dimensions that are unique and differ from the usual experiences of their suburban and rural counterparts. However, the basic responsibility is common--the principal as leader.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals, in an effort to assist urban high school principals to conduct self assessments and strengthen their leadership styles, conducted the NASSP Urban Principals Leadership Center during 1987-88. The center's program emphasized collaborative leadership in planning and implementing programs.

The emphasis on "principal as leader" may have added a new dimension to the traditional distinction between the dual roles of "principal as educator" and "principal as adminis-

trator" (Blank, 1987). Rolf Blank believes this new dimension is related to the "effective school" research conducted by Ronald Edmonds (1979), Micheal Rutter (1979), and the recent research of Boyer (1983), Lightfoot (1983), Coleman, et al. (1981), Sizer (1984), and others.

Blank also indicates,

A common finding of these studies is the critical role of the principal as leader in creating school conditions that lead to higher student academic performance--conditions such as setting high standards and goals, planning and coordination with staff, orientation toward innovation, frequent monitoring of staff and student performance, and involving parents and the community (E.R.S. Spectrum, 1987, p. 24).

Blank also suggests that principal leadership may be an important and influential concept for improving schools; but indicates there are relatively few data available on the role of principals and the characteristics of principal leadership, particularly in high schools (1987, p. 2). He states most of the effective school research has occurred at the elementary school level.

Rolf Blank indicates there are six characteristics or areas of leadership that have been analyzed in recent studies of high schools:

1. Instructional improvement and innovation

INDICATORS:

- a. Curriculum or instructional innovation led by the principal.
- b. Principal role in decisions on curriculum design and changes in curriculum.
- c. Principal efforts to increase academic learning time during the school day.

2. Educational goal consensus

INDICATOR:

- a. Degree of consensus among staff on annual goals for the school.

3. Staff Development

INDICATORS:

- a. Principal role in decisions on staff development programs.
- b. Proportion of time in faculty meetings spent on curriculum and instruction matters.

4. Seeking district or community support/resources

INDICATOR:

- a. Recent principal request to district for support/resources.

5. Involving staff in planning

INDICATORS:

- a. School policy or program change from teachers' initiative.
- b. Number of principal meetings per week with teachers (individual or group).

6. Making decisions of central importance--exercising authority with school policy and organization

INDICATORS:

- a. Principal role in selecting faculty.
- b. Principal role in deciding rules for student behavior.
- c. Principal role in scheduling and assigning teachers.

Blank contends the three conditions that capture important differences among urban high schools and the differences in urban high school leadership are: "school size (total enrollment); socio-economic status of students (proportion of

disadvantaged students in the school); and district role in decisions affecting the school (centralization/ decentralization)" (Blank, 1987, pp. 26-27).

In addition, it is suggested that from many quarters, educational administrators, principals in particular, are told to be instructional leaders. However, at the same time, principals are being asked to influence instruction in organizations that seem to have structures defying their efforts. Two of these structures are: principals' time being consumed by managerial tasks, and the degree of acceptance and participation on the part of teachers (Gallagher, 1989, p. 117).

Another educational deterrent is the lack of discretionary funds to meet specific needs in individual schools. Ernest Boyer indicates high school principals, in general, have little or no control over their budgets and rarely have discretionary funds. Their ability to reward outstanding teachers, deal with unsatisfactory teaching, or develop new programs is shockingly restricted (Boyer, 1983, p. 226).

Currently, the formal preparation of prospective principals is a major concern of superintendents, school boards, and the future principals themselves. There is, however, little evidence of attention to preparation strategies for urban administrators.

Eugene Eubanks and Daniel Levene (1987) say that recognition of the importance of principals and other administra-

tors in creating more effective schools is almost universal and, "nearly everyone agrees that outstanding administrators are required if instruction is to become significantly more effective, and that the general level of leadership must be much improved in the future" (1987, p. 27).

School administrators serving at all levels, and their national professional organizations, are now advocating the principles of school-based management (also referred to as site-based management). A task force, composed of representatives of the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, has produced a publication entitled, School-Based Management. The task force suggests, "School-based management offers realistic hope of improved student and teacher performance" (NASSP, 1988, p. 2).

Essentially, school-based management is "a process that involves the individuals responsible for implementing decisions in actually making those decisions. Decisions are made at the level closest to the issue being addressed" (NASSP, 1988, p. 5).

The task force, in describing the role of the principal in school-based management, indicated the principal is the only one in a school building who sees the whole school. This means the principalship is even more important in a system

of school-based management. The task force also suggests some of the areas in which principals must be proficient:

Instructional leadership and curriculum awareness  
Business management  
Personnel management  
Facilities, maintenance, and property management  
Security  
Counseling  
Communicating  
Community relations.

The task force also stated, "along with increased authority for making decisions comes increased accountability." Schools will be expected to develop clear sets of objectives and have their performances meet the objectives. Those who consistently do not meet their objectives may be removed (NASSP, 1988, p. 11).

Meanwhile, urban principals publicly express their concerns and frustrations as leaders of urban high schools. The Harvard University Principals Center held a "Conversation with Urban High School Principals" in 1987. Participating urban high school principals discussed the following:

- The importance of a principal combining "guts and intelligence" in attempting to reach educational goals.

- Principals should have more control over personnel decisions (hiring and firing of staff).
- A reputation for being effective principals (turning schools around) can become a burden. You become a "fireman."
- Significant parental and community involvement is critical to school improvement.
- It is important to help all parents make a real connection to the school, not just bring in those parents whose children are in trouble.
- The high dropout rates in urban schools and decreasing number of black students enrolled and graduating from college.
- The high unemployment rate among black youth, especially black males.
- The importance of interacting and supporting at risk students.
- There is a strong need to recognize and reward students who are successful in school.
- Students need to be groomed to take the P.S.A.T. and S.A.T. examinations rather than leaving it to chance.
- Mentoring should not be limited to the college bound students.
- The academic program in a school is only as good as its faculty.
- Good teachers need to be recognized and supported (Steinberg & Astrein, 1987, pp. 1-11).

These principals' comments suggest a deep concern about the educational lives of urban high school students. Yet, the role of being an instructional leader seems mired in the everyday management and organizational matters (Bridges, 1978, pp. 1-21). Perhaps this situation supports Thomas

Sergiovanni's belief that the principal's key function in effective schools is establishing goal consensus among staff and developing an institutional identity (Educational Leadership, 1984, pp. 4-14).

Thus, urban high school principals find themselves in administrative assignments--sometimes without explanation for the assignment (Boyer, 1983, p. 221). These administrators also have inordinate amounts of day-to-day crisis situations; large percentages of students functioning below grade level; apathetic parents; high levels of poverty; bureaucratic school systems; teachers who may or may not fit their assignments; union contracts that regulate student discipline, class size, scheduling, salaries, and provide for an elaborate grievance procedures which limit the principals; discretionary power; racial and/or class sensitivities; and communities demanding improvement of schools (Bridges, 1978, pp. 9-15). Today's principals, like business leaders, are expected to have a "bias for action, being actively involved, and value driven" (Peters & Waterman, 1982).

According to Judith Alamprese and Nancy Brigham, a principal's efforts to improve the management of a high school should include two critical components:

1. Practices implemented to facilitate direct, open communication with staff and students; to act as an advocate for the school; and to streamline administrative procedures.
2. Practices that enable the principal to gain direct knowledge of all school operations and to enforce

a clear set of performance related goals (Alamprese & Brigham, 1986, p. 43).

### Summary

This review of the literature has examined the historical and research aspects of urban schools and their communities, urban school reform, and the urban high school principalship. The purpose of the review was (1) to describe urban education and the challenges faced by urban educators in the past, and (2) to identify those problems and professional expectations they must address today.

The review of literature suggests the major studies of public education prompted by the Nation at Risk report seemed to examine only superficially the problems and concerns of urban educators and students. However, some demographers and urban education researchers have documented the need for high quality learning experiences for urban students. Poor and minority students in urban schools, especially the high schools, need teachers who know how to teach them and principals who know how to provide the proper educational environment and the leadership that must accompany these efforts.

The literature provides numerous suggestions for improving urban schools. However, there is little evidence that practicing urban high school principals have been asked directly what they deem educationally important; what impedes

their efforts to improve their schools; what specific efforts must occur in order to meet the educational goals and their (principals) specific roles in achieving their expressed goals. Thus, this study attempts to remedy this deficiency by asking urban high school principals, directly, to indicate their problems and concerns. In addition, the study asks them to indicate what they believe is necessary to improve their schools and what their professional organization, NASSP, can do to assist them.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used in the study, describe the population selection procedures, explain the development of the survey instrument (questionnaire) and its administration, and provide an explanation of the statistical procedures used in analyzing the data.

#### Research Methodology

Descriptive research methodology was used in this study. In descriptive survey research, data are obtained from a clearly defined population. Descriptive survey research is characterized by classification of the data. The data may be terms descriptive of the population, as inferred in the sample, or they may be univariate frequency distributions (for example; ages, weights, test scores, or other measures). They may also be counts of different answers given in interviews or to a questionnaire. When summaries of such data result in statements or inferences concerning the population, these statements are descriptive generalizations, or laws (Englehart, 1972, pp. 293-294).

Weinberg and Schumaker (1969) in their discussion of descriptive research indicated:

The methods of descriptive statistics entail specifying a population of interest and then collecting the measurements of all members of that population. These original measurements or scores are called raw data. The raw data themselves are descriptive, but the science of descriptive statistics deals with methods of deriving from raw data measurements that are more tersely descriptive of the original population. In fact, it is the type of measure once removed from the raw data that is of prime importance to the statistician and research worker. For instance, the average IQ of members of an army battalion is obviously much more comprehensible and meaningful than the list of thousands of IQ scores as they were originally obtained. But it almost goes without saying that an understanding of the exact meaning of an average is necessary to interpret an average in any particular case. The descriptive statistical approach makes use of all the data concerning a population, and it entails deriving descriptive statistical measurements from data (Weinberg & Schumaker, 1969, pp. 4-5).

Survey research has the advantage of a wide scope: a great deal of information can be obtained from a large population. While surveys tend to be more expensive than laboratory and field experiments and field studies, for the amount and quality of information they yield, they are economical (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 422).

The researcher elected to use descriptive survey procedures using a questionnaire to obtain information regarding urban high school principals' opinions and concerns related to fulfilling their professional responsibilities, and to study the relationship of these factors and selected and demographic and personal variables.

The study was sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, a national professional organization. The findings of this study will be published during the fall of 1989.

### Population

The researcher, after consultation with the dissertation committee, determined the population to be used in the study would be all of the high school principals in the largest 100 cities in the United States (World Almanac, 1987) (see Appendix A).

The population was identified from a list of all high school principals in the 100 cities that was prepared by Quality Education Data, Inc. (Denver, Colorado). Those schools that did not have a twelfth grade graduating class or a minimum of 200 students were deleted. Thus, the population for the study was determined to be 1,259 urban high school principals.

### Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed for two purposes. The first purpose was to collect opinions, concerns, selected demographic information, and recommendations for affecting positive change from urban high school principals. The sec-

ond purpose was to identify topics and issues that could be used to develop programs and services for urban high school principals by the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

In an effort to ask relevant questions which the researcher believed the principals would be able to answer, a group of practicing urban high school principals were asked to participate in the construction of the survey instrument. The desire for clarity and relevance was stimulated by Jean Converse and Stanley Presser (1988) who remind researchers that we sometimes ask people questions in the manner in which are familiar rather than in a manner that enables people to understand and accurately respond to the question (p. 57).

A preliminary questionnaire was sent to 20 urban high school principals. They were asked to respond to four items which would generate items that might be included in the survey instrument (Appendix B).

