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ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND EXPERIENCES OF RURAL SUPERINTENDENT-PRINCIPALS

by

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A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Education

Grand Forks, North Dakota
December
2015

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This dissertation, submitted by Chad Allan Clark in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

November 20, 2015
Date

PERMISSION

Title	Roles, Responsibilities, and Experiences of Rural Superintendent-Principals
Department	Educational Leadership
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Chad Allan Clark
December 1, 2015

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Brittney, Marleigh, Mckenna, and Myah . . . Daddy is finally going to have time to play with you! I want you all to remember that you do not have to be the brightest, but you do have to work hard to get to where you want to be! Please remember that nothing comes easy!

Finally, I would like to thank my mother, Jane Clark. There were many times throughout the program when I wanted to give up, but you would call and tell me that I could do it. Your words of encouragement and endless support have helped me become the man I am today. Your baby boy has done what many people did not think was possible. I never would have been able to do it without you. I love you!

ABSTRACT

Superintendent-principals face the task of effectively leading while performing in their roles and responsibilities as superintendent and principal. A limited amount of research has found that superintendent-principals experience role ambiguity, stress, and burnout. The purpose of this study was to understand roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. The research question guiding this study was: What are the shared experiences of rural superintendent-principals in their first 5 years of a dual-role administrative career?

This qualitative study involved interviewing superintendent-principals with 5 or fewer years of experience in the dual-role position of superintendent-principal. Six superintendent-principals in rural North Dakota were interviewed, and data were coded into categories, themes, and assertions. Outcomes identified for rural superintendent-principals were: role and responsibilities were more managerial than leadership, impact of additional roles and responsibilities on instructional leadership, key support systems, impact of a rural environment on a leader, and superintendent-principal training. This study provides recommendations for rural superintendent-principals, rural school board members, North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs, and North Dakota Department of Public Instruction.

Keywords: superintendent-principal, leadership, management, rural school district

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I accepted my first administrative position as a superintendent-principal in a rural school district in northeast North Dakota in 2011. As I sat in my office in early July, I was not sure what my roles and responsibilities would be as a superintendent-principal. I reflected on Educational Leadership coursework and could not recall a lot of discussion about the superintendent-principal position. I contacted two prior superintendent-principals from my school and another local rural administrator to seek advice. Each administrator had his or her own story to tell and no story was the same. However, I quickly learned what it meant to be a superintendent-principal in a rural school district.

At the beginning of my tenure in August 2011, I turned in school improvement paperwork from the prior school year to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, hired a classroom teacher and bus driver to replace individuals who resigned two weeks before school started, completed a federal consolidated application for a Title I program, prepared for a school board meeting, visited with community stakeholders, and distributed fliers to promote back to school night. Expected and unexpected duties demanded more managerial skills than leadership skills during that first month. My roles and responsibilities continued to multiply with my position over the remainder of the school year. As my roles and responsibilities increased, a change in balance of leadership and management tasks occurred.

Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, and Slate (2010) reported superintendent-principals wear various "hats" daily; this refers to a person who has many different roles or tasks to perform. As a superintendent-principal, I wore the substitute teacher "hat" when there were no substitute teachers available. After losing three bus drivers in 1 year, I carried out the role of bus driver for the school district. If a janitor or cook were absent, I grabbed a mop or helped out in the kitchen to keep things running smoothly. I performed the duties of a head basketball coach for both boys and girls during my first year because I could not find anyone who was willing to coach. I switched my "hat" to nurse every time a student came in sick, hurt, or needed a head check for lice. I took on the counselor's role by listening to many students and parents and supporting them on a daily basis. I also wore the "hat" of a construction engineer and answered any questions the school board had when it came to replacing our windows, gymnasium floor, and roof. These were some of the extra roles and tasks added on top of my superintendent-principal duties in my rural school district.

After reflecting on my time as a superintendent-principal for 3 years, I determined that I needed to spend more time managing than leading. According to Kotter (1990), management "brings order and consistency" (p. 20). Many "fires" were reactive not proactive and needed to be put out on a daily basis. Chronic student behaviors, student attendance, staff concerns about students, and parent complaints took up most of my day as superintendent-principal. The school week consisted of finding substitute teachers, completing a weekly newsletter, answering emails, attending Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings, answering the telephone, and taking messages to let students know whether or not they would stay for the afterschool program, inputting student attendance

data for the afterschool program, and making sure students got home safely on my bus route. These were some of the managerial tasks I performed to ensure "order and consistency" as a superintendent-principal in a rural school setting.

Kotter (1990) argued, "Leadership produces movement" (p. 21). During my 3 years as superintendent-principal, the school district became a schoolwide Title I institution, implemented the Marzano Teacher and Principal Evaluation Model, and initiated a one-to-one iPad program. Instructional leadership was a top priority of mine. I planned on visiting the classroom every day to observe instruction and provide feedback to teachers. However, the instructional leadership did not go as planned due to the interruptions mentioned above. Instructional leadership consisted of visiting the classroom by December 15 and March 15 and meeting North Dakota's teacher evaluation requirements. My leadership "moved" the school district in a direction, but could have been more effective if less time had been spent on management.

In my experience as a rural superintendent-principal, I discovered that it was necessary to take on more roles and responsibilities to keep the school running efficiently and effectively. I quickly realized that prioritizing tasks was key in order for this to happen. This has been my experience of what it is to be a superintendent-principal in a rural North Dakota school.

Need for Study

Small, rural districts and schools play a prominent role in the education of North Dakota's students. Brian Bucholz (personal communication, February 17, 2015), research technician with Management Information Systems at the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, provided the following on North Dakota rural school

districts. At the time of this report, of the 179 public school districts in North Dakota, 163 public schools were considered rural. In North Dakota, 44 out of 179 school districts were operating with a superintendent-principal. Eleven (11) of the 44 superintendent-principals had 5 or less years experience working as a dual-role administrator.

Superintendent-principals are asked to "do more with less" and must learn how to effectively lead with the dual responsibilities demanded by both positions. Superintendent-principals "are forced to prioritize their responsibilities, thus leaving many important duties undone" (Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, & Slate, 2008, p. 2). More accountability requirements and responsibilities exist for dual-role administrators compared to single-role superintendents or principals. One of the primary differences between small school administrators compared to large school administrators is they are responsible for not only seeing that tasks are done, but for actually performing the tasks (Wylie & Clark, 1991). This study provided an insight into individuals serving in the complex role of superintendent-principal, allowing them to describe their experiences.

It is important to increase our understanding of roles and responsibilities that accompany a superintendent-principal position in rural education for several reasons. First, information collected may give "rich-thick descriptions" (Creswell, 2014; Glesne, 2011; Maxwell, 2013) of the specific role of superintendent-principals and how they attend to multiple roles expected by local, state, and federal mandates. Rich thick description "transports readers to the setting and gives the discussion an element of shared experiences" (Creswell, 2014, p. 202).

The second reason for this study is that, at least at the time of the study, there was little research focused on rural administrators serving in superintendent-principal

positions (Anderson, 2007; Canales et al., 2008; Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010; Hesbol, 2005; Lochry, 1998; McIntire, 2007; Palleria, 2000). Some studies took place in rural schools in Nebraska, Texas, South Dakota, California, and Illinois. However, in any field, it is important to expand limited research, and in this case at the time of this study, on dual-role administrators as experienced by superintendent-principals in their respective rural North Dakota communities. This study is important for newly appointed superintendent-principals in rural schools who are at a disadvantage because relatively little high-quality research has been conducted about dual-role administrators and rural education issues. Results of this study may allow actual and prospective administrators considering positions of leadership in small rural school districts to identify leadership and management skills required for successful leadership.

Finally, this study attempted to identify challenges encountered by respondents serving in a superintendent-principal's role. Information gathered has been made available to leadership programs and rural school districts to assist in improved preparation and support of future administrators who may find themselves serving in a superintendent-principal position.

Purpose of Study

This study attempted to understand roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. Emphasis was placed on identifying leadership and management skills, successes, and challenges of individuals serving in a superintendent-principal position. I chose phenomenology as a methodology and explored the perceptions of six North Dakota rural superintendent-principals through an interview process. This research aimed to fill a gap in the literature when it came to

understanding the rural superintendent-principal in the United States, particularly in North Dakota.

Research Question

This phenomenological study focused on perspectives of rural North Dakota superintendent-principals who had held their position for 5 years or less. The following research question guided this study of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota:

1. What are the shared experiences of rural superintendent-principals in their first 5 years of a dual-role administrative career?

Conceptual Framework

Historically, public school leaders were viewed as managers. The early role of superintendents was considered managerial, as they were responsible for simple clerical and practical tasks (Urban & Wagoner, 2014). Today, superintendents are expected to lead district reform efforts due to federal and state accountability legislation, create formal strategic plans, promote public engagement for academic reform, and utilize data to drive decision making and professional development (Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, & Reeves, 2012; Hentschke, Nayfack, & Wohlstetter, 2009). The principal role evolved in the early 1800s. Principals were responsible for managing schools that grew from one-room schoolhouses into schools with multiple grades and classrooms. Today, principals are expected to be instructional leaders for their school districts. Instructional leaders need to have a common vision of good instruction, provide support and resources for classroom teachers, and monitor teacher and student performance (National Education Association, 2008). Over the past 25 years (at the time of this study), the role of school

leaders has shifted from managers to leaders in the field of education. Not only has the role of administrators changed over the years, educational leadership has shifted as well.

The conceptual framework for this qualitative study was influenced by John Kotter's (1990) leadership theory. Kotter stated that leadership and management are often interchanged; however, each term has its own meaning and purpose. Kotter defined leadership as a process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas and produces movement. Kotter identified three elements of leadership based on "works on leadership in modern organizations" (p. 184) from authors such as Bennis and Nanus (1985) and Peters and Austin (1985) and research studies that Kotter conducted in the late 1980s. The elements of leadership, as identified by Kotter, are establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring people.

Kotter defined management as bringing a degree of order and consistency to an organization by keeping it on time and on budget. Kotter identified three elements of management based on multiple books on management and a 1987 survey that Kotter conducted to describe actions of effective management. The elements of management as identified by Kotter are: planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. Kotter stated that strong leadership and strong management are needed for any organization to be successful.

Torrance and Humes (2015) discussed the transformation of management into leadership in the field of education. In the late 1960s, educational institutions focused on management that was being utilized by industries. In the mid-1970s, educational management strategies continued "to secure efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning" (Torrance & Humes, 2015, p. 794). In the 1980s and 1990s, leadership started

to emerge in the educational setting and in literature, separating itself from management. In the last decade, leadership and management may be separated theoretically, but not practically.

Delimitations

This study took place in rural areas within the state of North Dakota. Six rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota were interviewed. The study did not include superintendents or principals who serve in other roles, such as superintendent-teacher or principal-teacher. The study was conducted to determine superintendent-principals' beliefs or perceptions about leadership roles and responsibilities, managerial roles and responsibilities, and advantages and disadvantages of the superintendent-principal position.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used in this study. The definition of terms was intended to provide clarity and specificity regarding use of terminology in this study. Terms included:

Dual-role: For this study, the term dual-role will be defined as someone who is both a superintendent and principal. (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2015)

Leadership: "A process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas" (Kotter, 1990, p. 19). "The term leadership produces movement" (Kotter, 1990, p. 21).

Management: "The term management brings a degree of order and consistency" (Kotter, 1990, p. 20). "The primary function of management is to keep a complex organization on time and on budget" (Kotter, 1990, p. 21).

Rural, Distant: "Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster" (Keaton, 2013, p. B-3).

Rural, Fringe: "Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster" (Keaton, 2013, p. B-3).

Rural, Inside CBSA: "Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory within a metropolitan CBSA and defined as rural by the Census Bureau" (Keaton, 2012, p. B-2).

Rural, Outside CBSA: "Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory not within a metropolitan CBSA or within a micropolitan CBSA and defined as rural by the Census Bureau" (Keaton, 2012, p. B-2).

Rural, Remote: "Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster" (Keaton, 2013, p. B-3).

Rural School: The term rural school will be defined as having "an average daily attendance of less than 600 or each county in which a school is located and served by a school district has a population density of fewer than 10 people per square mile and a [federal NCES] Locale Code of 7 or 8" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, n.d., p. 9).

Principal: "A staff member performing the assigned activities of the administrative officer of an individual school to whom has been delegated major responsibility

with commensurate authority for the direction of all aspects of the program" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2015, p. 6).

Superintendent: "A staff member who is the chief executive officer of a school administrative unit and works directly under a board of education" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, 2015, p. 7).

Superintendent-principal: A staff member performing the assigned activities of both superintendent and principal (Canales et al., 2010).

List of Acronyms

The following acronyms are utilized within this study. This list will clarify their meaning within the context of this study.

ADA- Average Daily Attendance

AYP- Adequate Yearly Progress

CBSA- Core Based Statistical Area

DIBELS- Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DPI- Department of Public Instruction

ECS- Education Commission of States

IEP- Individualized Education Program

NCES- National Center for Education Statistics

NCLB- No Child Left Behind

NDCEL- North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders

NDDPI- North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

NDSA- North Dakota State Assessment

NWEA- Northwest Evaluation Association

REA- Regional Education Association

REAP- Rural Education Achievement Program

STARS- State Automated Reporting System

Organization of Study

This report is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provided the Introduction, Need for Study, Purpose of Study, Research Question, Conceptual Framework, Delimitations, Definition of Terms, List of Acronyms, and Organization of Study. Chapter II provides a literature review on five key areas related to rural superintendent-principals: (a) rural education, (b) a paradigm shift in education, (c) preparation programs, (d) novice leaders, and (e) administrative roles, responsibilities, successes, and challenges. Chapter III provides the methods used to gather and analyze data for the study. Chapter IV presents findings from superintendent-principal interviews. Chapter V contains a conclusion and summary of the data as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This study was conducted to gain a better understanding of rural North Dakota superintendent-principal roles, responsibilities, and experiences. An emphasis was placed on identifying leadership and management skills, successes, and challenges of the superintendent-principal position. This was a qualitative study relying primarily on interview data to review, analyze, and compare perceptions of superintendent-principals in North Dakota. The research question for this study was:

1. What are the shared experiences of rural superintendent-principals in their first 5 years of a dual-role administrative career?

At the time of this study, literature on superintendent-principals serving in rural school districts in the United States was limited. Research studies focusing on rural superintendent-principals had been conducted in California (Lochry, 1998; Geivett, 2010; & McIntire, 2007), South Dakota (Palleria, 2000), Texas (Canales et al., 2008; Canales et al., 2010), Illinois (Hesbol, 2005), and Nebraska (Anderson, 2007). I found only one study, conducted in North Dakota, with a direct relationship to the research question (Klein, 1988).