The items to which the 20 principals responded were:

1. List five specific actions necessary to make the school the type of learning institution it should be.
2. List those matters that should be considered national issues and concerns regarding urban high schools.
3. Define/describe what the word 'urban' means.
4. Define/describe the characteristics of an urban high school.

The 20 principals were in the following cities:

1. Atlanta, GA
2. Boston, MA
3. Buffalo, NY
4. Detroit, MI
5. Denver, CO
6. Chicago, IL
7. Columbus, OH
8. Houston, TX
9. Los Angeles, CA
10. Tulsa, OK
11. Minneapolis, MN
12. New Orleans, LA
13. Pittsburgh, PA
14. Providence, RI
15. Philadelphia, PA
16. Memphis, TN
17. Milwaukee, WI
18. St. Louis, MO
19. Seattle, WA
20. Washington, D.C.

Seventeen of the 20 principals responded to the request. This represented an 85% response rate. The information received from the 17 urban high school principals provided the

basis for development of the survey instrument. A draft of the survey instrument was presented to the dissertation committee on December 14, 1988. It was agreed that the instrument would be field tested using the 17 principals who responded to the original questionnaire and the seven members of the NASSP Urban Schools Committee. The committee was included because it would use the findings of the study as a basis for developing programs and services for urban high school principals.

As part of the survey instrument validation procedure, a letter of explanation and the draft of the survey instrument were sent to 23 high school principals on January 23, 1989. The name of one principal was deleted from the original list of 24 because of retirement.

In addition to completing the questionnaire, the principals were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. How long did it take you to complete the form?
2. List (by number) those items you found to be ambiguous and/or awkwardly worded and indicate why you believe them to be so.
3. List the items you do not understand and indicate why you do not understand them.
4. List those items you believe should be deleted and state why they should be deleted.
5. Are there any items that should be modified? Please list them and suggest how they should be modified.
6. Are there any items you believe should be added? Please list them (Appendix C).

Twenty-two of the 23 principals involved in the field testing of the questionnaire responded. This was a 96% response rate.

After reviewing the field test results with the dissertation chairman, the researcher determined no changes in the wording of the items were necessary. Principals reported the amount of time required to complete the questionnaire ranged from 10 to 30 minutes. The mean time required was 20 minutes.

### Collection of Data

The printed survey instrument, accompanied by a letter, was sent to 1,259 urban high school principals between March 1 and March 3, 1989. They were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to NASSP in the postage paid envelope that had been provided (Appendix D).

By March 29, 1989, 578 questionnaires had been returned. This represented a 46% return rate.

A follow-up letter was sent on March 31, 1989, to those principals who did not respond (Appendix E). By May 11, 1989, a total of 815 survey instruments had been returned. Thus, the response to the survey was 65%.

Edward Lehman's "Tests of Significance and Partial Returns to Mail Questionnaires" approach to analyzing late and non-responses was used:

To explore the possibility that participants who did not return questionnaires had different attitudes than those who did return them, a technique in which responses of early and late respondents were compared and was applied to the data. Research indicates that those responding late are similar in attitudes and characteristics to those who do not respond at all (Lehman, 1963, pp. 284-289).

A comparison of the responses received prior to and after the follow up letter indicated no observable differences in the demographic profile or responses of the two groups suggesting generalizability of the findings to the entire population is appropriate.

### Method of Analysis

All of the questionnaires were examined to determine if they met the basic criteria for inclusion in the study (city, student enrollment, and a twelfth grade graduating class). Those questionnaires that did not meet the criteria were discarded.

All data were coded and entered into the computer. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System. Frequencies, ranges, percentages, means and other appropriate statistics were computed and are reported in table form in Chapter 4.

### Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the research methodology used in developing the survey instrument, data collection procedures, and the statistical procedures used in analyzing the collected data.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the response data and discuss the findings. The chapter is divided into the following major sections: Demographic Profile of the Respondents; Demographic Data that Describes Urban High Schools and Students; Problems and Challenges Facing Urban High Schools; Respondents' Recommendations for Affecting Positive Change in Urban High Schools; Respondents' Views of Their Status, Authority, Job Satisfaction and the Status of Their Schools, School Districts and Communities; and the Professional Development Needs of Urban High School Principals.

#### Demographic Profile of Urban High School Principals

Age of respondents. Table 1 shows that over 50 percent of the respondents (51.4%) are 50 years or more in age. The average age of the high school principals is 50 years (rounded to the whole number. However, the largest group of respondents (197 or 24.2%) were between 45 to 49 years of age. The respondents ranged in age from 28 to 70 years.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents by Age

(N=815)

Category	Frequency	Percent
Less than 40	40	4.9
40 to 44	149	18.3
45 to 49	197	24.2
50 to 54	182	22.3
55 to 59	165	20.2
60 to 64	58	7.1
65 or more	15	1.8
No response	9	1.1

Mean*	50 years
Range - Low	28 years
High	70 years

\*Means reported in this chapter are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Gender of respondents. As Table 2 indicates, the majority of the respondents (630 or 77.3%) were male and 180 or 22.1% of the principals were female.

Ethnic distribution of respondents. The number and percent of respondents by ethnic heritage are shown in Table 3. The largest group of urban principals were white (531 or 65.2%). The next largest ethnic representation (212 or 26%) were black, followed by Hispanics (53 or 6.5%).

Highest college degrees held by respondents. All but four (0.5%) of the respondents reported having at least a masters degree. Table 4 indicates 435 or 53.4% of the respondents have masters degrees; 180 or 22.1% have postmasters certificates; and 188 or 23.1% urban high school principals have doctoral degrees.

Respondents' experience as secondary school principals. The respondents' average number of years of experience as a secondary school principal was 10. Table 5 indicates the largest group of principals (192 or 23.6%) had 6 to 10 years of experience. The range of experience was from 1 to 37 years.

Respondents' experience in current districts. Table 5 shows the respondents have served as principals in the districts to which they are currently assigned for an average of nine years. The largest group in the categories listed were those who have served in their current district between

Table 2. Gender of Respondents

(N=815)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	630	77.3
Female	180	22.1
No Response	5	0.6

Table 3. Ethnic Distribution of Respondents

(N=815)

Ethnic Group	Frequency	Percent
White	531	65.2
Black	212	26.0
Hispanic	53	6.5
American Indian	6	0.7
Asian	7	0.9
Other	2	0.2

Table 4. Highest College Degrees Held by Respondents

(N=815)

Degree	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors	4	0.5
Masters	435	53.4
Six Year Certificate (Postmasters work)	180	22.1
Doctoral Degree	188	23.1
No Response	8	1.0

Table 5. Respondents Experience as Secondary School Principals

(N=814)

Number of Years	Total Number of Years as a School Principal		Number of Years in Current District	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1 year	55	6.2	73	9.0
2 years	42	5.2	62	7.6
3 years	42	5.2	59	7.2
4 years	41	5.0	46	5.7
5 years	56	6.9	71	8.7
6 to 10 years	192	23.6	216	26.5
11 to 15 years	133	16.3	144	17.7
16 to 20 years	89	10.9	96	11.8
More than 20 years	50	6.1	35	4.3
No Response	114	14.0	12	1.5
Mean		10		9
Range--Low		1		1
High		37		33

6 to 10 years (216 or 26.5%). The range of service of the respondents in their current districts was 1 to 33 years.

Respondents' experience as assistant principals at the secondary school level. Table 6 indicates 78.8% of the respondents had experience as assistant principals in secondary schools. The largest percentage of the respondents (32.7%) had between 6 and 10 years experience as assistant principals. The mean was 6 years and the range was from 1 to 22 years of experience as an assistant principal.

Teaching experience of respondents at the secondary school level. As shown in Table 7, 87.6% of the urban high school principals have taught at the secondary school level. Table 7 also indicates 73.6% of the principals had more than five years of secondary school teaching experience. The average number of years of teaching was 10 and the range was from 1 to 31.

Salaries of respondents. The numbers and percent of the respondents' salaries according to nine ranges are reported in Table 8. The average salary is \$56,018. Among this group of urban high school principals, 517 or 63.4% earn between \$50,000 and \$64,999. The salaries range from \$27,500 to \$93,000.

Respondents' contracts. Table 9 indicates, by percent, the lengths of the respondents' principalship contracts during the 1988-89 school year. The largest percentage of the principals (57.2%) had 12 month contracts.

Table 6. Respondents' Experience as Assistant Principals at the Secondary School Level

(N=815)

Experience	Percent
<b>Previous experience as an assistant principal</b>	
Yes	78.8
No	15.3
No Response	5.9
<b>Number of years served as an assistant principal</b>	
1 year	6.7
2 years	12.3
3 years	12.6
4 years	11.2
5 years	8.4
6 to 10 years	32.7
11 to 15 years	9.5
16 to 20 years	2.2
More than 20 years	0.2
Years not indicated	4.2
No response	5.9
Mean	6
Range--Low	1
High	22

Table 7. Principals' Teaching Experience at the Secondary School Level Prior to Becoming a Secondary School Principal

(N=815)

Experience	Percent
Experience teaching at secondary level	
Yes	87.6
No	6.5
No Response	5.9
Number of years of teaching at the secondary level	
1 year	0.8
2 years	2.4
3 years	5.5
4 years	4.9
5 years	10.1
6 to 10 years	36.8
11 to 15 years	20.3
16 to 20 years	10.8
More than 20 years	5.7
Years not indicated	4.2
No response	5.9
Mean	10
Range--Low	1
High	31

Table 8. Salary Distribution for School Year 1988-89

(N=815)

Salary Range	Frequency	Percent
Less than \$30,000	1	0.1
\$30,000 to \$34,000	2	0.2
\$35,000 to \$39,999	15	1.8
\$40,000 to \$44,999	46	5.6
\$45,000 to \$49,999	89	10.9
\$50,000 to \$54,999	191	23.4
\$55,000 to \$59,999	171	21.0
\$60,000 to \$64,999	155	19.0
\$65,000 to \$69,999	66	8.1
\$70,000 to \$74,999	42	5.2
\$75,000 or more	6	0.7
No Response	31	3.8

Mean	\$56,018
Range--Low	\$27,500
High	\$93,000

Table 9. Length of Principals' Contracts for the School Year 1988-89

(N=815)

Length of Contracts	Percent
Less than 10 months	1.3
10 months	19.0
11 months	19.1
12 months	57.2
No Response	3.3

Length of respondents' typical day at school. Table 10 shows that the majority of the respondents (51.9%) spend 10 hours per day or more in their schools. This does not include school related activities that occur in the evenings and on weekends.

Extra hours spent per week beyond the typical week. As Table 11 indicates, 392 or 48.6% of the respondents spend 10 or more hours beyond their typical work week (not including summers) on school related matters. Ten principals (1.2%) did not spend any additional time beyond their typical weeks and 25 or 3.1% spent 20 or more hours.

Respondents satisfaction with their positions. Table 12 shows that 57.8% of the urban high school principals are satisfied with their current positions. Another 35.3% of the respondents were moderately satisfied; 4.8 moderately dissatisfied; and 1.3% were dissatisfied with their positions.

Respondents' membership in NASSP. The number and percent of those principals who are and are not members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals are shown in Table 13. The response shows 607 or 74.5% are members of NASSP and 200 or 24.5% are not members.

Geographical distribution of respondents based on regions defined by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Table 14 shows the distribution of the responses based on the seven regions that have been defined by NASSP. All 50 of the United States and the District of Columbia are

Table 10. Time Principals Spend at School on a Typical School Day (Excluding Evenings and Weekends)

(N=815)

Number of Hours	Percent
Less than 7 hours per day	0.0
7 hours per day	1.4
8 hours per day	14.8
9 hours per day	29.6
10 hours per day or more	51.9
No Response	2.3

Table 11. Extra Hours Spent Per Week Beyond the Typical Week (Based on Typical Days)

(N=806)

Number of Extra Hours Per Week	Frequency	Percent
5 or less	171	21.1
6 to 10	329	40.8
11 to 15	149	18.5
16 to 20	80	9.9
More than 20 hours	25	3.1
No Response	52	6.5

Table 12. Degree of Satisfaction in Current Positions  
as Principals

(N=815)

Satisfaction	Percent
Satisfied	57.8
Moderately Satisfied	35.3
Moderately Dissatisfied	4.8
Dissatisfied	1.3
No Response	0.7

Table 13. Respondents' Membership in the National Association of Secondary School Principals

(N=815)

Current Members of NASSP	Yes	No	No Response
Frequency	607	200	8
Percent	74.5	24.5	1.9

included in the seven regions. Table 14 also shows to which regions the states are assigned. The three regions with the largest number of responses were Region 3 (278 or 34.2%) followed by Region 2 (174 or 21.4%) and Region 7 with 113 or 13.9% of the responses.

### Demographic Data Describing Urban Schools and Students

#### States and number of schools represented in the survey.

Thirty-six states and the District of Columbia are represented in the study. Table 15 indicates the three states with the greatest number of respondent schools were New York (112 or 13.7%), Texas (82 or 10.1%), and California with 75 or 9.2%.

Population of the cities in which the respondents high schools are located. Table 16 shows the number and percent of the responses received according to population categories. Two categories, 250,000 to 499,999 and 2,000,000 or more, each were represented by 181 schools or 22.2%. The third largest category was less than 250,000 which had 129 or 15.8% respondents.

Types of schools participating in the study. Table 17 indicates the majority of the urban high schools included in the study (594 or 72.9%) were comprehensive schools. The next largest group were magnet schools (79 or 9.7%) followed by vocational schools (72 or 8.8%).

Table 14. Number of Urban High School Principals that Responded According to the Regions Defined by the National Association of Secondary School Principals

(N=814)

Region	Number Responding	Percent
Region 1 (ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI)	15	1.8
Region 2 (NY, NJ, DE, MD, DC, PA)	174	21.4
Region 3 (KY, VA, TN, NC, SC, GA, AL, FL, LA, MS, TX)	278	34.2
Region 4 (MI, WI, MN, ND, SD, WY)	53	6.5
Region 5 (WV, OH, IN, IL, IA, NE)	94	11.5
Region 6 (AR, MO, KS, OK, NM, AZ, CO)	81	10.0
Region 7 (MT, ID, WA, OR, CA, VT, NV, AK, HI)	113	13.9
No Response	6	0.7

Table 15. States and the Number of Schools Responding to the Survey

(N=815)

States Represented	Frequency	Percent
Alabama	19	2.3
Alaska	6	0.7
Arizona	17	2.1
California	75	9.2
Colorado	15	1.8
District of Columbia	9	1.1
Florida	50	6.1
Georgia	17	2.1
Hawaii	4	0.5
Illinois	39	4.8
Indiana	9	1.1
Iowa	6	0.7
Kansas	11	1.3
Kentucky	3	0.4
Louisiana	31	3.8
Maryland	17	2.1
Massachusetts	15	1.8
Michigan	24	2.9
Minnesota	16	2.0
Mississippi	3	0.4
Missouri	10	1.2
Nebraska	5	0.6
Nevada	8	1.0
New Jersey	3	0.4
New Mexico	12	1.5
New York	112	13.7
North Carolina	14	1.7
Ohio	35	4.3
Oklahoma	16	2.0
Oregon	5	0.6
Pennsylvania	33	4.0
Tennessee	43	5.3
Texas	82	10.1
Utah	2	0.2
Virginia	16	2.0
Washington	14	1.7
Wisconsin	13	1.6
No Response	6	0.7

Table 16. Approximate Populations of Cities in Which the High Schools of the Respondents are Located

(N=815)

Populations	Number of Respondents	Percent
Less than 250,000	129	15.8
250,000 to 499,999	181	22.2
500,000 to 749,999	104	12.8
750,000 to 999,999	66	8.1
1,000,000 to 1,249,000	69	8.5
1,250,000 to 1,499,999	2	0.2
1,500,000 to 1,749,999	22	2.7
1,750,000 to 1,999,999	5	0.6
2,000,000 or more	181	22.2
No Response	56	6.9

Table 17. Types of Schools Participating in the Study  
(N=815)

Type of School	Frequency	Percent
Comprehensive	594	72.9
Vocational	72	8.8
Magnet	79	9.7
Alternative	60	7.4
No Response	10	1.2

Grades included in the schools that participated in the survey. Table 18 shows the majority of the schools (618 or 75.8%) contained grades 9 through 12. The next largest group of schools were those that had grades 10 to 12 (105 or 12.9%).

Student enrollment in respondent schools. Student enrollments in the respondent schools ranged from 200 to 7,200. Table 19 shows a frequency distribution that indicates all size categories listed in the survey have noticeable representation in the study. The mean is 1,513 students (rounded to a whole number).

Racial-ethnic mix of the student populations. Table 20 indicates there were no all white, Hispanic, Asian or American Indian student populations included in the study. However, 4.3% of the schools reported 100% black populations. Table 20 also shows 30.1% of the respondents reported white student enrollments of 1 to 25%; 26.5% reported white enrollments of 26 to 50%; 19.1% of the principals indicated they had white student enrollments of 51 to 75%; and 11.5% of the administrators reported 76 to 99% white student enrollments. Nearly half (46.6%) of the schools enroll 1-25% Hispanic students. Approximately half (54.1%) of the respondents also reported Asian enrollments of 1 to 25%.

Average daily attendance. Table 21 shows 96 schools (11.8%) reported average daily attendance rates 95% or more; 307 or 37.7% averaged 90 to 94% students in attendance each day; and 189 or 23.2% reported 85 to 89% average daily at-

Table 18. Grades Included in the Schools that Participated in the Survey

(N=815)

Grades in Schools	Frequency	Percent
Grades 7 to 12	47	5.8
Grades 8 to 12	11	1.3
Grades 9 to 12	618	75.8
Grades 10 to 12	105	12.9
Grades 11 to 12	6	0.7
No Response	10	1.2

Table 19. Student Enrollments in Respondents' Schools

(N=815)

Student Enrollments	Frequency	Percent
Less than 500	86	10.6
500 to 749	43	5.3
750 to 999	69	8.5
1,000 to 1,249	115	14.1
1,250 to 1,499	105	12.9
1,500 to 1,749	97	11.9
1,750 to 1,999	65	8.0
2,000 to 2,249	82	10.1
2,250 to 2,499	44	5.4
2,500 or more	91	11.2
Mean	1,513	
Range--Low	200	
High	7,200	

Table 20. Racial-Ethnic Mix of the Student Populations  
in the Respondents' Schools

(N=815)

Percent	Percentages				
	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
None	9.9	0.7	28.7	39.1	72.0
1 to 25	30.1	38.4	46.6	54.1	2.4
26-50	26.5	25.3	11.8	2.3	--
51-75	19.1	12.8	6.4	1.1	--
76-99	11.5	15.6	3.2	0.2	0.2
100 percent	--	4.3	--	--	--
No Response	2.8	2.9	3.3	3.1	3.3

Note--To read the table above, the following examples are provided:

9.9% of the responding schools reported no white students enrolled and 30.1% of the schools reported 1-25% white student enrollment.

tendance. One hundred ninety-three schools (23.6%) indicated their average daily attendance was 80% or less.

Students participating in free or reduced rate lunch programs. Table 22 indicates 155 schools or 19.1% have 10% or less students participating in a free or reduced rate lunch program; 123 or 15.1% have 11 to 20% of their students participate; 109 schools or 13.4% provide free or reduced rate lunches to 21 to 30% of their students; 31 to 40% of the students receive these lunches in 97 or 11.9% of the urban schools; and 274 urban high schools or 33.7% provide free or reduced rate lunches to more than 40% of their students.

Number of teachers (in full-time equivalents) employed in respondents' schools. Table 23 shows the number of teachers employed in urban high schools by size categories. The largest category (165 or 20.2%) was the 75 to 99 teachers group. This was followed by the 100 to 124 teacher category with 156 or 19.1% respondents so indicating. Sixty-five schools (8.0%) employ 150 or more teachers.

Racial-ethnic mix of teaching staffs. Less than one percent (0.4%) of the respondents' schools have no white teachers on their staffs. However, Table 24 shows 4.2% have no black staff members; 44.8% have no Hispanic teachers; 67.2% have no Asian staff members; and 84.5% do not have American Indians teachers. The data indicate 39.4% of the urban high schools have staffs composed of 76 to 99% white teachers. Black teachers most often (52.2% of the time)

Table 21. Average Daily Rate of Attendance

(N=815)

Average Daily Rate of Attendance	Frequency	Percent
80% or less	193	23.6
85 to 89%	189	23.2
90 to 94%	307	37.7
95 percent or more	96	11.8
No Response	30	3.7

Table 22. Percentage of Students Who Participate in Schools' Free or Reduced Rate Lunch Programs

(N=814)

Percentage Categories	Frequency	Percent
10% or less	155	19.1
11 to 20%	123	15.1
21 to 30%	109	13.4
31 to 40%	97	11.9
More than 40%	274	33.7
No Response	56	6.9

Table 23. Number of Teachers (in Full-Time Equivalents)  
Employed in Respondents' Schools

(N=815)

Number of Teachers	Frequency	Percent
Less than 25	56	6.9
25 to 49	99	12.1
50 to 74	149	18.3
75 to 99	165	20.2
100 to 124	156	19.1
125 to 149	90	11.0
150 or more	65	8.0
No Response	35	4.3

Mean        89

represent 1 to 25% of the total teaching force; in 25% of the urban schools, they constitute 26 to 50% of the teaching staff. In most urban high schools, Hispanic, Asian and American Indian teachers are even less well represented.

Number of assistant principals assigned to respondents' schools. Table 25 indicates 90.6% of the schools have assistant principals. The data illustrate 62.7% of the responding principals have three or more assistant principals. Within that group, 9.9% of the schools have six or more assistant principals.

#### Problems and Challenge Facing Urban High School Principals

The urban high school principals were requested to indicate to what extent 28 previously identified factors hinder student achievement in their schools. Table 26 shows the rankings of the factors in the order the principals considered them to be severe problems to not being problems. Responses are shown by frequency, percent and weighted (1=not a problem, 2=slight problem, 3=moderate problem, and 4=severe problem) mean. The respondents consider student absenteeism to be the most severe problem (mean = 3.25). This was followed by inadequate parental interest (2.99), inadequate money available (2.96), inadequate student self-motivation to learn (2.84), and students lacking organizational skills (2.77). Student discipline was not viewed as a problem.

Table 24. Racial-Ethnic Mix of Teaching Staffs in Respondents' Schools

(N=815)

Percent	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
None	0.4	4.2	44.8	67.2	84.5
1 to 25	5.0	52.5	46.5	26.0	9.8
26 to 50	16.9	25.0	3.2	0.4	--
51 to 75	32.5	8.8	0.2	0.1	--
76 to 99	39.4	4.2	--	0.2	--
100 percent	0.9	0.2	--	--	--
No Response	4.9	5.0	5.3	6.0	5.6

Note--To read the table above, the following examples are provided:

In 39.4% of the respondents' schools, 76 to 99% of the teaching staffs are white; 44.8% of the urban high schools have no Hispanic teachers.