Search engines used for reviewing the literature included Academic Search Premier, ERIC, Google Scholar, and ProQuest through the Chester Fritz Library at the

University of North Dakota. I conducted the research myself, initially, but asked for specialist assistance from Janet Rex, University of North Dakota librarian, to confirm the lack of sources and to find others, if they existed. The terms used to search for literature on the topic included: superintendent-principal, dual-role superintendent-principal, dual-role administrators, history of dual-role administrators, roles of dual-role administration, and challenges of dual-role administrators. Because of the absence of research on the dual-role administrator, I drew information from a much more complete group of literature focused on the separate roles of principal and superintendent to inform my study.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature for this study. The first section of the literature review provides information on rural education and a paradigm shift in education and administration preparation programs. Next, the literature review will focus on administration preparation programs and novice leaders in the administrative position. Finally, the literature review provides the following information on the superintendent, principal, and superintendent-principal positions: history, role and responsibilities, challenges, and successes.

Superintendents and principals serve in suburban, urban, and rural school districts. Superintendent-principals mainly serve in rural school districts. The definition of each context is different from state to state. The following section will define rural in the United States as defined by Keaton (2013) for a federal report. On a smaller scale, the term rural is defined by Department of Public Instruction (n.d.) in North Dakota.

Rural Education

Rural school districts are considered the backbone of education in the United States, especially in North Dakota. In a federal report, Keaton (2013) reported that 27,264 of 98,271 schools (27.7% of schools) in the United States were considered rural. The total number of students attending rural schools in the United States was 9,132,607 of 49,709,977 (18.4%). In North Dakota, 334 out of 512 schools (65.2%) were considered rural, which is a great deal higher than the national average. In the 2011-2012 school year, the total number of students attending rural schools in North Dakota was 39,367 of 101,687 (38.7%). There are numerous definitions for the term rural. For the data listed above, Keaton's definition of rural is below. Keaton included three definitions of rural in his report. These definitions were obtained from the United States Department of Education's Common Core of Data program.

> *Rural, Fringe*: Census-defined rural territory that is less than or equal to 5 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is less than or equal to 2.5 miles from an urban cluster.
>
> *Rural, Distant*: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 5 miles but less than or equal to 25 miles from an urbanized area, as well as rural territory that is more than 2.5 miles but less than or equal to 10 miles from an urban cluster.
>
> *Rural, Remote*: Census-defined rural territory that is more than 25 miles from an urbanized area and is also more than 10 miles from an urban cluster.
>
> (Keaton, 2013, p. B-3)

For the purpose of this study, the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's (2015) definition of rural school was used. NDDPI uses Keaton's Locale Code to help with the definition.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's (n.d.) definition of rural school is defined by the Rural Education Achievement Program (REAP). A rural school has "an average daily attendance of less than 600 or each county in which a school is located and served by a school district has a population density of fewer than 10 people per square mile and a [federal NCES] Locale Code of 7 or 8" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, n.d., p. 9).

According to Phan and Glander (2008), Locale Code 7 refers to rural, outside a Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) and Locale Code 8 refers to rural, inside a CBSA. Below are the definitions of Locale Codes 7 and 8.

> *Rural, outside CBSA*: Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory not within a metropolitan CBSA or within a micropolitan CBSA and defined as rural by the Census Bureau.
>
> *Rural, inside CBSA*: Any incorporated place, Census-designated place, or non-place territory within a metropolitan CBSA and defined as rural by the Census Bureau.
>
> (Phan & Glander, 2008, p. 3)

Each rural school is unique compared to urban, suburban, and other rural schools (McCloud, 2005; Murdock, 2012). McCloud (2005) stated, "There can be no one-size-fits-all approach to either rural education or to the preparation of leaders for rural schools" (p. 1). Researchers have conducted studies on advantages and disadvantages of rural schools. The following two sections focus on rural schools' positive attributes and challenges that were found in a review of the literature.

Positive Attributes of Rural Schools

A rural school is an asset to a small community and gives the community an identity (Jimerson, 2006b; Murdock, 2012). According to Murdock (2012), a meta-analysis of previous studies conducted identified positive attributes of rural school districts. Small schools provide more opportunities for students to participate in available programs because of less competition (Jimerson, 2006b; Barley & Beesley, 2007), have fewer discipline problems (Jimerson, 2006b; Barley & Beesley, 2007), offer more meaningful adult connections (Budge, 2006; Jimerson, 2006b; Barley & Beesley, 2007), provide a safer school environment (Jimerson, 2006b), and generally have lower class sizes (Jimerson, 2006b). The following three studies (Budge, 2006; Jimerson, 2006b; Barley & Beesley, 2007) provided evidence of the benefits of rural schools.

Budge (2006) conducted a case study focusing on a school district that faced an economic decline and an out-migration of its young people. Budge interviewed 11 leaders in the school district. Leaders consisted of three administrators, two school board members, four teacher leaders, and two parent/community leaders. Budge reported both the problems and privileges associated with rural places. According to Budge, leaders enjoyed the following positive benefits from being in a small community: developing a sense of efficacy and worth; developing a sense of belongingness; being close to extended family; being allowed an opportunity to grow professionally; and building relationships with community members, parents, students, and colleagues. Budge found that respondents were more motivated to be involved in a rural community and school district and were given opportunities to take on leadership roles. These findings were in part confirmed by Jimerson (2006b) who shared similar results with Budge's case study.

Jimerson (2006b) conducted research on the benefits of small schools on student academics and emotions. Her findings included the following 10 research-based reasons for sending students to rural schools: increased participation in before- and after-school activities; increased safety and decreased need for disciplinary actions; sense of belongingness; individualized instruction for all students; implementation of good teaching strategies; positive increase in teacher attitudes and morale; high expectations for all students; multi-age classrooms due to declining enrollment; less bureaucracy; and fewer building transitions between elementary, middle, and high school (Jimerson, 2006b). Jimerson provided research studies that countered the claims of some rural school benefits such as homogenous grouping, also known as tracking, and less bureaucracy. Jimerson reported that many rural schools use heterogeneous grouping more often because they do not have enough students to track and they have a school culture of all-inclusiveness. Jimerson believed that the major reason rural school districts were successful was due to the close interpersonal connections between students, staff, and community. Jimerson's research findings were validated in Barley and Beesley's (2007) exploratory study.

Barley and Beesley (2007) focused on why high performing, high-needs (HPHN) rural schools are successful. Their study was broken down into two phases. In Phase 1, Barley and Beesley selected 20 high-performing, high needs rural schools based on 2 years of state achievement data. Principals from each school were contacted by telephone and questioned based on 19 factors attributed to the success of rural schools. Barley and Beesley reported that the top four important factors were: high expectations of students; structural support for learning; use of student data; and alignment of curriculum,

instruction, and assessment. In Phase 2 of the study, data were collected through a focus group consisting of community members, parents, school board members, teachers, and the principal in four schools. Barley and Beesley questioned the role of each participant, school characteristics, community involvement in the school district, pros and cons of the school district, and elements of success. Data were collected through interviews with principals and teachers not involved in the focus group and focused on the success of the school. Barley and Beesley reported the following themes from data collected: community support, extracurricular activities, student mindset, strong leadership, a culture of caring, use of student data, structural supports for learning, high expectations of students, and teacher retention. The most important factors for rural school success mentioned at all four schools was supportive relationships with the community.

Jimerson (2006b), Budge (2006), and Barley and Beesley (2007) conducted studies that focused on positive attributes of rural school districts. Two common responses among these studies and Murdock's (2012) book were: creating a sense of belongingness; and building positive relationships with community, parents, students, and staff. While there is considerable evidence to suggest working in a rural context is beneficial to student, teacher, and administrator success, studies also point to some important challenges.

Challenges Related to Rural Schools

According to Budge (2006), leaders in new roles face critical challenges in rural school districts. Rural education leaders must address critical challenges such as: retaining and recruiting administrators (Cruzeiro & Boone, 2009; Pijanowski, Hewitt, & Brady, 2009; Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013), experiencing isolation in a rural

community (Ashton & Duncan, 2012; Wood, Finch, & Mirecki, 2013), meeting federal mandates connected to No Child Left Behind (Jimerson, 2005), and dealing with declining enrollment (Jimerson, 2006a; Johnson, Showalter, Klein, & Lester, 2014; Schwartzbeck, 2003).

Rural school boards face the daunting task of recruiting and retaining administrators. Wood, Finch, and Mirecki (2013) surveyed 40 superintendents on strategies and factors for recruiting and retaining rural administrators in the Midwest. Superintendents, near urban areas, reported the top two challenges in "recruiting" administrators were close proximity to higher paying districts and low/uncompetitive salaries. The top two challenges for "retaining" administrators in these areas were close proximity to higher paying districts, and social environment and culture. Geographical and social isolation were the top two recruitment and retention challenges reported by superintendents "not near" urban areas. Small town superintendents indicated geographic isolation, and social environment and culture as the top two challenges in "recruitment." Geographical isolation and close proximity to higher paying districts were the two highest rated "retaining" challenges.

In another study, Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady (2009) surveyed 197 superintendents in Arkansas on their perceptions of a principal shortage there. Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady found that "less than half of the applicants who made up the leadership search pool were qualified for the job" (p. 90). The mean number of applicants applying for a principal position was "approximately 10.3 candidates" (p. 90) and only 4.9 candidates were considered qualified for the position. However, in school districts with 499 students or fewer, the mean number of applicants was 6.8 and 4.4

candidates met criteria for being qualified for the position. A gap between the mean number of applicants and mean number of applicants who met interview criteria continued to increase as district size became larger. According to Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady, being qualified meant having the correct licensure, experience, educational quality, leadership experience, or other factors determined by local school boards.

Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady (2009) also reported that rural schools were (are) at a significant disadvantage when searching for new school leaders compared to larger school districts. Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady reported that larger school districts receive an average of 14.6 applications for an open position compared to 6.8 in neighboring rural school districts. Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady reported three top ways to recruit and retain school administrators were to: raise their level of compensation, improve leadership training strategies in educational leadership preparation programs, and redefine the role of principal.

In contrast to the two studies mentioned above, Cruzeiro and Boone (2009) reported that they did not have a shortage of applicants for vacant principal positions, and they were able to find qualified applicants to fill principal positions. Cruzeiro and Boone interviewed 43 superintendents, 23 in Nebraska and 20 in Texas, to: (a) determine if rural school districts in these states were experiencing a shortage of qualified principal candidates, and (b) identify professional and personal attributes rural superintendents sought in principal candidates. They found that the superintendents from both states reported no shortage of qualified principal candidates. Cruzeiro and Boone reported that Texas superintendents received 20-25 applications for advertised principal positions, which included more than one qualified applicant. In both states, potential principal

candidates were expected to have experience as a classroom teacher, have the appropriate credentialing, and preferred applicants were expected to have experience as an assistant principal or principal.

Ashton and Duncan (2012) reviewed literature on challenges encountered and skills required for a principal serving in a rural school district. Ashton and Duncan created an entry plan for new rural principals based on their literature review. Ashton and Duncan found:

> The challenges new rural administrators face often include lack of decision-making experience, feelings of professional loneliness and isolation, little administrative support, as well as standardized compliance with state and national requirements that do not account for school or staff size (Ashton & Duncan, 2012, p. 1).

Ashton and Duncan suggested that new administrators need to find a mentor to combat isolation and loneliness. Ashton and Duncan stated that new leaders begin their new positions with a "sink or swim mentality" and this mentality can leave administrators "overwhelmed" and looking for a new job.

Another challenge facing rural school districts is federal mandates, such as No Child Left Behind. Jimerson (2005) discussed the following six challenges the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 placed on rural schools and districts:

1. Preventing small schools and districts from being misidentified as failing or "in need of improvement" . . .
2. Preventing schools that need help from being under-identified as "in need of improvement" . . .
3. Maintaining confidentiality . . .
4. Staffing all rural schools with "highly qualified" teachers . . .

5. Limiting financial strains due to NCLB implementation. . .
6. Meeting requirements for "sanctions" in rural area.

(Jimerson, 2005, pp. 2-4)

Jimerson (2006a) mentioned the challenges rural schools and districts face when experiencing declining enrollment. Jimerson (2006a) stated, "When enrollment falls, revenue decreases" (p. 6). Rural schools and districts are often faced with financial distress that leads to reduction of programs, staff, and resources. Schwartzbeck (2003) provided three reasons for declining school enrollment and discussed challenges facing rural school districts. Rural communities are becoming increasingly older because of an increase in families moving out of rural communities for better opportunities, and a decline in births. Schwartzbeck identified the following five challenges for rural school districts experiencing declining enrollment:

1. Threat of consolidation;
2. Loss of per-pupil funding;
3. Fewer instructional resources;
4. Teacher and administrator quality issues; and
5. Declining school facilities or difficulty securing funds for repair or construction.

(Schwartzbeck, 2003, p. 3)

Paradigm Shift – No Child Left Behind

A paradigm shift in education over the past 15 years has led to an increase in accountability for educators. The era of accountability has forced a shift in the administrator's role, duties, and expectations (Rice, 2010). Starr and White (2008) stated that prior to this paradigm shift in school leadership, administrators were expected to be disciplinarians and building managers. The paradigm shift from manager to leader has been difficult due to the amount of management tasks and issues that now take up an

administrator's time and attention (National Education Association, 2008). Administrators are faced with reforms at the local, state, and federal level. Educational reforms, such as No Child Left Behind, have added to the role and responsibilities of superintendents, principals, and superintendent-principals.

The goal of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 has been to close achievement gaps and raise achievements for all students in the United States (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001). School district's not meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) requirements are held accountable under the law. Sanctions under NCLB have a great impact not only on school districts, but also on principals. Principals, whose school districts do not meet AYP, experience a "diminished control over school management to dismissal to dissolution of the entire school" (National Education Association, 2008, p. 2). Stakeholders, such as school boards, community leaders, and parents, put pressure on school leaders and focus on principals' instructional leadership (National Education Association, 2008). A 2006 Wallace Foundation Perspective report highlighted the connection between student achievement and instructional leadership:

> Behind excellent teaching and excellent schools is excellent leadership – the kind that ensures that effective teaching practices don't remain isolated and unshared in single classrooms, and ineffective ones don't go unnoticed and unremedied. Indeed, with our national commitment to make every single child a successful learner, the importance of having such a high-quality leader in every school is greater than ever. (The Wallace Foundation, 2006, p. 1)

The National Education Association (2008) reviewed research in the field and came up with suggestions that principals need to have a clear understanding of in addition to their routine tasks. These suggestions are as follows:

- Developing new skills and learning innovative ways of doing things . . . so . . . school environments will be safe, flexible, challenging, and responsive to the needs of multicultural populations.
- Successful principals need to develop a comprehensive understanding of school and classroom practices that contribute to high student achievement in order to influence the work of teachers.
- Teachers' working conditions are linked to students' learning conditions, so schools must provide optimal conditions . . . . These include safe and modern school facilities, fair compensation and benefits for personnel, adequate and sustained funding, sufficient time for planning, community support, and effective and sufficient instructional materials.
- Using student achievement data to guide improvements is critical to managing curriculum in ways that promote student learning.
- . . . provide teachers with time for collaboration as well as time for professional development that is tied to the teaching and learning process.
- Principals must share authority and responsibility and learn to empower and support teachers.