Table 25. Number of Assistant Principals Assigned to Respondents' Schools

(N=815)

Assistant Principals Assigned	N	Percent
Schools Having No Assistant Principals	60	7.4
Schools with Assistant Principals	738	90.6
1 Assistant Principal	57	9.8
2 Assistant Principals	161	27.6
3 Assistant Principals	189	32.4
4 Assistant Principals	91	15.6
5 Assistant Principals	28	4.8
6 or more Assistant Principals	58	9.9
No Response	17	2.1

Table 26. Factors Considered to be Hindering Academic Achievement in Respondents' Schools

Factors	Percent of Total Responses				Severe Problem	No Response	Weighted Mean
	Not a Problem	Slight Problem	Moderate Problem	Severe Problem			
Student absenteeism	4.9	13.5	33.9	47.4	0.4	3.25	
Inadequate parental interest	9.1	20.6	31.8	38.3	0.2	2.99	
Inadequate money available	8.2	22.0	34.2	34.8	0.7	2.96	
Inadequate student motivation to learn	5.4	30.6	38.3	25.5	0.2	2.84	
Students lacking organizational skills	4.5	31.4	45.8	17.9	0.4	2.77	
Student self expectations are too low	8.7	29.1	39.9	21.1	1.2	2.74	
Student apathy	7.4	32.0	36.1	19.4	5.2	2.71	
Students lacking basic skills to do high school work	6.1	28.8	38.8	25.4	1.0	2.59	
Drug and/or alcohol abuse	9.2	43.6	39.5	6.6	1.1	2.44	
Lack of community support	21.1	36.6	29.6	12.4	0.4	2.34	
Staff expectations of students are too low	22.2	36.2	29.8	11.4	0.4	2.31	
Too few building administrators to supervise teachers	30.2	29.3	22.8	17.5	0.1	2.27	
Inadequate physical facilities	29.3	31.2	23.8	15.6	0.1	2.26	
Classes too large	30.2	28.5	26.7	14.4	0.2	2.25	
Peer pressure against academic achievement	22.6	41.5	23.7	11.8	0.5	2.25	
Student discipline problems	18.2	46.1	30.8	4.8	0.1	2.22	
Inadequate supplies and equipment	27.1	36.4	25.5	10.6	0.4	2.20	
Too little flexibility for differences between schools	28.7	37.2	21.6	11.9	0.6	2.17	
Students with children of their own	26.3	43.7	21.1	8.6	0.4	2.12	
Security problems involving non-students	29.3	45.3	17.9	7.0	0.5	2.11	
Collective bargaining by employee groups	38.2	25.6	24.2	11.3	0.7	2.09	
Staff absenteeism	27.0	41.3	27.7	3.7	0.2	2.08	
Staff morale low	28.0	45.3	21.6	4.8	0.4	2.03	
Student morale low	33.5	43.9	19.3	2.5	0.9	1.91	
Student gangs	48.2	31.4	15.7	4.4	0.2	1.76	
Low level of staff competence	44.4	40.4	13.1	1.6	0.5	1.72	
School day too short	62.0	20.1	12.8	5.0	0.1	1.61	
School year too short	65.3	20.9	10.8	2.8	0.2	1.51	

Respondents' Recommendations for Affecting Positive Change  
in Their Schools

Three items in the survey were designed to obtain the respondents' recommendations and priorities for affecting positive change in their schools.

Factors respondents believe would have the most significant impact on raising academic achievement. Table 27 shows the frequency and percent regarding those factors the respondents believed would have the most significant impact on raising academic achievement of students. Raising students' perceptions of their own abilities rated highest among the respondents (376 or 46.1%). This was followed by increasing parental involvement in student education (271 or 33.3%) and raising staff perceptions of student abilities (263 or 32.3%). The matter of more autonomy for building principals ranked eighth.

Respondents' use of an additional one hundred dollars per student for each of the next three years. Table 28 indicates the largest number of principals (92 or 13.2%) would use the additional funds to increase the amount of training and staff development provided for teachers. Additional teachers/smaller class size (85 or 12.2%) was next and additional instructional materials (80 or 11.4%) ranked third.

Respondents' most important goals for their schools and students. Table 29 lists the frequency and percent regarding

Table 27. Principal's Rating of Factors that Would Have the Most Significant Impact on Raising Academic Achievement

(N=815)

Factor	Frequency	Percent
Raise student perceptions of their own abilities	376	46.1
Increase parental involvement in student education	271	33.3
Raise staff perceptions of student abilities	263	32.3
Removal of ineffective teachers	222	27.2
Increase the financial resources available to education	219	26.9
Improved teaching techniques	214	26.3
More effective programs for at-risk students	193	23.7
Allow more autonomy for building principals	163	20.0
Removal of disruptive students from class	113	13.9
Greater emphasis on basic skills	91	11.2
Increase the length of time school facilities and staff are available	64	7.9
Raise parental perceptions of student abilities	61	7.5
Improvement of teaching materials	33	4.0
More stringent requirements for graduation	27	3.3
Decrease non-instructional activities during school day	23	2.8
Increase school security	17	2.1
Provision of day care facilities for children of students	15	1.8
Increase level of assistance provided to families for welfare needs	11	1.3
Assign more homework	5	0.6
Other	49	6.0
No response	3	0.4

Table 28. Principal's Recommendations for Expenditure of Additional Operating Funds (\$100 per student for three years)

(N=699)

Way in Which Funds Would be Used	Frequency	Percent
More training and staff development for teachers	92	13.2
Additional teachers/smaller class size	85	12.2
Additional instructional materials	80	11.4
At-risk student programs	56	8.0
Additional supplies and equipment	49	7.0
Student motivational and incentive programs	49	7.0
Computers for instructional purposes	47	6.7
Tutoring services	45	6.4
Additional support services and programs	35	5.0
Additional counselors	31	4.4
Improve facilities	19	2.7
Curriculum revision	17	2.4
Increase parent involvement in the schools	13	1.9
Student self-concept and self worth programs	11	1.6
Basic skills programs	9	1.3
Case workers for home and community contacts	8	1.1
More co-curricular activities for students	7	1.0
Teacher incentive programs	6	0.9
Increased security	4	0.6
Other	28	4.0

the urban principals' most important goals for their schools and students. Increasing academic achievement was the most important goal to the largest number of respondents (251 or 30.8%). Adequately preparing students for college and/or work was next (108 or 13.3%); and promoting equity and excellence for all students (73 or 9.0%) was third.

Respondents' perceptions of their roles in achieving their goals. As a follow up to asking the urban principals to indicate the most important goals for their schools, the respondents were requested to state their perceived roles in achieving their goals. Table 30 shows the largest number of respondents (254 or 31.2%) saw themselves as leaders in the schools' efforts to achieving the goals. Being a facilitator ranked second (188 or 23.1%); and serving as a motivator was third (73 or 9.0%).

**Respondents' Views of Their Status, Authority, Job Satisfaction, and The Status of Their Schools, School Districts, and Communities**

Status factors. Table 31 shows respondents rate job security higher than the prestige attached to their positions. Slightly more than 67% of the principals described their job security as being good while 46.9% rated the prestige attached to the principalship as "good." Recognition

Table 29. Goals Considered by Principals to be Most Important for Their Schools and Their Students

(N=815)

Goals	Frequency	Percent
To increase academic achievement	251	30.8
To adequately prepare students for college and/or work	108	13.3
To promote equity and excellence for all students	73	9.0
To increase student attendance	51	6.3
All others providing a response	41	5.0
To improve students' self-esteem	39	4.8
To create a positive school climate	39	4.8
To attain higher scores in standardized proficiency tests	24	2.9
To increase the percentage of students who graduate	21	2.6
To address the needs of at-risk students	16	2.0
To reduce student apathy toward academics	13	1.6
To increase parental involvement and support	13	1.6
To have staff develop higher expectations of students	11	1.3
To produce good citizens and citizenship	8	1.0
Increased staff development	7	0.9
To improve curriculum	5	0.6
To play a larger role in the selection of teachers for the building	4	0.5
No Response	91	11.2

Table 30. Principals' Perceptions of Their Roles in Achieving Their School's Goals

(N=815)

Roles	Frequency	Percent
Being a leader	254	31.2
Being a facilitator	188	23.1
Serving as a motivator	73	9.0
A provider of resources	42	5.2
Providing staff development activities	38	4.7
All others providing a response	32	3.9
Serving as a role model	18	2.2
Providing the proper school climate	18	2.2
Hiring the best teachers	14	1.7
Securing parental interest and support	5	0.6
Directing the empowerment of teachers	3	0.4
No Response	130	16.0

from central office and/or school board was considered fair (42.7%), 28.2% rated it good, and 27.7% saw it as poor.

Satisfaction. Table 31 also describes the degree of satisfaction the respondents expressed regarding eight factors. Seven of the eight factors were viewed as being good by the principals. The exception was their daily schedules. The principals' interaction with students was rated highest in the good category (83.4%); interaction with teachers was second (81.6%); and general career satisfaction (78.8%) was third. The daily schedule was viewed as good by 39.5% of the principals, fair by 42.5% and poor by 16.6%.

Respondents assessments of their progress toward meeting the goals of their schools and their students. Table 32 shows 49.1% of the urban high school principals indicated they have met their goals for their schools; 36.3% said they did not meet their goals; and 13% indicated they have exceeded their goals.

Principals' opportunities to interview prospective teachers before they are assigned to the principals' schools. Table 33 indicates 32.8% of the respondents always interview prospective teachers before those teachers are assigned to their schools; 45.9% usually interview the prospective teachers and approximately one-fifth of the respondents (20.2%) do not interview prospective teachers.

Respondents' description of the authority they have in selecting teachers for their schools. Table 34 shows that

Table 31. Principals' Status and Satisfaction With Their Positions

Factors	Percent			No Response
	Good	Fair	Poor	
<u>Status Issues</u>				
Job security	67.2	25.0	6.6	1.1
Prestige attached to the position	46.9	43.4	8.2	1.5
Recognition from central office and/or school board for achievements	28.2	42.7	27.7	1.3
<u>Satisfaction Issues</u>				
Interaction with students	83.4	15.1	0.6	0.9
Interaction with teachers	81.6	17.1	0.5	0.9
General career satisfaction	78.8	18.0	1.8	1.3
Helping others learn	76.6	21.2	0.9	1.3
Interaction with parents	63.9	30.4	4.4	1.2
An increase in personal knowledge	61.6	29.4	2.0	7.0
Working environment	53.7	37.9	7.2	1.1
Daily schedule	39.5	42.5	16.6	1.5

Table 32. Urban Principals' Assessments of Their Progress Toward Meeting the Goals for Their Schools and Their Students

(N=815)

Progress Toward Meeting Goals for Schools and Students	Percent
Have exceeded my goals	13.0
Have met my goals	49.1
Have not met my goals	36.3
No response	1.6

Table 33. Principals Opportunities to Interview Prospective Teachers Before They are Assigned to the Principals' Schools

(N=815)

Opportunities to Interview Teachers	Percent
Always interview prospective teachers	32.8
Usually interview prospective teachers	45.9
Do not interview prospective teachers	20.2
No Response	1.1

the majority of the respondents (440 or 54%) share authority with their central offices in selecting teachers for their schools; 117 or 14.4% of the principals have primary authority for hiring teachers; and 253 or 31.0% have little or no authority.

Principals' response to the question, "In general is the authority to run your school given to you by the school board and central administration in balance with the degree to which you are held responsible when things go wrong?" Table 35 indicates the majority of the respondents (426 or 52.3%) do not believe their authority to run their schools is in balance with the degree to which they are held responsible when things go wrong. The number of principals who believed their autonomy was consistent with the degree of responsibility was 369 or 45.3%.

Respondents' descriptions of their level of authority to make decisions concerning their own schools. Table 36 describes the level of authority the principals believe they have in regard to making decisions concerning their own schools. The majority of respondents (447 or 54.8%) indicated their authority was moderate; 167 or 20.5% stated they have high levels of authority; and 193 or 23.7% indicated their levels of authority are low. Two principals (0.2%) feel they have no authority to make decisions concerning their own schools.

Table 34. Principals Description of the Authority They Have in Selecting Teachers for Their Schools

(N=815)

Authority in Selecting Teachers	Frequency	Percent
Have Primary Authority for Hiring	117	14.4
Share Authority With the Central Office	440	54.0
Have Little or No Authority	253	31.0
No Response	5	0.6

Table 35. Principals' Belief That the Authority They Have for Operating the School Matches Their Responsibility

(N=815)

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	369	45.3
No	426	52.3
No Response	20	2.5

Table 36. Respondents' Descriptions of Their Level of Authority to Make Decisions Concerning Their Own Schools

(N=815)

Levels of Authority	Frequency	Percent
High	167	20.5
Moderate	447	54.8
Low	193	23.7
None	2	0.2
No Response	6	0.7

Principals' perceptions of the amount of influence they have over their school districts' decisions that affect secondary schools. Table 37 shows that 347 or 42.6% of the respondents believe they have some influence on school district decisions which affect their schools. A like sized group (41.2%) believe they have little influence on such decisions.

### The Educational Status of Urban Schools in General

Respondents' descriptions of the levels of competency of most of their students in regard to basic skills. Table 38 indicates that 44.0% of the urban high school principals consider the competency of their students to be average. However, 23.5% consider their students above average and 31.2% believe their students are below average.

The degree to which the principals believe their students are having their needs met as their schools currently operate. Table 39 shows that 552 or 67.7% of the respondents indicated most (80% or more) of their students were having their needs met. Of that figure, 188 principals (23.1%) reported that 80 to 89% of their students' needs were being met. Two hundred eighty-three (34.7%) indicated that 90 to 99% of their students' needs were being met.

Respondents rating of their teaching staffs. The majority of the urban high school principals (464 or 56.9%) indicated their teaching staffs were rated above average.

Table 37. Principals' Perceptions of the Amount of Influence They Have on Their School Districts' Decisions that Affect Secondary Schools

(N=815)

Amount of Influence	Frequency	Percent
Much influence	37	4.5
Some influence	347	42.6
Little influence	336	41.2
No influence	85	10.4
No Response	10	1.2

Table 38. Respondents' Descriptions of the Levels of Competency of Most of Their Students in Regard to Basic Skills

(N=815)

Levels of Competency	Percent
Well above average	5.3
Above average	18.2
Average	44.0
Below Average	27.2
Well Below Average	4.0
No Response	1.2

Table 39. The Degree to Which Principals Believe Their Students Are Having Their Needs Met as the Schools Currently Operate

(N=815)

Students Having Needs Met	Number of Principals	Percent
Less than 50 percent	23	2.8
50 to 59 percent	35	4.3
60 to 69 percent	45	5.5
70 to 79 percent	123	15.1
80 to 89 percent	188	23.1
90 to 99 percent	283	34.7
All of Them	81	9.9
No Response	37	4.5

Table 40 shows that in addition, 237 or 29.1% rated their teachers average; 13 or 1.6% were reported as being below average; and 93 principals or 11.4% of the respondents rated their teaching staffs outstanding. None of the respondents indicated their staffs were poor.

Principals' descriptions of their communities' attitudes toward public schools and the value of education. Table 41 indicates the respondents' communities' attitudes toward public schools were not rated as high as the communities' attitudes toward the value of education. On a range from very positive to very negative, 6.9% of the communities were reported as viewing public schools as very positive; 33.6% as positive; 35.1% average; 21.2% as negative; and 2.1% viewed public schools as very negative.

In regard to the communities' attitudes toward the value of education, Table 41 shows that 14.8% of the respondents' communities viewed education as very positive; 42.3% as positive; 36.7% average; and 5% viewed education as negative. None of the communities were reported as viewing the value of education as very negative.

#### Respondents' Professional Development Needs

Areas in which urban principals would most like to increase their personal skills and/or knowledge. Table 42 identifies the areas in which respondents would most like to

Table 40. Respondents' Rating of Their Teaching Staffs  
(N=815)

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Outstanding	93	11.4
Above Average	464	56.9
Average	237	29.1
Below Average	13	1.6
Poor	0	0.0
No Response	8	1.0

Table 41. Principals' Descriptions of Their Communities' Attitudes Toward Public Schools and the Value of Education

(N=815)

Attitudes	Public's Attitude About Schools Percent	Public's Value of Education Percent
Very Positive	6.9	14.8
Positive	33.6	42.3
Average	35.1	36.7
Negative	21.2	5.0
Very Negative	2.1	--
No Response	1.1	1.1

increase their personal skills and/or knowledge. Mastery of new technology was rated highest (86 or 11.1%) followed by teacher supervision (68 or 8.8%); ability to motivate students (44 or 5.7%); curriculum planning (36 or 4.6%); and time management (35 or 4.5%).

Respondents' ranking of possible NASSP conducted programs for urban high school principals. The respondents were asked to rate five proposed NASSP conducted programs that would be designed specifically for them. The ratings were ranked from 5=most helpful to 1=least helpful. Table 43 shows a national recognition program for urban principals was rated most helpful by 200 or 24.5% of the respondents. However, 210 or 25.8% principals also rated a national recognition program least helpful. Special publications targeted to urban principals was next as being most helpful (160 or 19.6%) followed by national conferences for urban principals (150 or 18.4%); an urban education column in the NASSP newsletter (88 or 10.8%); and urban education sessions at the NASSP Convention (63 or 7.7%).

### Summary

This chapter provides the results of the collected data. It indicates that urban high school principals tend to be white males who are approximately 50 years of age. Urban principals view student attendance as the number one hin-

Table 42. Areas in Which Urban Principals Would Most Like to Increase Their Personal Skills and/or Knowledge

(N=815)

Skill and/or Knowledge Area	Frequency	Percent
No Response	188	23.1
Mastery of new technology	86	10.6
Teacher supervision	68	8.3
Ability to motivate students	44	5.4
Curriculum planning	36	4.4
Time management	35	4.3
Ability to plan and conduct staff development programs	32	3.9
Ability to motivate staff	31	3.8
Ability to assist at risk students	26	3.2
Improve people skills	25	3.1
Leadership strategies	24	2.9
Teacher evaluation	22	2.7
Communication (written and/or oral)	20	2.5
Management skills	20	2.5
Budget making/finance	17	2.1
Learning styles	15	1.8
Working with parents	14	1.7
Site based management	9	1.1
Organizational skills	9	1.1
Use of research	8	1.0
Public relations	7	0.9
Labor relations (including negotiations)	6	0.8
Public speaking	5	0.6
Race relations	5	0.6
Better understanding of legal aspects of the position	5	0.6
Mastery of a foreign language	4	0.5
Making a master schedule	4	0.5
Ability to increase community involvement	4	0.5
Strategy planning	4	0.5
Managing politics	3	0.4
All others providing a response	38	4.7

Table 43. Respondents' Ranking of Proposed NASSP Conducted Programs for Urban High School Principals

(N = 815)

Rank	National Conferences for Urban High School Principals		An Urban Education Column in NASSP Newsletter		Urban Education Sessions at NASSP Convention		Special Publications Targeted to Urban Principals		A National Recognition Program for Urban Principals	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
5 (Most helpful)	150	18.4	88	10.8	63	7.7	160	19.6	200	24.5
4	130	16.0	168	20.6	173	21.2	107	13.1	81	9.9
3	122	15.0	149	18.3	167	20.5	143	17.5	92	11.3
2	112	13.7	170	20.9	184	22.6	114	14.0	77	9.4
1 (Least helpful)	149	18.3	86	10.6	73	9.0	139	17.1	210	25.8
No Response	152	18.7	154	18.9	155	19.0	152	18.7	155	19.0

drance to higher academic achievement in their schools. These administrators believe they have moderate authority over what takes place in their buildings, tend to be satisfied with their positions, and desire to improve their supervisory skills. The majority of the principals believe they are meeting their schools' goals, have staffs that are above average and students whose needs are being met. The majority of the respondents indicated their students' levels of competency in regard to basic skills is average to below average. These principals, the majority of whom work 10 hours or more per day, believe their interaction with students and teachers is good.

A large majority (74.5%) are members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and would like the Association to provide professional growth activities that are specifically designed for urban high school principals.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Introduction

This study was conducted to gain the views and suggestions of urban high school principals in regard to their positions, schools, school districts, communities, goals, and professional growth needs. The study represents a collaborative effort by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. The rationale for the study was twofold: (1) to produce a relevant and useful dissertation within the parameters of acceptable scholarship; and (2) to assist the National Association of Secondary School Principals and its newly formed Urban Schools Committee in developing programs and activities for urban high school principals.

The high school principals in the nation's largest 100 cities, according to population, were selected to participate in the study. The schools were required to have a minimum student enrollment of 200 students and a twelfth grade graduating class.

The literature review in Chapter 2 addresses Urban Communities and Their Schools; Urban High School Reform Efforts;

and the Urban High School Principalship. Essentially, the literature indicates the dilemmas and challenges of educating urban children have been in existence for over 160 years. During the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the education of white immigrant children in the cities was the concern of urban educators. As economic opportunities and assimilation into the cultural mainstream occurred for urban whites, urban educators were faced with large numbers of blacks moving from rural settings into the cities and a mass exodus of white families from the cities. These urban communities and their schools are now composed mainly of African Americans, Hispanics and Asians. Some cities are witnessing changes in their minority population from predominantly black to majority Hispanic.

As early as 1961, scholars such as James Conant wrote of urban slums and suburbs and their schools. He indicated poverty, race, neglect, lack of appropriate teaching methods, and inadequate funds contributed to the plight of urban school children. Conant's beliefs were reinforced in the 1970s by Harry Passow, Henry Levine, Jonathan Kozal and others. Now, in the 1980s, urban school research such as that undertaken by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (An Imperiled Generation, 1988) indicates urban schools continue to be less than adequate.

The school reform movement of the 1980s which was prompted by The Nation at Risk (1983) was targeted to Ameri-

can education in general and in particular the status of the nation as a world economic power. The concerns for the nation's urban schools seemed to be an afterthought. Demographic researchers Linda Darling-Hammond (1985), and Harold Hodgkinson (1985) have provided data which suggest the nation faces a serious crisis if urban schools and their communities are ignored. Jeannie Oakes (1987), Rolf Blank (1987), The Council of Great City Schools, and others have suggested strategies for improving urban schools. Some states (Virginia, Tennessee, New Jersey, Florida, and others) and local school systems such as Atlanta, Denver, and Portland, are implementing programs designed to address the needs of urban schools.

A major component in much of the urban school reform literature is leadership, especially at the high school level. Ernest Boyer (1983), Jeannie Oakes (1987), Rolf Blank (1987), and others have examined the changing role of the high school principal and provide suggestions for enhancing leadership functions at the principal level.

### Collection of Data

In order to design an appropriate data gathering instrument, twenty urban high school principals were asked to list specific programs and activities they believed had to occur in urban schools in order to make them the types of

learning institutions they thought they should be. These principals were also asked to list matters that they believed should be considered national issues and concerns regarding urban high schools. Seventeen (85%) of the principals responded. Their responses were important contributions to the development of the first draft of the survey instrument.