(National Education Association, 2008, p. 3)

Principals' roles have shifted from managers to instructional leaders in education (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; Starr & White, 2008; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). However, not everyone agrees with this dichotomous theory. Torrance and Humes (2015) argued that if there is leadership in the education realm, it is not well defined; and, it has been left to the teaching profession to figure out how changes in roles of leaders resulting from new legislation are to be defined and distributed. Leadership and management are two words that have often been used interchangeably, but they have very different meanings. Kotter (1990) defined leadership as a process that "helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas" (p. 19) and "produces movement" (p. 21). Kotter defined management as a process that "brings a degree of order and consistency" (p. 20) and "keeps a complex organization on time and

on budget" (p. 21). Table 1 shows Kotter's summaries of management and leadership. Kotter believed a successful organization needs both leadership and management present.

Table 1. Comparing Management and Leadership.

	Management	*Leadership*
Creating an agenda	Planning and Budgeting – establishing detailed steps and timetables for achieving needed results, and then allocating the resources necessary to make that happen	Establishing Direction – developing a vision of the future, often the distant future, and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision
Developing a human network for achieving the agenda	Organizing and Staffing: establishing some structure for accomplishing plan requirements, staffing that structure with individuals, delegating responsibility and authority for carrying out the plan, providing policies and procedures to help guide people, and creating methods or systems to monitor implementation	Aligning People: communicating the direction by words and deeds to all those whose cooperation may be needed so as to influence the creation of teams and coalitions that understand the vision and strategies, and accept their validity
Execution	Controlling and Problem Solving – monitoring results vs. plan in some detail, identifying deviations, and then planning and organizing to solve these problems	Motivating and Inspiring – energizing people to overcome major political, bureaucratic, and resource barriers to change by satisfying very basic, but often unfulfilled, human needs
Outcomes	Produces a degree of predictability and order, and has the potential of consistently producing key results expected by various stakeholders (e.g., for customers, always being on time; for stockholders, being on budget)	Produces change, often to a dramatic degree, and has the potential of producing extremely useful change (e.g., new products that customers want, new approaches to labor relations that help make a firm more competitive)

Reprinted from J. P. Kotter, 1990, *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs From Management*, p. 6. Copyright 1990 by the Free Press.

Research (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; Starr & White, 2008; The Wallace Foundation, 2013) has suggested that the role of administrators is changing from managerial type roles to leadership roles. Preparation programs need to focus on this change, and also, on administrator skills needed in the rural context, not only urban and suburban contexts (Copeland, 2013; McCloud, 2005).

Preparation Programs

The purpose of educational leadership programs has been to prepare individuals for administrative positions in educational settings. Each individual is prepared using similar content and courses. However, one size fits all does not apply to all school districts (McCloud, 2005). Rural schools and school districts are unique. Expectations are different for rural superintendents and principals compared to their counterparts serving in urban or suburban districts (Copeland, 2013). Due to an increase in roles and responsibilities for rural school leaders, educational leadership programs must be multi-faceted (McCloud, 2005). Researchers (Copeland, 2013; Lamkin, 2006; Lochry, 1998; McCloud, 2005) have recommended colleges and universities provide a specialization in or offer courses pertaining to rural schools.

Hall (2006) believed college professors need to communicate with administrative practitioners and be in their buildings to gain a better understanding of the challenges that principals and superintendents encounter on a daily, monthly, or yearly basis. Real-world information can be collected and incorporated into educational leadership programs at the university level (Hall, 2006). Hall recommended that aspiring leaders be placed with a mentor or in an internship position to gain experience before accepting a leadership position.

McCloud's (2005) report presented nine themes preparation programs should consider when preparing leaders for rural schools.

Theme 1- "The identification, selection, and preparation of education leaders in rural American require tailored solutions and approaches" (p. 2). Rural school districts are faced with a smaller recruitment pool, and risk administrators not tied to the community leaving the school district early. McCloud suggested rural school districts should create a leadership team, a grow-your-own program, create supportive networks, and provide leadership training. School districts creating a leadership team or developing a grow-your-own program prepare teacher leaders working within the district by helping them obtain administrative credentials so they can replace administrators should the need arise. Administrators need support structures in place through networking with other administrators and leaders, and/or taking courses to learn more about administration.

Theme 2 – "A clear vision of the leadership skills and qualities needed must be developed; then each school must work with universities, colleges, and other partners to create preparation programs that meet those needs" (McCloud, 2005, p. 3). McCloud mentioned that principals and superintendents are no longer managers, but leaders. To be a leader, they must have a vision. McCloud mentioned that school leaders come into administrative positions unprepared for the changes in education such as new standards and accountability. McCloud recommended university systems work with potential leaders to develop new skills and "an arsenal of strategies to promote student achievement" (p. 3).

Theme 3 – "New partnerships are needed to provide better links between theory, research, and practice" (McCloud, 2005, p. 4). Colleges and universities must be willing to work with all schools and communities, especially rural schools and communities. McCloud reported that principals believe the "preparation programs have little if any bearing on the daily realities of their jobs" (p. 4). At the time of this report, the University of Michigan-Flint was collaborating with the state welfare agency to help design a curriculum for its graduate-level leadership program.

Theme 4 – "Ongoing relationships with skilled and carefully matched mentors offer a powerful source of leadership preparation and support" (McCloud, 2005, p. 4). For rural superintendents and principals, finding mentors who have worked in a rural setting has been challenging. High quality mentors are hard to find in rural areas. However, more states are implementing mentorship program for principals and superintendents. According to the Education Commission of the States (2013), 27 states had statewide policies providing mentor or internship programs for principals and/or superintendents. In 2011, Arizona added a superintendent mentoring program and Vermont added a principal mentoring program (Education Commission of the States (ECS) State Policy Database, n.d.). North Dakota has not been one of the states providing a mentoring or internship program for principals and/or superintendents.

Theme 5 – "Community is a potent—but sometimes overlooked—source of leadership and support in many rural schools" (McCloud, 2005, p. 5). McCloud recognized that effective leaders have strong community connections. She recommended that preparation programs help aspiring leaders build strong relationships with

community members. McCloud mentioned that building a positive relationship with a community could improve economic development efforts.

Theme 6 – "Technology—combined with face-to-face sessions—provides an important tool for increasing access to more diverse school leadership preparation and support services" (McCloud, 2005, p. 6). McCloud believed that preparation programs should create rural leaders who are able to use technology through universities for on-line learning and also gain support from other areas or distant leaders. McCloud mentioned that rural leaders should take advantage of participating in on-line journaling, blogging, and chat rooms.

Theme 7 – "Certification, licensing, and pension policies need to be revised" (McCloud, 2005, p. 6). McCloud stated that some universities have "low entrance and completion thresholds" (p. 6) allowing more individuals to hold leadership degrees. McCloud recommended that universities implement recruitment and selection policies to get a better understanding of why candidates are entering leadership programs. McCloud also addressed the fact that leaders in rural areas often lack proper certification.

Theme 8 – "There is a need for greater awareness of and more research on rural schools" (McCloud, 2005, p. 7). McCloud mentioned that most research on small schools focuses on school districts with a student body between 400 and 600. McCloud stated that there is limited research on rural school districts with fewer than 150 students and little is known about what works in these districts.

Theme 9 – "Money matters" (McCloud, 2005, p. 7). Rural school districts have been faced with declining enrollments, and that has a negative impact on funding. Rural school districts are forced to hire leaders they can afford. High-skilled and experienced

leaders often cost a school district more money than hiring a novice leader. McCloud suggested that small communities and school districts contact policymakers to lobby for more funds. Two researchers (Lochry, 1998; McIntire, 2007) focused on superintendent-principals in California offered the following recommendations for preparation programs.

McIntire (2007) recommended training programs in California to "consider the unique culture and circumstances of the single-school district and develop training to address the unique setting of the single-school district" (p. 244). He also recommended "these programs should work to attract potential administrators who may eventually seek these positions before the need for replacements in the field becomes acute" (p. 244). Lochry (1998) urged "colleges and universities in California to include offerings and programs that are relevant to the potential small, rural school district administrator, with emphasis on the uniqueness of the position and its requirements" (p. 72).

As recommended by researchers, preparation programs need to: communicate with administrative practitioners (Hall, 2006; McCloud, 2005) to gain a better understanding of administrative challenges, offer courses that pertain to rural school district administrators (Copeland, 2013; Lamkin, 2006; Lochry, 1998; McCloud, 2005), and prepare leaders for suburban, urban, and rural school districts (McCloud, 2005). Preparation programs are designed to prepare aspiring administrators for their first leadership positions.

Novice Leaders – First Leadership Positions

Research has shown that all novice leaders experience some similar key challenges (Ashton & Duncan, 2012; Hobson et al., 2003; Spillane & Lee, 2014). New leaders often struggle with professional isolation, social loneliness, increased roles and

responsibilities, and basic management skills. Challenges for any leader, especially novice leaders, have contributed to an increase in occupational stress (Lamkin, 2006; Canales et al., 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014). A high level of stress can cause job dissatisfaction, burnout, and can cause an individual to leave a position (Canales et al., 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Ashton and Duncan (2012) identified the following three challenges that new leaders encounter: dealing with professional isolation and loneliness, building relationships and trust in a rural community, and developing organizational management responsibilities. They created an entry plan or "toolkit" to assist rural principals in an effort to prepare future leaders for these challenges. Ashton and Duncan recommended finding a mentor or networking, coping with stress through healthy alternatives, and creating a personal mission statement to alleviate isolation and loneliness. Ashton and Duncan provided two "tools" to build relationships: establishing key relationships and taking time to build rapport. School leaders new to a community need to take time to learn about the culture of a community and school district. New leaders need to communicate and build relationships with all stakeholders to demonstrate their willingness to be a part of a rural community. Ashton and Duncan's final three "tools" focused on the area of developing organization management responsibilities. The three "tools" are infusing the vision, time and task management, and effective scheduling for instructional leadership. New leaders need to understand and support a school district's mission/vision statement. The mission/vision statement gives direction to where a school district is headed and provides a basis for decision making and action. Time and task management focuses on prioritizing tasks. Ashton and Duncan created a table that

prioritizes tasks under four categories: (a) important and urgent, (b) not urgent, but important, (c) urgent, but not important, and (d) not urgent, and not important. New leaders need to schedule time for instructional leadership. This includes daily walkthroughs, observations, coaching and mentoring, and planning for staff development to help improve instruction for all students in a school district.

Hobson et al. (2003) conducted a review of the literature focusing on problems experienced by, and support strategies for, new head teachers-principals in the United Kingdom and outside the United Kingdom. Hobson et al. reviewed 35 full reviews and produced critical summaries. The summaries were analyzed and findings synthesized to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main problems of early headship?
2. What are the support strategies for new heads?

Hobson et al. found that novice head teachers-principals experienced similar problems. Hobson et al. (2003) reported the main problems were:

- feelings of professional isolation and loneliness . . .
- dealing with the legacy, practice and style of the previous headteacher . . .
- dealing with multiple tasks, managing time and priorities . . .
- dealing with school budget . . .
- dealing with . . . ineffective staff . . .
- implementing new government initiatives, notably new curricula or school improvement projects . . .
- problems with school buildings and site management

(Hobson et al., 2003, p. 15)

Hobson et al. reported that some of the recommended methods of support for new head teachers-principals include visiting a school prior to taking over, networking, mentoring, training in areas such as finance and personnel issues, attending new administration conferences, and conducting and acting on a needs assessment.

Spillane and Lee (2014) conducted a mixed-methods, longitudinal study with 17 novice elementary principals from Chicago. Participants' experiences ranged from classroom teacher to assistant principal. Spillane and Lee focused on practical problems of a novice principal during their first 3 months on the job. Consistent themes that emerged from the data were: (a) an increase in responsibilities, and (b) ultimate responsibility of the principal role. Spillane and Lee (2014) argued that the "sense of more and ultimate responsibility contributed to three problems of practice—high levels of task volume, diversity, and unpredictability" (p. 17). Task volume consisted of increase stakeholder attention, phone calls, emails, and demands. Eight principals (47%) reported the workload volume to be a challenge, with seven of those eight (88%) reporting the workload to be almost overwhelming. Task diversity focused on the multiple hats that are worn by an administrator. Seven (41%) of the 17 principals indicated an increase in task diversity over their first 3 months. Principals reported being instructional leaders, social workers, nurses, counselors, and lunchroom managers. Task unpredictability refers to daily management skills administrators are faced with such as paperwork, student discipline, and attending meetings. Task unpredictability was identified by 10 (59%) of the principals at the end of their first semester. Spillane and Lee reported that increased responsibility and ultimate responsibility led to additional stress, loneliness, and isolation for administrators.

The following section focuses specifically on the unique role of a superintendent. Research conducted on superintendent roles and responsibilities (Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, & Reeves, 2012; Wadlington, 2011), satisfactions (Anderson, 2007; Palleria, 2000), and challenges (Hill, 2015; Lamkin, 2006) contributed to a better understanding of one part of dual-role administrator positions.

Superintendent

History

According to Urban and Wagoner (2014), the superintendent position in education began in the late 19th century due to increasing enrollments in urban schools. During this time, superintendent roles were clerical and managerial. Roles included keeping records and assessing students (Urban & Wagoner, 2014). A central board was in charge of remaining administrative tasks, such as hiring staff and fiscal management. Educational reform and advances in pedagogy have changed the role of a superintendent from managerial to more leader oriented.

Roles and Responsibilities

Superintendents have also been known as CEOs (chief executive officers) of a school district (Eadie, 2003; Lamkin, 2006). In all schools, superintendents are held accountable for academic achievement; need to be visible in a school and building; and create relationships with students, parents, and communities (Lamkin, 2006). However, rural superintendents' roles and responsibilities are going to be different than their counterparts in a suburban or urban school district (Wadlington, 2011).

Wadlington (2011) interviewed 15 superintendents to gather their perceptions on being a learning leader. Wadlington found that superintendents need to be

knowledgeable in student learning improvement activities. Superintendents need to "have a current understanding of scholarly work pertaining to pedagogy, best practices, and student learning improvement activities" (Wadlington, 2011, p. 84) and be able to communicate a vision to community stakeholders. Respondents reported that all staff members were leaders of learning. Wadlingon stated that superintendents nurtured the learning leadership network and allowed other staff members to fill leadership roles. Wadlington (2011) also reported that superintendents need to create buy-in when there is school change. Participants stated that a philosophy or goal was not "their goal" but "our goal" as a whole (Wadlington, 2011, p. 87).

Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves (2012) conducted a case study to find effective leadership characteristics of rural superintendents. They interviewed 27 interviewees in one Midwestern state. Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves reported a superintendent's priorities were: all students can and will achieve academic success, a high quality teacher be hired in every classroom, and finding new sources of money for their school district. Forner, Bierlein-Palmer, and Reeves also found that effective leadership practices consist of a superintendent: establishing goals and expectations to drive reform, building relationships with stakeholders to gain support for any reforms, helping and supporting teachers who struggle with instructional performance, removing low-performing teachers or principals from the school district, working closely with school principal(s), taking a strong stand on contract negotiations, and realigning financial commitments to match district goals and priorities.

The state of North Dakota has specific legal requirements describing the role of a superintendent. In North Dakota, superintendent duties are outlined by the North Dakota

Legislative Branch of government under North Dakota Century Code 15.1-14.01.

Superintendent duties are as follows:

1. Supervise the general operation of the school district.
2. Supervise the provision of education to students.
3. Visit the schools of the district.
4. Supervise school personnel.
5. Prepare and deliver reports requested by the board of the district.
6. Perform any other duties requested by the board.

(Administrators, 2014, NDCC § 15.1-14-01)

Superintendent-principals take on the role of superintendent in their dual position. Because of changes in the role of superintendent and increases in accountability, researchers (Anderson, 2007; Palleria, 2000) conducted studies to determine how satisfied individuals were serving in superintendent positions.

Satisfactions

A common instrument used to gauge job satisfaction is the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire. The Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire consisted of 20 job satisfaction items. Twelve items were categorized as intrinsic, six items were extrinsic, and two items were added to the 18 items and categorized as general satisfaction. Two research studies, using the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire, focused on general job satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction, and extrinsic satisfaction. One study questioned public school superintendent-principals serving in a dual-role position, and the other study questioned superintendents serving in a single-role position (Anderson, 2007; Palleria, 2000).

Palleria (2000) surveyed 69 superintendents in South Dakota. The superintendents responded that their highest areas of general and intrinsic job satisfaction were: the chance to do things for other people and being able to keep busy all the time.

The top two extrinsic satisfactions were: the chances of advancement on the job and the way the school board handles his/her workers.

Palleria (2000) reported the areas of least satisfaction for superintendents. The areas of least general and extrinsic job satisfaction were: being praised for doing a good job, and competence of "my supervisor" in making decisions. Superintendents felt the areas of least intrinsic satisfaction came from telling people what to do and the chance to work alone on the job.

Anderson (2007) surveyed 114 superintendents in Nebraska. Superintendents reported the top two general and intrinsic satisfactions were: the chance to do things for other people, and the chance to do different things from time to time. The top two extrinsic satisfactions were: the way company policies are put into place, and pay and the amount of work that is done.

Anderson (2007) also reported on areas of least job satisfaction given by superintendent-principals. The two areas of least general satisfaction were: the chance to tell people what to do, and praise received for doing a good job. Superintendent-principals reported the chance to work alone on the job and the chance to tell people what to do were the two intrinsic satisfactions they care about the least. The two extrinsic satisfactions superintendent-principals cared about the least were: the praise received for doing a good job, and chance for advancement on this job.

Palleria (2000) and Anderson (2007) found that superintendents were satisfied with their positions. The top general and intrinsic job satisfaction that was common in both studies was the chance to do things for other people. Palleria (2000) and Anderson (2007) found that the area of least general job satisfaction reported by superintendents

was praise received for doing a good job. In both studies, respondents reported the area of least extrinsic job satisfaction was: praise for doing a good job, and the areas of least intrinsic job satisfaction were: the chance to work alone on the job, and the chance to tell people what to do. While there is considerable evidence to suggest there are many satisfactions to being a superintendent, studies also point to important challenges.

Challenges

Lamkin (2006) interviewed 7 focus groups consisting of 58 rural superintendents from New York, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee. Lamkin's main focus was on the primary problems and challenges that superintendents encountered in their first few years. Lamkin found that rural superintendents faced similar challenges as other school leaders faced in other contexts. Lamkin reported the top three challenges faced by novice rural superintendents were: lack of adequate training for specific tasks and skills, lack of acculturation to the environment and community expectations of the superintendent role, and working with a tight-knit community and trying to bring in change and new ideas. In this study, superintendents mentioned the following six areas where they believed they were unprepared: school law, finance, personnel, government mandates, district or board politics, and technology. Lamkin (2006) reported that superintendents had to be "the jack of all trades" and meet "the demands of the small rural community" (p. 21). Superintendents reported on task diversity, level of personal accountability, and not having enough staff to delegate tasks to in their building. Lamkin reported that rural superintendents had a tough time in a rural community because they were always visible and had to deal with emotion and gossip.

Hill (2015) argued that states need to do more for rural education. Rural superintendents are at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts in suburban and urban school districts when it comes to salary. Hill stated that rural superintendents take on additional roles such as driving bus and teaching and are not compensated for extra responsibilities. Rural superintendents work with a tight budget due to a shrinking economic tax base and resistance to taxation. Hill (2015) stated that superintendents are prominent public figures and need to earn the respect of their communities to support school districts. Hill also stated that superintendents are faced with isolation and do not have support as an individual or support for their school district. School board members appoint superintendents and dual-role administrators for the school district and can provide support for these administrators.

Superintendent/School Board Relationships

The most important relationship for a school district is the one between its superintendent and school board (Eadie, 2003; Houston & Eadie, 2002). The school board is considered an organization composed of a group of elected officials working together to achieve a common goal. The relationship between the school board and superintendent may determine how long a superintendent stays with a school district (Byrd, Drews, & Johnson, 2006; Nelson, 2010).

Houston and Eadie (2002) stated that superintendents and high-impact school boards set clear strategic directions; have policies for current operations; monitor short-term educational, administrative, and financial performance; evaluate long term effectiveness; and build positive ties with community stakeholders. Houston and Eadie

believed that superintendent and school board members need to work together and answer the following questions:

1. Where is our school district going?
2. Where is our school district right now?
3. How is our school district doing? (Houston & Eadie, 2002, p 41)

Houston and Eadie (2002) discussed how the relationship between superintendent and school board should be based on trust and openness. Superintendent and school board members need to bring the right attitude to their relationship and not have hidden agendas. The right attitude in this relationship is important to bring harmony toward common goals (Houston & Eadie, 2002). Eadie (2003) added to the literature on superintendent/school board relationships and provided the following eight keys for superintendents to build successful working relationships with school boards:

Key 1 Put partnership at the top of your list

Key 2 Specialize in the governing "business"

Key 3 Empower your board

Key 4 Turn board members into owners

Key 5 Spice up the governing stew

Key 6 Get your senior administrators on board

Key 7 Keep expectations in sync

Key 8 Stay on the high-growth path (Eadie, 2003, p. v)

Byrd, Drews, and Johnson (2006) found that superintendents were less likely to stay in a school district if they were not part of the decision making process, and there was poor with communication with the school board. Byrd, Drews, and Johnson reported

that the relationship between superintendent and school board, most notably the school board president, has an impact on the tenure of a superintendent. They reported that conflict with the board was a reason why superintendents did not renew their contracts with a school district.

Nelson (2010) conducted an exploratory study with 213 superintendents in Minnesota. Nelson surveyed current and recently retired superintendents, and interviewed 10 superintendents to explore school board-superintendent relationships and factors influencing those relationships. Nelson found that 95% of respondents ranked their relationship with their school board as good or very good. Nelson found that superintendents reporting a good or very good relationship with the school board also experienced positive job satisfaction, superintendent effectiveness, fairness on superintendent evaluations, and increased support by their school board over time. On the other hand, superintendents experiencing moderate to poor board relationships also reported having lower job satisfaction.

A collaborative relationship between a school board and superintendent is vital for any school district. The relationship between the two parties has an impact on job satisfaction, job effectiveness, and tenure of a superintendent. Superintendents having a negative experience with school boards often leave their positions early, and this can impact the school district with administrator turnover.

Principal

History

In the past, rural school districts were led by head teachers who were considered both principals and teachers (Urban & Wagoner, 2014). Rural communities and school

districts grew over time, leading to an increase in the roles and responsibilities of head teachers. As school districts continued to grow, and responsibilities of head teachers increased, it became difficult for head teachers to maintain the operations of schools. So, principals were hired to take over managerial duties of head teachers, and head teachers became superintendents. Over the years, the role and responsibilities of principals have changed from managers to instructional leaders (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; Starr & White, 2008; The Wallace Foundation, 2013).

Roles and Responsibilities

Demand for greater accountability has changed roles and responsibilities of the principal from manager to leader. Principals are held accountable for making sure all students are given the same opportunity to learn and be successful. Lunenburg (2010) suggested that principals could meet this goal by focusing on the following: encouraging collaboration among teachers; using data to improve learning; providing support for teachers and students; and aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Lunenburg stated that principals need to allow time for staff to collaborate. During this time, staff members can discuss student issues, instructional strategies, and curriculum. Instructional leaders create a collaborative environment, and discourage teaching with the door closed, that is teaching in isolation.

The Wallace Foundation (2013) agreed that the role of principal has shifted from manager to leader. This organization stated that principals need to be leaders of learning. The Wallace Foundation suggested that the following five tasks need to be present, in order for leadership to be at work.

- *Shaping a vision of academic success for all students. . .*
- *Creating a climate hospitable to education. . .*
- *Cultivating leadership in others. . .*
- *Improving instruction. . .*
- *Managing people, data and processes* to foster school improvement.

(The Wallace Foundation, 2013, p. 6)

Principals need to establish and be committed to a vision for all students. The Wallace Foundation (2013) mentioned that principals did not always have high expectations for all students. High expectations for all students is one key to closing the achievement gap and allowing all individuals a chance at a successful career in a global economy.

Principals are responsible for creating a positive learning environment. The Wallace Foundation (2013) stated that in order for this to happen, principals need to move away from the traditional school model and build a sense of school community with staff, parents, and communities. The Wallace Foundation (2013) reported that leaders should distribute leadership amongst group members to achieve a goal. This type of leader has been shown to improve employee motivation and work settings.

Principals need to be continuous learners and be able to share research-based strategies with staff members to improve instruction (The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Effective instructional leaders visit classrooms frequently, are visible, and provide feedback to teachers after observations. The Wallace Foundation (2013) stated, "To get the job done, effective leaders need to make good use of the resources at hand. In other words, they have to be good managers" (p. 15). Each state adopts standards for principal

roles and responsibilities. At the time of this report, North Dakota's standards that principals must meet are shown after the next paragraph.

In North Dakota, school districts were required to adopt a principal evaluation model for the 2015-2016 school year. North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (2014) created a State Template that is aligned to the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) policy standards. The seven ISLLC standards are:

- Standard 1: Shared Vision
- Standard 2: Culture of Learning
- Standard 3: Management
- Standard 4: Family and Community
- Standard 5: Ethics
- Standard 6: Societal Context
- Standard 7: Student Achievement Growth

The role and responsibilities of principals has changed from teacher-manager to manager to instructional leader. Principals are accountable for making sure all students are given the same opportunity to be successful. In order to do this, principals must use data to improve learning, improve instruction, and provide support to teacher and student learning. Most principals, including those in North Dakota, are evaluated using the seven ISLLC standards.

With a change in the role of principals and an increase in accountability, researchers (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013) conducted studies to determine exactly how satisfied principals were with their positions.

Satisfactions

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) mailed out 4,237 questionnaires to principals and assistance principals in Virginia to determine their concerns and satisfactions with their positions. Of the 4,237 questionnaires, only 1,543 responded for the study. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran discovered that building relationships with students (85%), teachers (84%), peers (84%), parents (83%), and community leaders (82%) ranked high on the satisfaction list. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran also found that principals were not satisfied with their salary (51.3%) and the amount of time they put into the position (40%).

Markow, Macia, and Lee (2013) surveyed 500 kindergarten through 12 grade public school principals by telephone in the United States in 2012. Their report stated that the percentage of principals very satisfied with their jobs was at its lowest point since 2001. In 2012, 59% of principals surveyed reported being very satisfied with their position compared to 61% in 2001 (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013). So from 2001 to 2012, job satisfaction dropped a couple percentage points. The highest level of job satisfaction recorded in Markow et al.'s study occurred in 2004-2005 when 76% of principals reported being very satisfied with their job. Markow, Macia, and Lee reported that principals with lower job satisfaction often deal with low-income students, minority students, and need to address individual needs of diverse learners, engage parents and communities in improving the education of students, create and maintain an academic environment, and maintain effective teachers. Markow, Macia, and Lee (2013) reported that "half (48%) of principals feel under great stress several days a week or more" (p. 32) and "one-third (32%) of principals say they are very or fairly likely to leave their job as a

school principal to go into some different occupation" (p. 34). While there was considerable evidence at the time of this study to suggest principals were satisfied with their jobs, studies also point to important challenges principals may encounter.

Challenges

Federal, state, and local mandates have changed the role of principal with the addition of No Child Left Behind legislation, implementation of Common Core State Standards, and the shift of the role of principal from organizational manager to instructional leader (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; Starr & White, 2008; The Wallace Foundation, 2013). Research studies indicate some of the challenges rural principals encounter are taking on additional roles (Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, & Slate, 2008; Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, and Slate, 2010; Hesbol, 2005; Geivett, 2010; Renihan & Noonan, 2012; Starr & White, 2008), lack of time to complete tasks (Canales, Tejeda-Delgado, & Slate, 2010; Geivett, 2010; Starr & White, 2009), and lack of resources (Geivett, 2010; Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013, Starr & White, 2009). The following researchers (Markow, Macia, & Lee, 2013; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; Starr & White, 2008) collected data on challenges principals encounter in the field of education.