Twenty-three principals, representing all geographic regions of the United States, were then requested to complete and critique the draft of the survey instrument. Twenty-two principals (96%) responded to the request. The survey instrument, in its final form, was mailed to 1,259 urban high school principals. Eight hundred fifteen principals returned the instrument. Thus, 65% of the urban high school principal population participated in this national survey of urban schools.

The survey was used to collect data in the following areas: the demographic profile of the urban high school principal; the demographic profile of urban schools and the students they serve; the problems and challenges facing urban high schools; recommendations for affecting positive change in urban high schools; respondents' views of their status, authority, job satisfaction, and the status of their schools, school districts, communities; and the professional development needs of urban high school principals.

The method of analysis and statistical treatments applied to the data are reflected in the descriptions and ta-

bles which appear in Chapter 4. The data, where appropriate, have been compared to that which was reported in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' publication, High School Leaders and Their Schools (1988).

## Findings

### **Demographic Profile of Principals**

The majority of urban high school principals in the nation's 100 largest cities are white (65.2%) males (77.3%) who have masters degrees or higher (98.6%). The female representation is 21.2% and black principals (male and female) represent 26% of the population included in the study.

The respondents averaged 10 years of experience as secondary school principals and six years of service as assistant principals. In addition, they had taught at the secondary school level on the average of 10 years. Of those responding, six hundred thirty-one urban high school principals (77.4%) earned \$50,000 or more. Their salaries ranged from \$27,500 to \$93,000.

More than half of the principals (57.2%) are on 12 month contracts and 51.9% of them spend over 10 hours per day in their schools. Two hundred fifty-four (31.5%) urban high school principals spend an additional ten hours or more beyond their typical work weeks on school related matters. The

majority of the urban high school principals (57.8%) are satisfied with their positions. Approximately three out of four (74.5%) are members of the National Association of Secondary School Principals.

### **Demographic Data Describing Urban Schools and Students**

Thirty-three states and the District of Columbia were represented in the study. New York, Texas and California provided the greatest percentage of responses (13.7%, 10.1% and 9.2% respectively). Just over half of the responses (50.8%) came from cities with populations of less than 750,000. In addition, 22.2% of the responses came from cities with populations of 2,000,000 or more.

The majority of the respondents' schools (594 or 72.9%) were comprehensive high schools (as opposed to vocational, magnet, and alternative schools) that had included a twelfth grade graduating class. Six hundred eighteen (75.8%) of the schools were composed of grades 9 to 12 and the average student enrollment for all of the 815 schools that participated in the study was 1,513. Only 96 schools (11.8%) had average daily attendance rates of 95% or more. The second largest average daily attendance grouping was in the 90 to 94% category (307 or 37.7%). One hundred schools or (12.2%) had less than 80% average daily attendance.

The response addressing the racial-ethnic mix of student populations indicates less than one percent of the urban high schools do not have any black students enrolled; 9.9% do not enroll any white students. Larger percentages of schools report no Hispanic (28.7%), Asian (39.1%), and American Indian (72%) students. The only schools that have enrollments that are totally of one ethnic group are the 4.3% which report 100% black student enrollments.

The average urban high school employs 89 teachers, most of whom are white. The respondents reported 32.5% of the schools had teaching staffs that were 51 to 75% white. Another 39.4% of the schools had staffs composed of 76 to 99% white teachers. Most of the minority teachers were in the 1 to 25% category. Fewer than 1% of the urban principals indicated they had no white teachers on their staffs; 4.2% had no black teachers. However, percentages of schools that did not have Hispanic, Asian and American Indian teachers were 44.8%, 67.2% and 84.5% respectively. With regard to assistant principal staffing, 90.6% of the schools indicated they had assistant principals and all but 9.8% of those schools reported having at least two assistant principals.

### **Problems and Challenges of the Principals**

Student absenteeism, less than adequate parental interest, and inadequate money available head the list of 28 fac-

tors the respondents viewed as problems or challenges. These were followed by: students having inadequate motivation to learn, students lacking organizational skills and having low self expectations respectively. The length of the school day and school year were twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth on the list.

### **Recommendations for Affecting Positive Change**

The urban high school principals were requested to select three factors, from a list of 19, that would have the most significant impact on raising the academic achievement of their students. Raising student perceptions of their own abilities headed the list (376 or 46.1%). The other factors selected by at least 25% of the respondents were: increased parental involvement; raise staff perceptions of student abilities; removal of ineffective teachers; increase the financial resources; and improve teaching techniques. Assigning more homework was last on the list.

When asked what they would do with an extra one hundred dollars per student for each of the next three years, the respondents' first choice was more training and staff development for teachers. This was followed by additional teachers/smaller class size and additional instructional materials. Teacher incentive programs were listed by less than one percent of the respondents.

When asked to state the most important goal for their schools, 251 or 30.8% of the principals made increasing academic achievement the number one goal. It was followed by the goal of adequately preparing students for college and/or work (108 or 13.3%). A companion question asked the principals what they perceived as their roles in achieving their stated goals. Being a leader ranked highest (254 or 31.2%); being a facilitator was next (188 or 23.1%).

#### **Principals' Status and Degrees of Satisfaction in Their Schools, School Districts and Communities**

The majority of the urban high school principals (67%) believed their job security was good and nearly half (49%) believed the prestige attached to the position was good. However, only 28.2% viewed the recognition they received from central office and/or school boards for achievements as good.

With regard to job satisfaction issues, interaction with students was rated highest followed by interaction with teachers, general career satisfaction and helping others learn.

Nearly half of the principals (49.1%) felt they had met their goals and 13% indicated they had exceeded their goals. However, the majority of the respondents (52.3%) believed they did not have the authority to administer their schools commensurate with the accountability demands. Only 32.8% of

the urban principals indicated they always interviewed teachers before they were assigned to their schools and 447 or 54.8% believed their levels of authority to make decisions concerning their own schools was only "moderate." Only 37 or 4.5% of the principals indicated they had much (as opposed to some, little, and no) influence on the school districts' decisions which affect their schools.

### **Educational Status of Urban Schools and Students**

When asked about the students' levels of competency regarding basic skills, 5.3% of respondents indicated the students' levels of competency were well above average; 18.2% reported the levels as above average; 44% said average; 27.2% indicated the levels were below average; and 4% reported students' levels of competency in basic skills were reported well below average. However, 67.7% of the principals believed 80% or more of their students were having their needs met as their schools currently operated; and the majority of the urban high school principals (464 or 56.9%) considered their staffs to be above average.

The principals indicated their communities view the value of education higher than they rate the public schools. For example, 14.8% of the principals feel their communities view the value of education as very positive while only 6.9% rate public schools to be very positive. In the positive

category, 42.3% of the principals' communities view the value of education as positive while only 33.6% gave an equal ranking to public schools. When considering that which was negative, 21.2% of the urban principals' communities rate the public schools as negative. Yet, only 5% of the communities view the value of education as negative. In addition, the respondents indicated 2.1% of the communities considered public schools to be very negative while none of the communities were reported as being very negative toward the value of education.

#### **Urban Principals Professional Development Needs**

The respondents, when asked to identify the areas in which they would most like to increase their skills and/or knowledge, rated mastery of new technology highest (11.1%). Only 68 (8.8%) principals indicated they would like to increase their skills in teacher supervision.

The respondents indicated all five of the programs they were asked to rate were of value. This suggests NASSP should consider conducting all five programs in some manner. The three programs that were viewed as most helpful (national recognition program for urban principals, special publications targeted to urban principals, and national conferences for urban principals) were also viewed as the least helpful in terms of percentages. This suggests that while some pro-

grams may be attractive to one group of principals, those same programs may not be appealing to another group. As a consequence, the association should pursue a variety of initiatives designed to reach a broad range of member interests. In addition, NASSP should frequently evaluate the new programs regarding their general acceptance by the urban principal membership.

### Conclusions

This study provides a national profile of the high school principals in the nation's one hundred largest cities. It reports the demographics related to the urban principals; the demographics of urban schools and the students they serve; the problems and challenges facing urban high schools; recommendations for affecting positive change in urban high schools; the views of their status, authority, job satisfaction and the status of their schools, school districts and communities; and the professional development needs of urban high school principals. In addition, this study provides data that will assist the National Association of Secondary School Principals in developing programs and activities for its urban principal membership and all others who may be interested.

The majority of urban high school principals who participated in the survey were white males (65.2%) who average

50 years in age. The percentage of black urban high school principals indicated in this study (26%) is higher than the 3.8% figure that was reported in the National Association of Secondary School Principals' 1988 national study of high schools (High School Leaders and Their Schools, 1988) which included urban, suburban, and rural high schools. The percentage of females reported in this study (22.1%) is considerably larger than 12% reported in the same 1988 NASSP national study. This study reports the responses of 815 urban high school principals compared with 716 responses to the earlier (1988) NASSP study.

Women and minority administrators, while greater in number in urban schools as opposed to rural and suburban schools, continue to be underrepresented in the nation's high schools. The majority of the urban high school principals who participated in the survey were white males (65.2%). The percentage of black and female urban high school principals were 26% and 22.1% respectively. Only 53 principals indicated they were Hispanic.

The professional needs of the principals seem relevant and reasonable. If estimated means were assigned to the five activities the principals were asked to rate, they would all be close to 3 on the scale of 1 to 5. Therefore all are worthy of consideration by the Board of Directors of the National Association of Secondary School Principals and the association's Urban Schools Committee. The principals indi-

cated by their responses that NASSP should conduct programs and activities that address the unique needs of urban high school principals. The programs would contribute to the acceptance and recognition of urban high school principals.

Minority teachers appear not to be adequately represented in urban schools when compared to urban student populations. While the overall enrollment of white students in urban high schools is less than blacks (but more than Hispanics and Asians) there are considerably more white teachers working in urban high schools than there are black teachers. The respondents indicated 39.4% of the schools had white teaching staffs in the 76 to 99% category. Only 4.2% of the schools had black staffs that were equally as large. In addition, 32.5% of the schools had white teaching staffs in the 51 to 75% category as opposed to only 8.8% of the schools having black teaching staffs in the same category. Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians are less represented than blacks.

Urban high school principals indicated that low student attendance represents the greatest hindrance to academic achievement. This conclusion is drawn from the findings listed in Table 26. While it would be difficult to argue against the belief that students cannot be taught if they do not come to school, the ten factors that followed student absenteeism in the ranking would suggest there is a tendency to blame the victims (students, parents and communities) for

less than desirable academic achievement. However, the urban high school principals' list of factors they believed would have the most significant impact on raising academic achievement, indicated a willingness on the part of school principals to address the barriers to academic achievement. Factors such as raising staffs' perceptions of student abilities, improved teaching techniques and more effective programs for at risk students were among the highest ranked (four of the first seven) suggestions for raising academic achievement. This suggests that while the principals may "blame the victims," they are willing to recommend actions within their control to address the problem of low academic achievement.

The principals' responses regarding what they would do with an extra one hundred dollars per student for the next three years have merit. However, as a write-in item, the responses did not suggest much creativity on the part of the principals or interest on the part of the 116 who did not answer the question. It is possible that they did not understand the question, have resigned themselves to living with the problems, or did not grasp the significance of the amounts of money that would be available to be used at their discretion. For example, the average sized school with a 1,500 student enrollment would have \$450,000 at their disposal for needed programs.