Preston, Jakubiec, and Kooymans (2013) reviewed literature from 2003-2013 to determine common challenges faced by rural principals. They used document analysis as their research design. Preston, Jakubiec, and Kooymans collected and analyzed data on rural principal challenges and determined patterns and themes from multiple research studies. Preston, Jakubiec, and Kooymans reported the common themes that rural principals faced were: personal history and community focus, diverse roles and the

retention of principals, lack of professional development and resources, gender discrimination, and school accountability and change. Preston, Jakubiec, and Kooymans reported that numerous studies have found that rural principals assume multiple duties such as "classroom teacher, instructional specialist, assessment leader, parent leader, change agent, and active community volunteer" and "struggle fulfilling their full-time administrative duties" (p. 3). Preston, Jakubiec, and Kooymans (2013) reported that principals have experienced an increase in managerial duties and need to have "specialized instructional leadership knowledge that emerged from the implementation of accountability policies" (p. 5).

Markow, Macia, and Lee (2013) surveyed 500 principals and reported the top four challenges facing K-12 principals are: addressing the individual needs of diverse learners (83%), managing the budget and resources to meet school needs (78%), engaging parents and the community in improving the education of students (72%), and implementing the Common Core State Standards (67%). Markow, Macia, and Lee also reported that classroom teachers viewed similar challenges as their top three challenges, but had a difference of opinion when it came to implementing the Common Core State Standards.

Starr and White's (2008) study focused on challenges associated with being a principal of a small rural school in Victoria, Australia. They interviewed 76 principals, either face-to-face or by telephone. Starr and White found the most common challenges rural principals faced were: workload proliferation, educational equity issues, re-defined principalship, escalating role multiplicity, and school survival. Challenges have led to low morale and increased stress. Participants in the study expressed anger and resentment over the changing role of the principal. Starr and White reported that tasks

external to the school district from the district, state, and federal government have taken time away from being an instructional leader. Respondents also reported that external tasks have increased the amount of time principals need to be at work and decreased the amount of time principals can be with family.

Starr and White (2008) found that rural principals take on multiple roles and have fewer resources and personnel compared to urban principals. Respondents also reported having to worry about declining enrollment, decreasing funds, and being forced to close school doors. Starr and White reported that rural school leaders work with other rural school districts to combine their funds and share learning resources in order to keep rural schools from closing.

This section provided a literature review on the history, roles and responsibilities, satisfactions, and challenges of the principal position. The following section focuses on history, roles and responsibilities, satisfactions, and challenges of the superintendent-principal dual-role position.

Superintendent-Principal

History

The evolution of the superintendent-principal dual-role position is not as clear as the history of the principal position alone, or the superintendent position. Rural school districts combined administrative roles at the district and site level to minimize administrative cost (Geivett, 2010). Small school districts have been faced with financial challenges and declining enrollments that, in turn, leads to combining administrative positions. Lochry (1998) stated a lack of financial resources contributed to cutting costs and combining the positions of superintendent and principal. Individuals in the dual-role

position wear multiple “hats” on a daily basis and experience an increase in responsibilities (Canales et al., 2010).

Roles and Responsibilities

A superintendent-principal position combines the roles and responsibilities of an individual principal and an individual superintendent. Limited research has been conducted to determine the most important roles and responsibilities (Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010; Hesbol, 2005; Lochry, 1998; and McIntire, 2007) and effective leadership behaviors (Canales et al., 2008; Canales et al., 2010) of superintendent-principals as perceived by superintendent-principals, school board presidents, and district secretaries/administrative assistants.

Lochry’s (1998) study focused on the perceptions of 116 superintendent-principals, 89 school board presidents, and 104 district secretary-administrative assistants regarding the degree of superintendent-principal involvement as a superintendent at the district-level and as principal at the site-level in California. Participants were surveyed on nine typical areas of duties and responsibilities considered to be part of the role of superintendent and twelve typical areas of duties and responsibilities considered to be part of the role of principal. The nine superintendent duties/responsibilities included: (a) acting as CEO of the district; (b) serving as secretary to the Board of Education; (c) facilitating board policy – interprets policy for Board of Education, staff, and community; (d) directing budget management and development; (e) directly involved with personnel recruitment, hiring, firing, and district office staff evaluation; (f) overseeing management of maintenance, operations, food service, and transportation; (g) coordinating SELPA (Special Education Local Plan Area) services with county office of Education; (h)

coordinating state and federal categorical programs; and (i) serving as District Liaison to local government, business, and community organizations. The twelve areas of duties/responsibilities considered to be in a principal's domain included: (a) managing the daily operation of a school site, (b) serving as a school's instructional leader, (c) making staff grade level or subject area assignments, (d) making student classroom assignments, (e) counseling students, (f) counseling staff, (g) supervising classroom management, (h) evaluating staff performance, (i) administering student discipline, (j) facilitating site staff meetings, and (k) facilitating site parent/community meetings and/or activities.

Superintendents-principals felt involved to a *very high degree* in seven out of the nine superintendent areas of duties/responsibilities. They felt involved to a *high degree* in the other two areas; coordinating SELPA services with the County Office of Education and coordinating state and federal categorical programs. They felt involved to a *very high degree* in ten out of the twelve principal areas of duties/responsibilities. The other two areas, they felt involved in to a *high degree* were making student classroom assignments and counseling students.

School board presidents felt superintendent-principals were involved to a *very high degree* in district-level duties and responsibilities in five of the nine areas. They ranked involvement of superintendent-principals as a *high degree* in the following areas: (a) serving as secretary to the board of education; (b) overseeing management of maintenance, operations, food service, and transportation; (c) coordinating SELPA services with County Office of Education; and (d) serving as district liaison to local government, business, and community organizations. The district

secretary/administrative assistant usually has served as secretary to the board, which was the lowest ranked area of superintendent-principal duties of the four. School board presidents felt superintendent-principals were involved to a *very high degree* in regard to site-level duties and responsibilities in four of the twelve areas. They ranked superintendent-principal involvement as *high degree* in seven areas. School board presidents ranked the superintendent-principals as *moderate* in the area of making student classroom assignments.

Secretary/administrative assistants ranked superintendent-principals as involved to a *very high degree* at district-level duties and responsibilities in three of the nine areas. Six areas ranked as *high degree* were: (a) serving as secretary to the board of education; (b) directing budget management and development; (c) overseeing management of maintenance, operations, food service, and transportation; (d) coordinating SELPA services with County Office of Education; (e) coordinating state and federal categorical programs; and (f) serving as district liaison to local government, business, and community organizations. They ranked superintendent-principal involvement in site-level duties to a *very high degree* in three of the twelve areas. They felt superintendent-principal involvement was to a *high degree* in eight areas. Making student classroom assignments was the one area ranked as *moderate* involvement.

Hesbol (2005) conducted a grounded theory study with four superintendent-principals, all male, from rural Illinois schools. The study examined perceptions of Illinois superintendent-principals' experience serving in elementary schools with enrollment between 100-300 students. The study consisted of in-depth interviews with superintendent-principals, school secretary/bookkeepers, and school board presidents.

Hesbol reported that all respondents believed responsibilities of the dual-role position was too much for one person. He found respondents were faced with endless demands and diversity of tasks such as creating schedules, covering for a custodian and mopping the floor, focusing on the curriculum, and helping out a sick child. Hesbol reported that respondents had a difficult time moving between the role of superintendent and the role of principal, had trouble describing the dual-role assignment, and were overwhelmed by work requirements of their positions and the limited amount of time to perform daily tasks. Hesbol also reported that superintendent-principals need to have a range of knowledge and expertise to meet the demands of both roles.

McIntire's (2007) study focused on comparing California superintendent-principals and principals in kindergarten through eighth-grade schools in the area of instructional leadership. Ninety-three (93) out of 125 (75%) superintendents-principals and 85 out of 138 (62%) principals took part in the study. McIntire created a Scale of Principals' Instructional Leadership (SPIL) and utilized a Likert-like scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). The questionnaire was based on work of a 1999 study conducted by Joseph Blase and Jo Blase. It focused on 11 strategies used by principals to demonstrate instructional leadership. The questionnaire was composed of the following strategies: (a) make suggestions; (b) give feedback; (c) use modeling; (d) use inquiry and solicit advice and opinions; (e) give praise; (f) emphasize the study of teaching and learning; (g) support collaborative effort among educators; (h) develop coaching relationships among educators; (i) encourage and support redesign of programs; (j) apply the principles of adult learning, growth, and development to all phases of staff development; and (k) implement action research to inform instructional decision making.

McIntire (2007) reported the most frequently used strategies by superintendent-principals were teacher praise and supporting collaborative efforts. Seventy-seven (77) of the 91 (84.7%) superintendent-principals rated teacher praise with a score of four or higher. Superintendent-principals provided teachers with praise in an attempt to improve instruction, teacher self-esteem, and innovation/creativity. Seventy-six (76) superintendent-principals (83.6%) rated supporting collaborative efforts with a score of four or higher. McIntire stated, "Effective instructional leaders recognized that collaborative relationships among teachers were fundamental necessities of successful teaching and learning" (p. 176). Collaboration time allowed staff to share ideas and effective teaching strategies.

The least frequently used strategies by superintendent-principals demonstrating instructional leadership were modeling effective teaching techniques for teachers and implementing action research to inform instructional decision making. Nineteen (20.9%) respondents rated use modeling with a score of four or higher and 37 (40.7%) rated it with a score of two or lower. Superintendent-principals were asked if they demonstrate teaching techniques or strategies to classroom teachers and whether or not superintendents debrief classroom teachers about their experience. Thirty-seven (40.7%) superintendent-principals rated implementing action research to inform instructional decision making with a score of four or higher, and 23 (25.3%) rated it with a score of two or lower. Action research was part of professional development hoping to improve "effects on student readiness to learn and outcomes of student learning or behavior" (p. 159).

Geivett (2010) surveyed 95 superintendent-principals and interviewed 15 of those that participated via telephone. Geivett conducted a literature review and identified six important roles and responsibilities of the dual-role position: student achievement, school board and superintendent-principal relationships, community relations, politics, human resource management, and finances. Rural superintendents-principals were asked to identify the most important aspect under each role and responsibility.

Superintendent-principals (84%) reported that managing and allocating essential resources was considered as the most important aspect of their responsibilities in the area of student achievement. Ninety-five percent (95%) of participants identified communication with the board as the most important aspect of their responsibilities in the area of school board and superintendent-principal relationships. Building trust and communication was identified as the most important factor under community relations (88%), politics (90%), and human resource management (97%).

In California, Canales et al. (2010) interviewed 10 rural superintendent-principals regarding prioritizing job responsibilities and effective leadership behaviors. They found "major responsibilities ranged from budget preparation, curriculum planning, staff development, facilities management, and student discipline" (p. 4). Effective leadership behaviors included being organized, managing time, and developing interpersonal relationship skills.

Stakeholder perceptions of effective leadership behaviors differ depending on who is being asked. In a study conducted by Canales et al. (2008), 206 teachers, 35 school board members, and 37 superintendent-principals were surveyed to identify effective behavior exhibited by superintendent-principals. Teachers identified the top

three leadership behaviors as: representation, tolerance of freedom, and role assumption. School board members ranked the following behaviors as most important: representation, consideration, and demanding reconciliation. Superintendent-principals indicated: tolerance of freedom, representation, and consideration as the top three effective leadership behaviors. Representation was a common leadership behavior identified by all three types of respondents. Canales et al. (2008) defined representation as a leader's ability to speak and act as representative of a group. As superintendent-principal roles and responsibilities increased, researchers (Palleria, 2000; Anderson, 2007) felt a need to conduct studies to explore individuals' satisfactions with the dual-role position.

Satisfactions

As mentioned earlier, two research studies used the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire and focused on general job satisfaction, intrinsic satisfaction, and extrinsic satisfaction of dual-role and single-role superintendents (Palleria, 2000; Anderson, 2007). Palleria (2000) surveyed 69 superintendents and 72 superintendent-principals in South Dakota. Superintendent-principals reported their top three general and intrinsic job satisfactions were the chance to do things for other people, the freedom to use their own judgment, and freedom to try their own methods. The top two extrinsic satisfactions were: the way company policies were put into practice, and the way school boards handle their workers.

Palleria reported areas of the least job satisfaction given by superintendent-principals. The lowest areas of general job satisfaction were pay and the amount of work and praise for doing a good job. Superintendent-principals felt the lowest areas of job satisfaction intrinsically came from telling people what to do and the chance to work

alone on a job. Areas of least extrinsic satisfaction came from pay and the amount of work and praise for doing a good job.

Anderson (2007) surveyed 114 superintendents and 54 superintendent-principals in Nebraska. Superintendent-principals reported the top two general and intrinsic job satisfactions were the chance to do things for other people and the chance to do different things from time to time. The top two extrinsic satisfactions were: competence of the school board in making decisions, and the way company policies are put into place.

Anderson (2007) reported the job areas superintendent-principals were least satisfied with. The two general and extrinsic job satisfactions superintendent-principals were least satisfied with were: chance for advancement on this job, and the praise I get for doing a good job. The areas of intrinsic satisfaction superintendent-principals were least satisfied with were: the chance to work alone on the job, and the chance to tell people what to do.

Palleria (2000) and Anderson (2007) found that superintendent-principals were satisfied with their positions. In both studies, superintendent-principals ranked the top general and intrinsic job satisfactions as: having the chance to do things for other people, and having freedom to do different things from time to time. The top extrinsic job satisfaction that was common in both studies was the way company policies are put into place. Palleria (2000) and Anderson (2007) found that the lowest area of general job satisfaction reported by superintendent-principals was praise they got for doing a good job. In both studies, respondents reported the lowest area of extrinsic job satisfaction was praise for doing a good job, and the lowest areas of intrinsic job satisfaction were: the chance to work alone on the job, and the chance to tell people what to do. Palleria (2000)

and Anderson (2007) both reported that dual-role superintendents had less intrinsic and extrinsic job satisfaction than those who served as superintendent only. Evidence from Palleria (2000) and Anderson (2007) suggested that superintendent-principals enjoy satisfaction from their dual-role position, however, research studies have been conducted to point out the challenges of the superintendent-principal position.

Challenges

Superintendent-principals are faced with challenges of managing and leading in a dual-role position. An increase of roles and responsibilities, decrease in the amount of time to complete required tasks, and being fiscally responsible are a few of the main challenges that rural superintendent-principals encounter (Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010).

Additional roles and responsibilities have led to role ambiguity (Canales et al., 2008; Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010; Hesbol, 2005; Lochry, 1998). Role ambiguity in these studies can be defined as a lack of clarity about expectations and behavior in a particular role. "The dual position of superintendent-principal can often blur the job description leaving the administrator to question their true role" (Canales et al., 2010).

Hesbol (2005) reported that three of four superintendent-principals experienced role ambiguity in Illinois. Of the three superintendent-principals experiencing role ambiguity, one had 8 years of experience, one had 2 years of experience, and one had 1 year of experience as a superintendent-principal. Hesbol (2005) reported, "The respondents report that they are most often perceived as either a superintendent or a principal perspective, contingent upon their constituents' own immediate needs" (pp. 214-215). Hesbol found that ambiguity created conflict that challenged superintendent-

principals' ability to perform their role effectively. The one superintendent-principal that did not experience role ambiguity had 8 years of experience. Hesbol found that the superintendent-principal credited this to learning the position and experience. The superintendent-principal did mention that role ambiguity did exist when he first took his dual-role position.

Canales et al. (2010) reported that respondents did not feel effective due to the number of daily tasks they had and limited amount of time. One superintendent-principal stated, "I never have enough time to do each task thoroughly. I always feel rushed" (Canales et al., 2010, p. 6). Geivett's (2010) study had similar results because superintendent-principals were pulled in different directions and forced to be reactive, rather than proactive, when addressing issues. Superintendent-principals also reported being the main guy and feeling like there was unlimited access to them. A superintendent-principal made the following comment on being responsible for all things in a school district, "Being all things to all people at all times! Being on call 24 hours a day" (Canales et al., 2010, p. 6).

An increase of roles and responsibilities demands an increase in time from the superintendent-principal. These challenges bring on occupational stress (Canales et al., 2010). Sixty percent of superintendent-principals identified time management as an occupational stressor (Canales et al., 2010). One participant stated, "I never have enough time to do each task thoroughly; I always feel rushed" (Canales et al., 2010, p. 6).

Geivett's (2010) study identified superintendent-principals perceptions of what changes needed to be made. Fifty-two (52) out of 94 participants (58%) responded to the question and provided 78 comments or responses that were coded and put into themes.

Thirty-five (45%) comments or responses indicated the need for assistance with duties and responsibilities. Fourteen superintendent-principals (18%) wanted to do away with state-mandated information and forms. Twelve respondents (15%) focused on additional funding and financial flexibility.

Geivett (2010) reported that superintendent-principals in small rural schools are faced with challenges of inadequate funding, budget development, and declining enrollment. Eighty-one (81) out of 94 respondents (86%) rated inadequate funding as either highly challenging (23%) or extremely challenging (63%). Budget development was another challenge with 58 superintendent-principals (61%) marking this area as highly challenging (37%) or extremely challenging (24%). Forty-four superintendent-principals (46%) ranked declining enrollment as highly challenging (20%) and extremely challenging (26%).

Role ambiguity (Canales et al., 2008; Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010; Hesbol, 2005; Lochry, 1998) was a major challenge mentioned in superintendent-principal research studies. Two researchers (Geivett, 2010; Lochry, 1998) recommended school districts employing superintendent-principals create a job description for the dual-role position.

Superintendent-Principal Job Descriptions

In Geivett's (2010) study, he found few job descriptions for the dual position of superintendent-principal. Geivett (2010) believed:

> Creating an appropriate job description for the superintendent-principal creates accountability and increases the community awareness of the duties and responsibilities for the position, while the lack of an appropriate

and realistic job description lends itself to a great deal of ambiguity within the position." (p. 195)

Lochry (1998) visited 116 superintendent-principals and reported:

None of them had a written job description, and the provisions of their contracts referred only to Education Code sections 35035 and 35040, related to the role of the superintendent and the principal. There is not education code provision for superintendent-principals. (p. 69)

Organization of Study

Chapter II presented a literature review on five key areas related to rural superintendent-principals: (a) rural education, (b) a paradigm shift in education, (c) preparation programs, (d) novice leaders, (e) administrative roles, responsibilities, successes, and challenges. The literature review examined superintendent, principal, and superintendent-principal roles and provided insight on administrative experiences encountered through research studies.

Chapter III introduces the qualitative research method of this study. This chapter will discuss the researcher's background, methods and procedures, data collection, data analysis, validity, and ethical considerations. Chapter IV presents findings from superintendent-principal interviews. Chapter V contains a conclusion and summary of the data as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. Emphasis was placed on identifying leadership and management skills and challenges of the dual role position. Superintendent-principals must learn how to effectively lead while dealing with dual responsibilities defined by both positions. Superintendent-principals are expected to prioritize their responsibilities, leaving many important duties undone (Canales et al., 2008). Educational reforms such as "No Child Left Behind" and "Common Core State Standards" have increased accountability requirements and responsibilities of superintendent-principals to a greater extent than single role superintendents or principals. One of the primary differences between small school administrators and large school administrators is that large school administrators can delegate some tasks, while small school administrators are often responsible for not only seeing that tasks are done, but for actually performing the tasks (Wylie & Clark, 1991). Rural superintendent-principals face the challenging task of effectively leading while performing the dual-roles and responsibilities of both a superintendent and a principal.

This study focused on a criterion-based sample of six superintendent-principals in North Dakota and their perceptions. The research included reviewing leadership,

management, and rural administrative challenges. The study addressed the lack of research involving rural superintendent-principals. The information resulting from this study may be of interest to leadership programs and rural school districts to assist in improving preparation and support of future administrators who may find themselves wearing "many hats" in small rural school districts.

Researcher's Background

I have been in the field of education for 13 years in North Dakota. I began my career at Emerado Elementary School, a rural school district with fewer than 110 students enrolled in pre-kindergarten through 8th grade (PK-8). At the time of this report, the elementary school was located in the town of Emerado, North Dakota. The elementary school was located approximately 17 miles west of Grand Forks. My roles included teaching Middle School math and science, coaching boys and girls basketball for the elementary and middle school, open gym supervision, after-school director, and Positive Behavior Support committee member. After my fourth year as a classroom teacher, I worked on my masters degree in educational leadership.

After 9 years as a classroom teacher at Emerado Elementary School, I accepted the position of superintendent-principal in the Emerado School District. My roles and responsibilities included serving as a superintendent and principal, coaching basketball, supervising lunch, driving bus, attending Red River Valley Education Consortium meetings with area superintendents, leading the Emerado Leadership Team, being an instructional leader, preparing for AdvancEd, and writing grants. In my 3 years as a superintendent-principal, I have learned to understand the complexity of roles,

responsibilities, and experiences that can occur as a superintendent-principal within a rural school district.

After 3 years as a superintendent-principal at Emerado Elementary School, I accepted a position as assistant principal at L.E. Berger Elementary School and Eastwood Elementary School in West Fargo. At the time of this report, I had been at West Fargo for 2 years. My responsibilities have included working with the School Attendance Review Board, working with students with behavior issues, leading the Response to Intervention Behavior committee, and evaluating certified staff.

Rationale for Qualitative Study

I chose a qualitative study to understand the perceptions of rural serving superintendent-principals. Qualitative research "relies on the views of participants" (Creswell, 2008, p. 46). A qualitative study allowed me to learn about experiences of each superintendent-principal I interviewed by viewing each superintendent-principal's challenges through their own eyes – issues of leadership and management, and successes and challenges encountered through their eyes.

There is limited literature on the topic of superintendent-principals in the United States. At the time of this study, there was no current literature on the topic of superintendent-principals in North Dakota. Exploration is needed if there is a lack of literature about a phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). It has been the aim of this qualitative study to add to the literature base in the United States and North Dakota on the topic of superintendent-principal roles, responsibilities, and experiences. I believe this study has implications for the state of North Dakota, as there are 44 school districts that operate with a superintendent-principal.

Research Method

I utilized a phenomenological research methodology to study perceptions of North Dakota rural superintendent-principals. As a former superintendent-principal, it was necessary for me to use phenomenology because the experience allowed me to understand other superintendent-principals and their roles and responsibilities more deeply. The phenomenon to be studied was the experiences of superintendent-principals in rural North Dakota. The research method was selected to better understand lived experiences of superintendent-principals and the roles, responsibilities, and challenges individuals in these positions experience. Phenomenology investigates the "what" and "how" of an experience (Wertz et al., 2011). Each individual told their story about their own experience through in-depth interviews. Phenomenological research participants were able to describe their lived experiences about a certain phenomenon to a researcher (Creswell, 2014). Phenomenological researchers ask "probing questions to encourage the participant to elaborate on the details to achieve clarity and to stay close to the lived experience" (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1375).

According to Wertz et al. (2011), the roots of the phenomenological approach came from the work of Edmund Husserl in the early to mid-1900s. The goal of phenomenology is "to faithfully conceptualize the processes and structures of mental life, how situations are meaningful lived through as they are experienced" (Wertz et al., 2011, pp. 124-125). Phenomenology allowed me to better understand a phenomenon by observing or listening to the individual living the experience. "In phenomenology reality is comprehended through embodied experience. Through close examination of individual experiences, phenomenological analysts seek to capture the meaning and

common features, or essences, of an experience or event" (Starks & Trinidad. 2007, p. 1374).

Research Question

The purpose of this study was to use phenomenological qualitative research methods to understand roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. The following research question guided this study:

1. What are the shared experiences of rural superintendent-principals in their first 5 years or fewer of a dual-role administrative career?

To answer the research question, a series of open-ended interview questions (Appendix A) was developed.

Participant Selection

Participants in this study were purposefully selected from a list of current superintendent-principals provided by North Dakota Department of Public Instruction's Management Information Systems using criterion-based sampling. Criterion-based sampling "specifies characteristics and attributes of the population to be studied" (Roulston, 2010, p. 81). For the purpose of this study, individuals interviewed met the following criteria:

1. Administrator held both a superintendent and principal position.
2. Superintendent-principals had 5 or less years experience in a current or previous role at the time of this study.
3. Superintendent-principal was employed in a rural North Dakota public school.

4. Rural school was defined as having "an average daily attendance of less than 600 or each county in which a school is located and served by a school district has a population density of fewer than 10 people per square mile and a [federal NCES] Locale Code of 7 or 8" (North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, n.d., p. 9)

I contacted Management Information Systems at North Dakota Department of Public Instruction for a list of current superintendent-principal names and their school districts. At the time of the study, 44 administrators held a superintendent-principal position in North Dakota (B. Bucholz, personal communication, February 17, 2015). Of the 44 superintendent-principal positions, only 11 administrators met the criteria listed above (B. Bucholz, personal communication, February 17, 2015). I verified their current employment and solicited contact information, including phone numbers, electronic mailing addresses, and school district addresses, for each potential participant using their online school system's websites.

I submitted an IRB proposal including a consent form for participants to sign for approval to conduct research when I received approval for my dissertation proposal from my faculty committee. Once I received approval from the Institutional Review Board, I contacted all 11 superintendent-principals via telephone and email. I left a voice message for potential participants that did not answer the telephone. I waited one week and contacted potential participants not responding to my first telephone call and email. I telephoned and emailed the superintendent-principals one more time. Once again, I left a voice message for those that did not answer the telephone call.

I received approval from seven potential respondents to conduct research at their site via telephone call or email. I introduced myself, stated the purpose and background of my study, provided an overview of the interview process and method of documenting data that would be collected from each interview, explained participants' rights, and informed them that the study was voluntary. Once I received approval from a potential participant, he/she was sent a district consent form (Appendix B), informed consent form (Appendix C), and a list of interview questions (Appendix A), and a confirmation of the scheduled date and time for their interview.

Seven of the 11 superintendent-principals that fit the demographics of serving in the superintendent-principal role in North Dakota responded and volunteered to be part of the study. However, only six of the seven volunteers participated in the study. One superintendent-principal did not return my telephone calls and emails to set up a date and time for an interview. I tried to contact the seventh volunteer two times via telephone and email with no response. After discussing with my advisor, the superintendent-principal was dropped from the study due to the lack of response.

Data Collection

I conducted semi-structured interviews with six superintendent-principals who volunteered and met the criteria of the study. During the interview, questions emerged not included in my original interview questions, and so I added them to my list of questions (Glesne, 2011). I started each interview by asking about an interviewee's years of experience in education and administration and continued with open-ended questions such as, "Why did you choose to become an administrator?" Open-ended questions allowed me to utilize follow-up questions. Follow-up questions allowed interviewees to

expand on their answers with more detail and descriptions (Roulston, 2010). The follow-up questions allowed me to follow a respondent's line of thought and made it less likely I would impose my own understanding over a respondent's answers.

The interview format used was phenomenological interviewing. The purpose of phenomenological interviewing was to "generate detailed and in-depth description of human experiences" (Roulston, 2010, p. 16). In using phenomenological interviewing, the focus was on using a variety of open-ended questions. Roulston (2010) explained, "Since researchers want to understand participants' feelings, perceptions and understanding, open questions are particularly useful in providing a format for interviewees to answer in their own words" (p. 16). Interview questions were prepared and sent to individuals before scheduled interviews.

Five of the six interviews lasted between 45 to 70 minutes. One of the six interviews lasted 120 minutes. This interview lasted a little longer due to the challenges the superintendent-principal experienced with the school board. When I asked the superintendent-principal about the challenges faced, the administrator put a hand over the recorder and whispered "school board." I told the superintendent-principal that the story needed to be heard on the sensitive challenge that was experienced. I was able to ask questions at a deeper level and the superintendent-principal was willing to provide examples from the years working as a superintendent-principal.

Interviews were placed at the respondent's choice of venue, in a quiet spot, free from interruptions. Interviews were held at a setting "in which both the interviewer and interviewee feel safe and comfortable" and "provides sufficient privacy to audio-record

interviews without interruptions" (Roulston, 2010, p. 100). The interviews ended once all interview questions were asked to the interviewees.

To prepare for interviews, I learned about the interviewee and school district by searching the Internet and reviewing the school district website. I searched for documents and publications about the interviewee during his or her time at their current school district. Roulston (2010) stated that preparing for an interview can help develop interview questions and topics to be explored further and help to establish a relationship at the start of an interview.

Each superintendent-principal was informed during their first communication, either by telephone or email, that their interview would be recorded, with their permission. I used a digital audio recorder to record each interview. I recorded additional information by making handwritten notes. Creswell (2014) suggested researchers take notes during an interview in case something happens to the recording equipment. Before each interview, I made sure the audio recorder worked and replaced batteries in the audio recorder with fresh batteries. Roulston (2010) suggested making sure the audio recorder works, conducting a sound check, replacing batteries, and having extra storage devices available. Prior to each interview, I informed the interviewee about the study and reviewed the consent form with him or her.

Data Analysis

Creswell (2008) described six specific steps to analyzing and interpreting qualitative data: organizing and preparing data, reviewing and coding data, building themes, reporting findings, interpreting findings, and validating accuracy. These steps informed my data collection and analysis.