With regard to the students' basic skills competencies, the respondents considered them to be average. However, 67.7% of these urban high school principals believe over 80% of their students are having their needs met. In addition the majority of the principals (464 or 56.9%) rated their teaching staffs above average and another 237 or 29.1% consider their staffs average. Ninety-three principals (11.4%) rated their staffs outstanding. These findings represent a conflict and once again hint of blaming the victims. They also raise the question of the staffs' and principals' expectations of students. In spite of this, principals believe their communities look favorably upon public schools but at a slightly lower level than they value education.

### Recommendations

Several recommendations for future research are offered as an outgrowth of the analysis of this study.

The discrepancies that exist regarding the principals' contention that the competency levels of their students are average yet the students' needs are being met by better than average teaching staffs, strongly suggests a study that specifically addresses this issue. Factors such as staff expectations of students, racism, classism and benign neglect should be included in such a study.

There is a need to sharpen the focus on the leadership function of urban high school principals as it relates to school improvement. There is a need to know if these principals understand and accept the importance of their leadership roles. This is critical and should be addressed before there is greater movement toward site-based management in some urban schools and/or school districts.

A secondary analysis of the data gathered in this study that compares responses according to regions, age, sex, race and principals' length of experience would make a contribution to the field of urban education.

In addition, there is a need to determine if there are differences in urban high schools within given cities. For example, a comparison of urban schools that have a majority of white students to schools having black majorities regarding academic achievement, staff expectations, community support, attendance and rating of teaching staffs. Similar studies could address the achievement levels of ethnic groups related to economic level, locations of schools (city versus inner-city), size of school, size of school districts, and race of principals.

Recommendations to the National Association of Secondary School Principals include the following:

1. A national conference for urban principals that addresses use of modern technology, teacher supervision/evaluation, improving staff expectations of students and strategies for improving student attendance should be planned.

2. An urban education column should be published monthly in the NASSP NEWSLEADER.
3. Urban education programs and workshops should become regular components of the NASSP national convention.
4. At least one monograph that addresses a specific need or concern in urban education should be published. For example, one-topic publications that address areas such as strategies for improving student attendance, improving students self expectations, and increasing parental involvement would be of value.
5. A variety of strategies to increase positive recognition of urban high school principals and their schools should be developed. For example, publishing profiles of individual principals and/or their staffs in the NASSP NEWSLEADER would tend to enhance the image of urban educators.

The feasibility of a national urban high school principal recognition program should be studied. However, this activity should be approached with caution because of strong negative responses to this proposal which matched the strong positive responses.

It is recommended that NASSP collaborate with other organizations and agencies to recruit women and minorities into the field of educational administration. Especially among those teachers who currently serve in urban high schools. This should be a national initiative that enlists the aid of higher education institutions in the recruitment and training efforts.

While there is no intention to suggest that members of an ethnic or racial group can only be taught by teachers who

are of the same group, it is recommended that NASSP actively participate in minority teacher recruitment programs and enlist the aid of the membership in developing local programs. This effort could include enhancement of Future Teachers of America programs; college scholarships for minority students who want to major in education and are willing to teach in urban high schools upon graduation from college; greater emphasis on the field of education by urban high school counselors; and a larger number of magnet high schools for future educators.

Based on the types of responses provided by the principals when they were asked what they would do with \$100 per student for three years and the growing national interest in site-based management, it is recommended that topics such as strategic planning, program planning and evaluation, and preparation of budget be included in NASSP publications targeted for urban high school principals.

Finally, there is a need to continue association efforts to examine the unique problems facing the urban high school in America and those who serve as principals in those schools. The formal appointment of an Urban Schools Committee represents a first step in addressing those concerns. Hopefully this document will provide information useful to the committee as it responds to the challenge of improving the urban high school.

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**APPENDIX A. CITIES THAT CONTAIN THE POPULATION SURVEYED**  
**(LARGEST 100 CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES)**

## LARGEST ONE HUNDRED CITIES IN THE UNITED STATES

(As of July 1, 1984 Estimates)

Data provided by: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Publication Source: 1987 World Almanac

1. New York, NY	7,164,742	22. New Orleans, LA	559,101
2. Los Angeles, CA	3,096,721	23. Cleveland, OH	546,543
3. Chicago, IL	2,992,472	24. Denver, CO	504,588
4. Houston, TX	1,705,697	25. Seattle, WA	488,474
5. Philadelphia, PA	1,646,713	26. El Paso, TX	463,809
6. Detroit, MI	1,088,973	27. Nashville, TN	462,450
7. Dallas, TX	974,234	28. Oklahoma City, OK	443,172
8. San Diego, CA	960,452	29. Kansas City, MO	443,075
9. Phoenix, AZ	853,266	30. St. Louis, MO	429,296
10. San Antonio, TX	842,779	31. Atlanta, GA	426,090
11. Honolulu, HI	805,266	32. Fort Worth, TX	414,562
12. Baltimore, MD	763,570	33. Pittsburgh, PA	402,583
13. San Francisco, CA	712,753	34. Austin, TX	397,001
14. Indianapolis, IN	710,280	35. Long Beach, CA	378,752
15. San Jose, CA	686,178	36. Tulsa, OK	374,535
16. Memphis, TN	648,399	37. Miami, FL	372,634
17. Washington, D.C.	622,823	38. Cincinnati, OH	370,481
18. Milwaukee, WI	620,811	39. Baton Rouge, LA	368,571
19. Jacksonville, FL	577,971	40. Portland, OR	365,861
20. Boston, MA	570,719	41. Tucson, AZ	365,422
21. Columbus, OH	566,114	42. Minneapolis, MN	358,335

43. Oakland, CA	351,898	72. Jackson, MI	208,810
44. Albuquerque, NM	350,575	73. Mobile, AL	204,923
45. Toledo, OH	343,939	74. Aurora, CO	194,772
46. Buffalo, NY	338,982	75. Mesa, AZ	193,931
47. Omaha, NB	332,237	76. Yonkers, NY	191,234
48. Charlotte, NC	330,838	77. Des Moines, IA	190,832
49. Newark, NJ	314,387	78. Montgomery, AL	184,963
50. Virginia Beach, VA	308,664	79. Las Vegas, NV	183,227
51. Sacramento, CA	304,131	80. Grand Rapids, MI	183,000
52. Louisville, KY	289,843	81. Riverside, CA	182,245
53. Wichita, KS	283,496	82. Dayton, OH	181,159
54. Birmingham, AL	279,813	83. Lincoln, NB	180,378
55. Norfolk, VA	279,683	84. Huntington Beach, CA	179,335
56. Tampa, FL	275,479	85. Lubbock, TX	178,529
57. Fresno, CA	267,377	86. Columbus, GA	174,824
58. St. Paul, MN	265,903	87. Knoxville, TN	173,972
59. Corpus Christi, TX	258,067	88. Spokane, WA	173,349
60. Colorado Springs, CO	247,739	89. Stockton, CA	171,659
61. Rochester, NY	242,562	90. Madison, MI	170,745
62. St. Petersburg, FL	241,294	91. Little Rock, AR	170,140
63. Anaheim, CA	233,516	92. Raleigh, NC	169,331
64. Akron, OH	226,877	93. Ft. Wayne, IN	165,416
65. Anchorage, AK	226,663	94. Salt Lake City, UT	164,844
66. Santa Ana, CA	225,405	95. Chattanooga, TN	164,400
67. Jersey City, NJ	223,004	96. Syracuse, NY	164,219
68. Shreveport, LA	219,996	97. Amarillo, TX	162,863
69. Richmond, VA	219,056	98. Kansas City, KS	160,468
70. Arlington, TX	213,832	99. Garland, TX	160,208
71. Lexington-Fayette, KY	210,150	100. Worcester, MA	159,843

**APPENDIX B. LETTER AND PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE**



February 19, 1988

Mr. Willie R. Gentry, Principal  
Worthing Senior High School  
9215 Scott  
Houston, TX 77051

Dear Willie:

NASSP, through its Office of Urban Services, plans to conduct a national study of urban high school principals. In order to develop a survey instrument that is relevant and capable of drawing national attention to the needs and concerns of urban high school principals, I am asking you to assist me in developing the questionnaire.

Here is the plan:

1. I am asking you to list what you consider to be the five greatest educational needs that exist in your school. (See attached form)
2. List what you believe to be the five most important national issues urban high school principals should be concerned about now and in the future. (See attached form)
3. Define the words 'urban' and 'urban high school'.
4. I will compile master lists of the school-level needs and those issues identified as being important concerns for urban educators in general.
5. I will send you my compilations and ask you to rate them based on what you consider to be the most important to that which you believe to have the least importance.
6. After receiving your ratings, I will develop a survey instrument that will reflect the input made by you and nineteen other urban principals from across the nation.
7. There is a possibility I will seek your opinion of the instrument prior to mailing it to a sample of principals.

Serving all Administrators in Middle Level and High School Education

Mr. Willie Gentry, Principal

-2-

February 19, 1988

Please rest assured that all of your responses will be treated in a confidential manner. Thus, please feel free to be as candid as possible.

Upon completion of the study, I will be pleased to send you a copy of the summary of the research.

You and the other nineteen urban high school principals who have been chosen to participate in the initial stages of this study have an opportunity to help set the focus of what I hope will be a significant contribution to the profession.

Your willingness to participate in this research activity will be deeply appreciated. I look forward to receiving your first response at your earliest convenience, and I wish you the very best in all of your endeavors.

Sincerely,

Santee C. Ruffin, Jr.  
Director of Urban Services

SCR:ab

Attachments

Please Return to Santee Ruffin at NASSP  
(Return Envelope is Enclosed)

Item #1

THAT WHICH IS NEEDED TO ASSIST URBAN HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN  
MAKING THEIR SCHOOLS EXEMPLARY LEARNING INSTITUTIONS

Please list at least five specific actions that need to occur in order to make  
your school the type of learning institution you think it should be.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please Return to Santee Ruffin at MASSP  
(Return Envelope is Enclosed)

Item #2

NATIONAL URBAN EDUCATION ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Please list those matters which you believe should be considered national issues and concerns regarding urban high schools.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Please Return to Santee Ruffin at NASSP  
(Return Envelope is Enclosed)

Item #3

DESCRIPTIONS/DEFINITIONS OF 'URBAN' AND 'URBAN HIGH SCHOOL'

1. Please define/describe what the word 'urban' means to you. Please limit your response to space provided below.)

2. Please define/describe what you believe is an 'urban high school'.

**APPENDIX C. LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING INSTRUMENT  
VALIDATION**

**SURVEY REACTION FORM**

1. How long did it take you to complete the survey form?

\_\_\_\_\_minutes

2. Please list (by number) those items you found to be ambiguous and/or awkwardly worded and indicate why you believe them to be so.

3. Please list items you do not understand and indicate why

4. Please list those items you believe should be deleted and state why



**The National Association of Secondary School Principals**  
1904 Association Drive • Reston, Virginia 22091 • Tel: 703-860-0200 • Fax: 703-476-8432

February 7, 1989

Mr. Ammon McWashington  
Ingraham High School  
1819 North 135th St.  
Seattle, WA. 98133

Dear Ammon:

I continue to be most appreciative of your taking the time to respond to the questionnaire I sent you during March, 1988. Your answers and those of sixteen other urban high school principals were essential in the development of the survey instrument that will be sent to 1,500 principals of public urban high schools across the nation within the next few weeks.

Once again, I am asking you to take a few moments to assist me in this national study by participating in the pilot study. Here is what I am asking you to do:

1. Respond to all items listed on the enclosed survey form as directed.
2. Please give me your suggestions as to how I can improve the survey on the enclosed form.
3. Return both forms to me as soon as possible.

Your understanding and participation is crucial to the validity and overall success of the study. Please know that your efforts will be deeply appreciated.

I look forward to receiving your responses.