Step 1: Organizing and Preparing Data

I began analyzing data by transcribing my first interview myself. The transcription was completed verbatim. The other five interviews were sent to transcriptionists at "rev.com" immediately following each interview. Once interviews were transcribed, I listened to the audio-recordings and read interview transcripts to ensure data were accurate. Roulston (2010) stated that it is "valuable for interviewers to re-listen to audio-recordings, especially if they have been transcribed by others" (p. 105). The five transcriptions were completed verbatim. I prepared and organized my interview notes and recordings after each interview. This allowed me to learn from the interview and make improvements for future interviews (Glesne, 2011). For example, each participant had a file of information that contained his/her recorded interview, transcribed interview, and interview notes.

Step 2: Reviewing and Coding Data

After face-to-face interviews were transcribed, I used elements of a phenomenological approach to data analysis on my study. I began by reading through my transcripts several times to gain an understanding of the whole before breaking the data down into smaller parts (Creswell, 2008). Then, I wrote memos on the transcripts to elaborate on the data (Creswell, 2008). Next, I hand-analyzed the qualitative data by "bracketing chunks" of text representing a category in the margins of transcribed interviews as I was looking for significant statements or themes (Creswell, 2014). Significant statements were identified in the transcripts that provided information about a superintendent-principal's experience. I deleted significant statements irrelevant to the topic. Codes were created from the remaining significant statements. I spread out the

transcripts and color-coded codes to create groups of related codes or categories. Many of the codes I assigned to the data were "in vivo" or taken from the language acquired from participants during interviews (Creswell, 2014). Once I assigned codes, I constructed a codebook in an XCEL spreadsheet to be used as a reference.

Step 3: Building Themes

I reviewed the codes in my codebook and aligned all similar codes in a XCEL workbook page. I had 130 codes on the first page, 45 on the second page, 114 codes on the third page, 78 codes on the fourth page, and 65 codes on the fifth page. Once all codes were created, I organized the codes into 11 categories on the first page, 4 categories on the second page, 13 categories on the third page, 12 categories on the fourth page, and 7 categories on the fifth page. I developed five themes from the data that could be used to answer the question of the study. Afterwards, I noticed the data had reached a point of saturation where no new information would be added to the list of themes.

Step 4: Reporting Findings

To better understand how the data connected between each area, I constructed a code map. I included this figure in Chapter IV. Also included in Chapter IV is a detailed explanation of themes that emerged during data analysis. I have also provided examples of participants' perspectives on superintendent-principal experiences in Chapter IV.

Step 5: Interpreting Findings

After reporting findings, I had to take a step back and determine if there was more to the dual-role phenomenon based on my personal experiences as a superintendent-principal and comparisons with other dual-role studies. In Chapter V, I provide a summary of the findings and reflect on the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2008).

Step 6: Validating Accuracy

The final step in the data analysis process outlined by Creswell (2008) is validating for accuracy, which I explain in greater detail in the next section.

Validity

Qualitative validity allows a researcher to check the accuracy of findings by applying certain procedures. Creswell and Miller (2000) emphasized that validity in qualitative research is about demonstrating that "studies are credible" (p. 124). And, "procedures for validity include those strategies used by researchers to establish the credibility of their study" (p. 125). I used the following strategies for this study: member checking, thick rich description, and clarification of researcher bias.

Member checking, also known as respondent validation, was used to verify the validity of collected data. Maxwell defined member checks as the following:

> Member checks are an important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your biases and misunderstandings of what you observed." (Maxwell, 2013, pp. 126-127)

Audio files were transcribed and sent to each participant for validation. Participants were given an opportunity to review a copy of their transcribed interview data. Participants were also given an opportunity to correct errors and challenge statements that they perceived as wrong interpretations. An opportunity to volunteer additional information was also provided to participants. The final report was shared with research participants to make sure their ideas and thoughts were represented accurately.

Thick, rich description was used to add validity to the study. I listened to the interview recordings and transcribed data verbatim. Written results included many quotes and details from each interviewee. "When qualitative researchers provide detailed descriptions of the setting or offer many perspectives about a theme, the results become more realistic and richer. This procedure can add to the validity of the findings" (Creswell, 2014, p. 202). Open-ended questions and follow-up questions were asked to provide more data about an interviewee's experiences. Interviews need to not only explain in detail what is done, but also how and why (Maxwell, 2013).

In order to increase the trustworthiness of this study, I clarified my background and personal interest in the study. "This self-reflection creates an open and honest narrative that will resonate well with readers" (Creswell, 2014, p. 202). My background provided experience in the area of a superintendent-principal position in a rural North Dakota school district. "Good qualitative research contains comments by the researchers about how their interpretation of the findings is shaped by their background, such as their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin" (Creswell, 2014, p. 202).

One audio file was transcribed by me and the other five were transcribed by "rev.com" and sent to each participant to check for validity. Dr. Pauline Stonehouse reviewed codes, categories, themes, and assertions that I created from the data in transcripts. The strategies that I used to validate the study were introduced and explained in my Educational Foundations and Research courses at the University of North Dakota. In future studies, I might hire two independent individuals to process the data with an objective point of view.

Ethical Considerations

I completed training by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of North Dakota. A human subject's review form was filed with the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB) to obtain approval to conduct the research once a committee had approved the topic proposal. The IRB's goal is to protect the rights of participants in a research study (Creswell, 2008).

I contacted the superintendent-principal of each school district to gain consent to conduct research in their school district. I introduced myself, stated the purpose of and background of the study, provided an overview of the interview process and methods of documenting data that would be collected from interviews, and explained each participant's rights. Participants who agreed to be interviewed were sent a district consent form (Appendix B), informed consent form (Appendix C) for them to sign before they engaged in their interview, a list of interview questions (Appendix A) to be asked at the interview, and a confirmation of scheduled date and time for the interview to be conducted.

Participants were told everything they need to know about the research before being asked to participate. Participants were informed that their privacy and confidentiality of their information would be respected. They were able to choose whether or not to participate in the research project. I removed identifying information from my study. Participants were hidden by using female pseudonyms and pronouns. The gender of the participant's husband or wife were hidden by using the word spouse. School districts and cities were hidden by using the following words: a specific school, rural, and a specific city. Participants were able to review and edit all transcripts.

After completion of the study, research materials were maintained according to law. I will keep the recordings for 4 years at my home office and will delete the recordings after 4 years. Consent forms and personal data will be kept for 4 years and will be stored in a locked file cabinet at my (the researcher's) home office. After 4 years, I will shred the consent forms and personal data.

Summary

Chapter III presented the method and research design utilized in conducting this study. Chapter IV contains data results with an analysis of the data. Chapter V contains the conclusion, summary, and recommendations for superintendent-principals and for further research.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to understand roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. Emphasis was placed on identifying leadership and management skills, successes, and challenges of the superintendent-principal position. Perceptions of six rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota were explored through qualitative research. This research may help North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI), North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders (NDCEL), university superintendent-principal preparation programs, school districts, and superintendent-principals to train for and work in jobs in rural settings.

Qualitative research was used to explore the perceptions of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. Using a qualitative approach allowed me an opportunity to gain a deeper and more accurate understanding of the superintendent-principal role and responsibilities associated with the position. Each superintendent-principal interviewed was given an opportunity to share his or her experience and discuss leadership roles and responsibilities as well as management roles and responsibilities associated with this dual-role position. This study of practitioners' experiences in a rural setting provides valuable insights into inherent challenges and successful accomplishments of novice administrators in the superintendent-principal dual-role position.

Participant Selection

Participants were selected using information collected through Management Information Systems at North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. At the time of this study, 44 administrators served as a superintendent-principal in the state of North Dakota. Eleven (11) of the 44 superintendent-principals had served in their dual-role positions for 5 years or fewer. Ten of the eleven novice superintendent-principals served as a superintendent-high school principal and one superintendent-principal served as a superintendent-elementary school principal. Of the eleven school districts, two were private schools and nine were public schools.

Group Profile

Six serving administrators in the state of North Dakota volunteered to participate in the study. Four of the six superintendent-principals had been in the field of education for 20 or fewer years. Two of the six superintendent-principals had been in education for more than 20 years. All superintendent-principals in the study obtained their masters degree through an educational leadership program at a university. Three superintendent-principals attended a public university in North Dakota. Two superintendent-principals attended a private university in North Dakota. One superintendent-principal attended a public university out-of-state.

Data Analysis

Moving from Codes to Themes

After my first interview, I listened to and transcribed the interview. From that point on, I utilized "rev.com" to transcribe the other five interviews. I listened to each interview to ensure information was transcribed verbatim. To gain a better sense of my

data, I read through my transcripts several times to explore connections between codes and to reflect on the meaning of each participant's interview. As I worked, I began to notice similarities and difference in codes. I spread out my transcripts and color-coded codes to create groups of related codes or categories. As I analyzed my data, I noticed themes emerging from groupings of codes and categories, and realized, after working with the data from all six interviewees, I had reached a point of saturation. The following five themes emerged: (a) leadership and management roles and responsibilities, (b) additional roles and responsibilities and its impact on instructional leadership, (c) areas of support for the rural superintendent-principal, (d) the rural context and its impact on the superintendent-principal, and (e) superintendent-principal training.

Based on data obtained through interviews, I was able to devise an assertion from themes that novice superintendent-principals take on additional managerial and leadership roles on top of dual-role responsibilities that come with their position. The additional managerial responsibilities have an impact on instructional leadership, job performance, and personal life. Superintendent-principals look to balance their personal and professional lives with support from family, friends, colleagues, community members, and school board members.

Codes	Codes	Codes	Codes	Codes
Defining Leadership Establishing Direction Aligning People Motivating and Inspiring Leadership Style Defining Management Planning and Budgeting Organizing and Staffing Controlling and Problem Solving Management versus Leadership Change	S-P Additional Roles S-P Additional Responsibilities Time Management Instructional Leadership	Isolation Prior Administrators Networks Mentoring School Board Education Support Resignations Politics Overall Community Support Building Projects REA/Other Districts Friends and Family	Grew Up Rural Family Experience Different Role Stepping Stone Singular Role Impact on Family Professional Effectiveness Personal Effect Commuting Activities Friends and Family	Career Experience S-P Preparation College Preparation Programs Rural Preparation Areas of Concern Self-Preparation Additional Coursework STAR Training/State Reports
Categories Leadership and Management	**Categories** Additional Roles and Responsibilities of S-P's	**Categories** Support	**Categories** Choosing a Rural S-P Position	**Categories** S-P Preparation
Theme 1 S-Ps take on more managerial roles and responsibilities than leadership roles and responsibilities	**Theme 2** Impact of additional roles and responsibilities on instructional leadership	**Theme 3** Areas of support for the rural S-P	**Theme 4** The rural context and its impact on S-P	**Theme 5** S-P Training

Assertions

Novice superintendent-principals take on additional managerial and leadership roles on top of the dual-role responsibilities. The additional managerial responsibilities have an impact on instructional leadership, job performance, and personal life. Superintendent-principals look to balance their personal and professional lives with support from family, friends, colleagues, community members, and school board members.

Figure 1. Code Map From Data Analysis.

Theme 1: S-Ps Take on More Managerial Roles and Responsibilities Than Leadership Roles and Responsibilities

Superintendent-principals were asked to define leadership and management. Respondents used a variety of definitions for the term leadership; however, definitions were very similar to the term management as defined for this study. Superintendent-principals were also asked about leadership and management roles and responsibilities. Superintendent-principals reported taking on multiple leadership and management roles and responsibilities throughout a school year. Leadership roles included superintendent, principal, and instructional leader. Management roles included bus driver, substitute teacher, and hallway and lunchroom supervisor.

Leadership

Leadership may refer to a position held by an individual or by the actual act of leading. An individual is an effective leader when his/her performance is characterized by several characteristics. Participants in this study discussed those characteristics including: vision, working collaboratively towards defined goals, leader responsibility, effective communication, teamwork, and motivating others. The meaning of the word leadership differed from one superintendent-principal to another. Two of the six superintendent-principals interviewed mentioned vision when defining leadership.

Vision.

Half of the superintendent-principals in this study interchanged leadership and management characteristics. The most common definition of leadership included vision. Participants in the study agreed leadership includes gathering input and working collaboratively to move a vision forward. The visioning process provides direction for a

school district through short and long-term goals. Respondents believed leaders need to communicate a vision to stakeholders such as staff, parents, students, community members, school board members, and local businesses and get them to understand "the vision." Brittney believed responsibilities needed to be delegated to all staff members to "get the vision out there" in order to achieve a goal. She believed that all staff members needed to "step into the vision" and the vision should be something that they all share. Brittney explained, "You have to have that vision and let everybody take their chunk and run with it and do what they think is best." Respondents believed in using distributed leadership and entrusting delegated duties to all school personnel. Brittney believed it was best to let staff run with a vision and support them along the way.

Rural superintendent-principals reported the need to select and implement a teacher evaluation system for the 2015-2016 school year. North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) required school districts to select a teacher evaluation model by August 1, 2015, and implement the model by September 1, 2015. Five of the six superintendent-principals had selected a teacher evaluation model at the time of this study. Brittney had a vision of how to implement Robert Marzano's teacher evaluation tool and had provided training and support for her classroom teachers. She worked with the REA (Regional Education Association) to learn more about Robert Marzano's teacher evaluation tool and shared the information with her staff. Brittney provided staff with different strategies to achieve their vision. Strategies included giving them ownership of their vision, encouraging teachers to network with other teachers in the area, providing mentor teachers to newly hired teachers, participating in instructional rounds, and providing professional development every Wednesday. Brittney explained the challenges

of supporting staff, “Sometimes you don’t agree with the direction, but you’ve got to support them [teachers] because you gave them the license to do it on their own.” The teacher evaluation tool produced a change in the way teachers were held accountable.

A majority of rural superintendent-principals experienced resistance to change when bringing new ideas into their school district. Veteran staff members were perceived to be resistant to new ideas and were unwilling to change. Some staff members who refused to change either retired, forced younger staff members out of the district, or slowed down the superintendent-principal’s vision. Brittney shared, “Change is never easy, and some teachers ended up leaving the profession early. I think because of expectations put down by me and other stakeholders.” Superintendent-principals experiencing change mentioned that it takes time, and they are starting to slowly move towards their vision.

Working Collaboratively Toward Defined Goals.

All superintendent-principals in the study agreed that working collaboratively towards defined goals was a characteristic of leadership. Superintendent-principals believed getting input from leadership teams and staff members was important. Nicole stated, “I am not a top-down leader. I always get advice from other people before decisions are made.” Superintendent-principals believed getting input from stakeholders such as staff, parents, students, community members, and local businesses was important to move a vision forward.