Sincerely,

Santee C. Ruffin, Jr.  
Director of Urban Services

SCR:sg

enclosures

Serving all Administrators in Middle Level and High School Education

5. Are there any items that should be modified? Please list them and suggest how they should be modified.

6. Are there any items you believe should be added? Please list them.

**REMINDER:**

Please return this form and the completed survey instrument in the enclosed envelope.

On behalf of NASSP and the other 1,500 public urban high school principals, I thank you for your participation in this very important survey of urban administrators.

Sincerely,

✓ Santee C. Ruffin, Jr.  
Director of Urban Services

SCR:sg  
enclosure

**APPENDIX D. LETTER AND FINAL VERSION OF QUESTIONNAIRE**



The National Association of Secondary School Principals

1904 Association Drive • Reston, Virginia 22091 • Tel: 703-860-0200 • Fax: 703-476-5432

Dear Principal:

You have been selected to participate in a NASSP survey which is exclusively for urban public high school principals. In our desire to include your school in the survey and not lose any of the properties of a scientific study (letters returned because of wrong names, transfers, etc.) we chose not to address this correspondence to you by name. Your understanding of this small but important matter is appreciated.

NASSP, through its Office of Urban Services, seeks the opinions, concerns and suggestions of urban high school principals (members and non members) from various regions of the nation. In addition, the Association has a sincere desire to make a contribution to the field of urban education in general. Your responses will also assist us in planning and implementing programs that are specifically designed for urban high school principals. The findings of the survey will be published.

As you know, the success of any survey is directly related to the number of questionnaires that have been fully completed and returned. Therefore, we ask that you respond to every item in the survey instrument and return it in the enclosed postage paid envelope as soon as possible.

Please be assured that this survey is strictly confidential. Any coding that appears on the form is for tabulation purposes only.

Your participation in this study is deeply appreciated. We look forward to sharing the findings of the survey with you.

Sincerely,

Santee C. Ruffin, Jr.  
Director of Urban Services

SCR:sg  
enclosure

Division of Secondary, Intermediate, and High Schools Education



**NASSP SURVEY OF URBAN SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

Your cooperation is important to the success of this survey. Please answer all items and return the completed questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to NASSP. No reference will be made to you, your school, or district in reporting the data from the study. All responses will be considered confidential. Thank you for your assistance.

1. To what extent do you consider the factors listed to be a problem hindering student achievement in your school? Please check one column for *each* problem area.

	Not a Problem	Slight Problem	Moderate Problem	Severe Problem
• Student absenteeism .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Staff absenteeism.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Collective bargaining by employee groups.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Inadequate money available.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Classes too large .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Staff morale low.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Student morale low .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Staff expectations for student achievement are too low.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Student expectations for themselves are too low .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Low level of staff competence.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Peer pressure against academic achievement.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Inadequate interest/involvement on the part of parents .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Lack of community support.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Inadequate physical facilities.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Inadequate supplies and equipment .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Student discipline problems.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Security problems involving nonstudents.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Too little flexibility permitted for differences between schools.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Students with children of their own.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Student lack of basic skills necessary for high school level work.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Drug and/or alcohol abuse .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Too few building administrators to adequately supervise teachers, administer programs, handle discipline, etc.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• School day too short.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• School year too short .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Student gangs.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Inadequate student motivation to learn.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Students lack organizational skills .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Student apathy.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Other (please specify): _____				

2. In your opinion, which *three* of the following would have the most significant impact on raising the academic achievement of students in your school? (*Please check no more than three.*)
- Raise student perceptions of their own abilities
  - Raise staff perceptions of student abilities
  - Raise parental perceptions of student abilities
  - More effective programs for at-risk students
  - Improved teaching techniques
  - Increase parental involvement in student education
  - Decrease in time allocated to noninstructional activities during the school day
  - Removal of disruptive students from classes
  - Increase in level of assistance provided to families for welfare needs such as food and shelter
  - Greater emphasis on basic skills
  - Increase school security
  - Removal of ineffective teachers
  - More stringent requirements for grade promotion
  - Provision of day care facilities for children of students
  - Assign more homework
  - Increase the length of time that school facilities and staff are available to students after the regular day
  - Improvement in quality and/or quantity of instructional materials
  - Increase the financial resources available to education
  - Allow more autonomy for building principals
  - Other (*please specify:* \_\_\_\_\_)

3. If you were provided with an extra \$100 per student for each of the next three years, with the allocation of these funds at your discretion, what would be your highest priority for the use of these funds?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How would you describe your current position as principal in terms of the following factors. Please check one column for *each* factor.

	Good	Fair	Poor
• Satisfaction involved with helping others to learn.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• General career satisfaction .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Interaction with students .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Interaction with teachers.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Interaction with parents.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Salary.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Job security .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Prestige attached to the position .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Working environment .....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Daily schedule.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Recognition from central office and/or school board for achievements.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Increase in personal knowledge and skills.....	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>
• Other ( <i>please specify:</i> _____)			

**STATUS QUESTIONS -- PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS**

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>5. What is your age? _____ years</p> <p>6. With which racial or ethnic group would you identify yourself?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <input type="checkbox"/> White</li> <li>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Black</li> <li>3 <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic</li> <li>4 <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian</li> <li>5 <input type="checkbox"/> Asian</li> <li>6 <input type="checkbox"/> Other</li> </ul> | <p>7. What is your gender?</p> <p>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Male      2 <input type="checkbox"/> Female</p> <p>8. What is the <i>highest</i> college degree you hold?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's degree</li> <li>2 <input type="checkbox"/> Master's degree</li> <li>3 <input type="checkbox"/> 6-year certificate</li> <li>4 <input type="checkbox"/> Doctoral degree</li> </ul> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

9. How many years have you been a secondary school principal:
- In your current district? \_\_\_\_\_ years
  - All together? \_\_\_\_\_ years
10. Did you teach at the secondary level before becoming a secondary school principal?
- 1  Yes, for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
2  No
11. Did you work as an assistant principal at the secondary level before becoming a principal?
- 1  Yes, for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
2  No
12. Are you a member of NASSP?
- 1  Yes      2  No
13. What is the length of your contract year for school year 1988-89?
- 1  Less than 10 months      3  11 months  
2  10 months      4  12 months
14. What is your contract salary for school year 1988-89?
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_
15. How much time (*excluding evenings and weekends*) do you spend at school on a typical school day? \_\_\_\_\_ hours
16. How many hours *in addition to those reported above* do you spend on school-related activities each *week* during the school year? (*Exclude summers.*) \_\_\_\_\_ hours
17. How satisfied are you with your current position as principal?
- 1  Satisfied  
2  Moderately satisfied  
3  Moderately dissatisfied  
4  Dissatisfied
18. How would you characterize the progress you have been able to make toward *your goals for your school and its students*?
- 1  Have *exceeded* my goals  
2  Have *met* my goals  
3  Have *not met* my goals
19. Please indicate below the *one* area in which you would *most* like to increase your personal skills and/or knowledge:
- \_\_\_\_\_

#### STATUS QUESTIONS -- STUDENTS, STAFF, AND SCHOOLS

20. How many students are enrolled:
- In your school? \_\_\_\_\_ students
  - In your school district? \_\_\_\_\_ students
21. How many teachers (*in full-time equivalents*) are employed in your school?
- \_\_\_\_\_ teachers
22. What is the approximate racial-ethnic mix of the student population in your school?
- White \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - Black \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - Asian \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - American Indian \_\_\_\_\_ %
- 100%
23. What is the approximate racial-ethnic mix of the teaching staff in your school?
- White \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - Black \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - Hispanic \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - Asian \_\_\_\_\_ %
  - American Indian \_\_\_\_\_ %
- 100%
24. What is the average daily rate of attendance in your school? \_\_\_\_\_ %
25. What percent of the student body do you feel can have their educational needs met in your school *as it currently operates*? \_\_\_\_\_ %
26. How would you describe your school?
- 1  Comprehensive      3  Magnet  
2  Vocational      4  Alternative
27. What grades are included in your school?
- 1  7-12      3  9-12      5  11-12  
2  8-12      4  10-12      6  Other
28. Approximately what percentage of your students participate in your school's free or reduced rate lunch program? \_\_\_\_\_ %
29. How would you describe the level of competency of *most* of the students in your school in regard to basic skills?
- 1  Well above average  
2  Above average  
3  Average  
4  Below average  
5  Well below average

30. How would you rate your teaching staff?  
 Outstanding  
 Above average  
 Average  
 Below average  
 Poor
31. Are there any assistant principals assigned to your school?  
 Yes (*how many:* \_\_\_\_\_)  No
32. In what state is your school located?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
33. What is the approximate population of the city in which your school is located?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
34. How would you describe the general attitude in your community toward the:
- Public schools
    - Very positive
    - Positive
    - Average
    - Negative
    - Very negative
  - Value of education
    - Very positive
    - Positive
    - Average
    - Negative
    - Very negative
35. How would you describe the *level of authority* that principals in your district have to make decisions concerning their own schools?  
 High                       Low  
 Moderate                   None
36. Please check below the statement that best describes your authority over the selection of teachers for your school. (*Check ONE.*)  
 Have primary authority for hiring  
 Share authority with central office  
 Have little or no authority
37. Do you have the opportunity to interview prospective teachers before assignment to your school?  
 Yes, always  Yes, usually  No
38. In general is the authority to run your school given to you by the school board and central administration in balance with the degree to which you are held responsible when things go wrong?  
 Yes                       No
39. How much influence do you think you have on school *district* decisions that affect secondary schools and secondary education?  
 Much influence       Little influence  
 Some influence       No influence
40. What one goal do you consider most important for your school and its students? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- What do you see as your role in achieving this goal?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**NASSP PROGRAMS FOR URBAN PRINCIPALS**

41. NASSP would like some input from you as to programs that might benefit urban principals. Please rank the five types of programs listed below from 5 (*most helpful*) to 1 (*least helpful*) using each rank number only once.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting national conferences and workshops for urban high school principals
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Providing an urban education column in NASSP's newsletter
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting urban education sessions at the annual NASSP convention
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Producing special publications targeted to the needs of urban principals
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting a national recognition program for urban secondary school principals
42. Do you have any suggestions for other programs that could be instituted by NASSP?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: NASSP URBAN PRINCIPALS SURVEY  
 1904 Association Drive • Reston, Virginia 22091

**APPENDIX E. FOLLOW-UP LETTER TO NON-RESPONDENTS**



**The National Association of Secondary School Principals**  
1904 Association Drive • Reston, Virginia 22091 • Tel: 703-860-0200 • Fax: 703-476-9432

March 31, 1989

Dear Principal:

We are sorry we haven't heard from you yet. Because, NASSP really needs your assistance. Please help us.

During the week of March 5, 1989 we mailed a letter to you which indicated NASSP is conducting a national survey of urban high school principals. A survey form and a return envelope accompanied the letter. Our records indicate we have not received your completed survey form.

We know you are a busy educator. However, we ask that you take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey and return it in the postage paid envelope that has been provided.

The few minutes you take to complete the form represents a significant contribution to NASSP's national study of the urban high school principalship. In addition, you will assist us in planning publications and programs that are specifically for urban high school principals.

Please be assured that your responses are confidential. No mention of you or your school will be made at any time. Any coding that appears on the form is for tabulation purposes only.

Your assistance will be deeply appreciated. We look forward to sharing the results of this study with you.

Sincerely,

✓ Santee C. Ruffin, Jr.  
Director of Urban Services

P.S. Please disregard this letter if you have mailed the first form we sent to you.

SCR:sg  
enclosures

Serving all Administrators in Middle Level and High School Education

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