According to participants in the study, leadership consisted of short and long range goals. Jess believed leadership occurs on a daily basis. Jess explained, “Doing what needs to be done on a daily basis. You never know from day to day what is going

to come up." This comment led me to infer that Jess had a tendency to be reactive to managerial situations that occurred on a daily basis. Whereas, Brittney believed leadership was looking toward the future. Brittney explained, "I don't know if it's weekly or daily because we're pretty small. I think that's more long term for us. The managerial pieces get in there daily." This comment led me to infer that Brittney tended to be more proactive and had a vision of short and long term goals instead of reacting to daily managerial issues.

Leader responsibility.

Respondents were asked to define leadership and provide examples of leadership responsibilities that they experienced. When answering these questions, respondents used the word management and characteristics of management to describe such tasks as filling out reports, deciding what to fund, offering materials and support for teachers, and taking surplus money to make much needed building improvements. Myah used the word management and characteristics of management when defining leadership. She was responsible for leading and managing three rural communities that were consolidated into one school district. Myah stated, "Leadership is maintaining and managing the entire community in my position."

Effective communication.

Rural superintendent-principals in the study identified effective communication and teamwork as leadership characteristics needed for their job. Two rural superintendent-principals believed it was important to communicate and share their vision with stakeholders. Effective communication included listening to and collecting information from stakeholders and sharing information and being transparent with

stakeholders. Jane led a building project and collected information from stakeholders. She stated, "We started a focus group, which brings input in from a community" and "used the information to create a building plan that is feasible as well as fiscally responsible." This comment led me to interpret that Jane spent a lot of time pulling people together for a focus group, collecting and analyzing information from the public, and preparing a building plan. Jane worked hard to effectively communicate school needs to the public and public opinions back to school leaders to put together a building plan everyone could feel they contributed to.

Teamwork.

All superintendent-principals believed in working together as a team with staff members. The leadership styles of the superintendent-principals were participative, democratic, team-oriented, proactive, and not autocratic. Superintendent-principals believed it was important to have a leadership team or group to identify what is important in a school community, a team stakeholders could go to for information. Nicole had not chosen a teacher evaluation model at the time of this study. She was hoping to get input from teachers and an elementary principal. Nicole explained how she felt on making the decision on her own. She stated, "Those are the kind of decisions I hate to make by myself because, like I said, I like to get input, but sometimes you got to make it. Go forward."

Motivate others.

A majority of rural superintendent-principals experienced resistance to change when implementing new ideas. Fortunately, they had leadership teams or staff members that they worked together with to continue towards a vision. Jane and Brittney reported

that effective leadership included actions designed to motivate and inspire all staff, faculty, and administrative staff. Jane stated, "As a leader, you have to wave the flag, you have to get out front and motivate." Respondents reported that leaders need to communicate the school district's vision to staff members in a way to get staff members to accept the vision. Once a vision is accepted, tasks need to be distributed among staff members so everyone is part of the school district's vision. Brittney explained, "I am the idea guy, and I'm pushing them to move forward." She also stated, "I try and give my staff the chance to run with their vision. The biggest thing would just be checking in with everybody." Respondents reported that working together as a team and motivating staff members was very important when it came to achieving the school district's vision.

Management

Rural superintendent-principals shared a similar understanding of the term management. They defined management as keeping the school running effectively on a daily basis. This included managing the "little piddly stuff" and "putting out daily fires." Nicole shared, "I'm just trying to put gas in the tank and oil in the engine, just to keep the place going." Respondents emphasized managerial tasks included responsibilities such as: planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving.

Planning and budgeting.

Rural superintendent-principals are responsible for planning and budgeting throughout the school year. All participants mentioned planning and budgeting fall under managerial responsibilities. Planning responsibilities reported included: creating the school calendar, developing classroom and extracurricular activities schedules, mapping out the school for video camera access points, setting up and timing bus routes, and

identifying needs and preparing professional development for the district. Nicole shared, "From a principal point of view, creating next year's class schedule. That's always a level of management to make sure you have your teachers where they need to be in terms of the schedule." Superintendent-principals were also responsible for budgeting. They reported creating a budget for the school year, paying bills and keeping track of payroll, and reviewing and approving teacher requests. Brittney planned and budgeted for professional development on the Marzano teacher evaluation tool. She explained to the school board that the REA was providing training, and it would cost less going with a consortium rather than going at it alone. Brittney said, "If we're on our own and we might have a couple grand, what are we going to do with a couple grand?"

Organizing and staffing.

A majority of superintendent-principals reported organizing and staffing as management responsibilities. The top two responsibilities reported were managing the bus route and finding substitute teachers. Jess reported communicating the bus schedule to bus drivers and parents as responsibilities. Myah reported driving bus routes to find the most efficient way to pick up and drop off students. Four out of the six superintendent-principals had to drive bus routes if a bus driver was not available.

Another managerial responsibility that fell on the shoulders of superintendent-principals was finding substitute teachers in a rural community. If a superintendent-principal could not find a substitute teacher, she usually performed the daily duties of a classroom teacher until somebody else was available to sub. Brittney stated, "Trying to find enough subs to try and cover in a small community. It's a nightmare." Four out of

six superintendent-principals reported subbing in the classroom while having the role of superintendent-principal.

Controlling and problem solving.

All superintendent-principals reported having management responsibilities when it came to problem solving. The top two managerial responsibilities identified in this area were student and staff issues. Student issues consisted of managing behavior and controlling student events. A few superintendent-principals made it a point to supervise the hallway and lunchroom to control student behavior. Nicole said, "If no one was out there, ever, people would figure that out and stuff would start to happen. That's part of management." Myah worked individually with students and created a rewards system for a student on an IEP. One respondent liked to have control and micromanaged all student events. Myah explained, "Everything ends up running through me, even though there's advisors of prom, concessions, and fundraisers. All those issues end up coming through me and approved by me."

Staff issues consisted of putting teachers on improvement plans due to poor instruction and organizational skills, managing high school staff with their cell phones during peer presentations, and limiting teachers' lounge conversations on student issues and complaints. Jess placed two staff members on improvement plans and managed the staff members to make sure they were doing their job. One staff member was placed on an improvement plan due to organization. Jess stated, "I bought some storage containers and worked with him until we got it done, and he was organized the way that I wanted him to be." Jane reported, "Monthly conversations with teachers, managing that you don't tell kids they're stupid, you don't tell kids you hate them." Respondents reported

that they problem solved and worked with students and staff to improve managerial issues.

Leaders or Managers

All superintendent-principals took on leadership and management responsibilities in their dual-role position. However, it was not clear whether or not some superintendent-principals could distinguish between a leader and a manager. Three out of six superintendent-principals interchanged the words leadership and management, and three out of six superintendent-principals differentiated the terms. Myah said, "Management isn't about leadership; it's completely separate." Brittney stated, "There are managers and there are leaders; leaders are harder to find than managers." A few superintendent-principals mentioned managerial responsibilities as leadership responsibilities. One superintendent-principal saw the role of a principal as only managerial, even though a principal is an instructional leader. Jane shared, "There is a principal that can do that. That's their role, their job, management." Respondents' comments when asked about leadership and management responsibilities led me to infer that they spend more time on managerial roles and responsibilities than on leadership roles and responsibilities.

Theme 2: Impact of Additional Roles and Responsibilities on Instructional Leadership

Rural superintendent-principals wear many hats in their dual-role position. They are expected to be a "jack of all trades." Myah summed it up, "In a small community, you are the one that is looked to for everything." Additional roles such as bus driver, athletic coach, substitute teacher, and technology coordinator are placed on rural dual-

role leaders, which may have negative impacts on other leadership areas. All six superintendent-principals interviewed reported having one or more roles in addition to their superintendent-principal role. A majority of the superintendent-principals wanted to be in the classroom more but the extra managerial responsibilities prevented them from doing so.

Multiple Roles

Rural school superintendent-principals are given extra roles before signing a contract. Additional roles consist of extracurricular activities such as coaching and a technology coordinator. Mckenna and Nicole coached high school athletics. Mckenna is an assistant coach. Nicole is a head coach. Myah was assigned the roles of an activities director and technology coordinator. Myah stated, "You didn't ask if I had any extracurricular activity contracts or work agreements that I was swindled into signing. Again, that came that first day that I was down there. I ended up being the activities director and the technology coordinator."

Rural superintendent-principals are also faced with filling positions with qualified individuals who are willing to take on additional roles. Brittney stated, "One of the challenges of a small school is finding people professionally trained and certified that are willing to go above and beyond." Roles that cannot be filled immediately are taken on by the superintendent-principal. Jess had taken on the role of assessment monitor. Jess said, "Testing is a challenge. Finding time for NDSA, NWEA, STAR, and DIBELS and all those things cut time out of instruction. That's a challenge." Brittney had taken on the role of director of transportation and instructional coach.

Superintendent-principals are forced to make quick decisions and assume roles to keep schools running effectively. Certain circumstances may arise when staff members are unable to fulfill their responsibilities and superintendent-principals need to find an immediate replacement. However, in rural communities, it is not always easy to find someone interested in subbing. Brittney explained, "The head cook walked out on me one day at 10:00 in the morning. Didn't feed our kids for lunch or anything, just walked out. I had to take over the kitchen and cook for a week." Brittney also had the head custodian leave in July. She stated, "Between the elementary principal and I, we were doing all the mowing and helping with the majority of the custodial stuff around the school."

In rural school districts, substitute teachers and bus drivers are two positions that are not easily filled. Three of the six superintendent-principals interviewed have subbed in the classroom. Brittney reported, "How can you have 5 or 7 go off for training in one day, and find enough subs to try and cover that in a small community? It's a nightmare, and that's one nightmare." Four of the six superintendent-principals interviewed have driven bus.

Additional roles, expected and unexpected, are taken on by superintendent-principals to maintain a smooth educational environment. Rural school districts are faced with the challenge of finding highly qualified teachers and substitute teachers, classified staff, and extracurricular staff. Respondents reported filling in for the following roles: NDSA and NWEA testing monitor, Title I director, 504 coordinator, substitute teacher, bus driver, cook, instructional coach, hallway and lunchroom supervisor, athletic coach, janitor, activity director, technology coordinator, and unofficial counselor. These extra

roles and responsibilities are time consuming and can have an impact on instructional leadership.

Effect on Instructional Leadership

Rural superintendent-principals believed instructional leadership was negatively impacted by the multiple roles and responsibilities of their dual-role position. Managerial responsibilities were a key factor preventing superintendent-principals from getting and staying in the classroom. Jess stated, "I'd be in the classroom and within 10 minutes of being in the classroom, I was being called out for some other emergency or phone call or somebody else needed something. It was constant." Four of the six rural superintendent-principals identified instructional leadership as an area impacted by increased managerial roles and responsibilities from their dual-role position.

A majority of superintendent-principals desired to be in the classroom more often than they had time for. One superintendent-principal reflected on the past and had set a goal of being in the classroom daily. Another superintendent-principal looked to the future and planned on setting up classroom observations. Nicole stated, "Next year, I need to sit down and make a schedule. On this day, this is teacher observation day. Try and do that once a week or whatever it may be." The superintendent-principals' espoused theory was to get into classrooms on a regular basis and be instructional leaders. However, superintendent-principals experienced the "theory-in-use" due to additional management responsibilities and only got into classrooms to observe and evaluate by December 15 and March 15 of the school year in session at the time of this study.

Summary of Theme 2

Additional roles were brought upon superintendent-principals for different reasons such as: agreements between superintendent-principal applicants and school boards at the time of their interviews, problems filling positions with qualified individuals, and people leaving the staff positions unexpectedly. Extra managerial responsibilities such as supervising hallways and lunchrooms, driving buses to and from extracurricular activities, and student behavior problems took time away from superintendent-principals as instructional leaders. Most superintendent-principals did not get into classrooms as much as they wanted; and most desired to improve classroom visitation hours. A few superintendent-principals planned on setting time aside for instructional leadership the year following interviews.

Theme 3: Areas of Support for the Rural Superintendent-Principal

Superintendent-principals may experience isolation in a rural community. Each rural school district is unique. Some superintendent-principals only have one principal to professionally network with, while others are the only administrator in the school district. Individuals in these roles may experience isolation due to a lack of support. Rural superintendent-principals participating in this study found several sources of support outside their school buildings. When available, respondents reported receiving support from prior administration, networking with colleagues, school board members, community members, and Regional Education Associations/other school districts.

Prior Administration

Rural superintendent-principals sought information and support through transitional arrangements. Transitional arrangements provided incoming superintendent-

principals the opportunity to gain an understanding of their responsibilities from an outgoing administrator. Half the rural superintendent-principals worked or tried to work with previous post holders. Participants in the study reported having mixed support from parting superintendent-principals. Jess received support from a parting superintendent-principal. Jess explained, "I had somebody sit down with me and show me a lot of this stuff. I was ahead of the game there." Myah reported the outgoing superintendent-principal was partially helpful. She stated, "I met with [the] previous superintendent for a couple of hours before I started and found myself contacting him quite often." Myah also mentioned, "He was partially helpful. He had his own job to worry about." Mckenna did not receive support from the outgoing superintendent-principal. She explained, "The previous superintendent was not a help in any way. He was leaving on very bad terms with the community and the school." Support from prior administration depends on the reason the individual is leaving such as their willingness to help, new responsibilities preparing for future administrative positions, and leaving on good terms with school and community.

Participants also had to contend with being compared to an outgoing administrator. Being compared to a prior administrator can bring either positive or negative support from stakeholders depending on how prior administration left the school district. Four of six superintendent-principals mentioned being compared to or trying to fill the shoes of prior administration. Jess came from a different school district than the one she worked for at the time of this study and not knowing people was a challenge. She explained, "Yes, that was huge. Not knowing people. Filling the last superintendent's footsteps. Falling into their [footsteps] and a big role to fill. They

missed him a lot, too." The prior superintendent-principal served the district for 12 years and worked well with all staff, students, and community members. Jane mentioned being compared to an outgoing administrator by the school board. She shared, "There'd be comparisons, maybe your predecessor, and if that person wasn't effective you're constantly being compared." Incoming superintendent-principals often faced the challenge of replacing successful parting superintendent-principals. Nicole explained the challenge she faced was "differentiating myself from my predecessors and particularly my immediate predecessor." Nicole' immediate predecessor was an experienced superintendent in Wisconsin and superintendent-principal in North Dakota. He served the school for 3 years and excelled in the area of finance. Nicole was compared to former administrators by community members saying, "You never do anything."

Most incoming superintendent-principals will be compared to their predecessors. Respondents perceived that community members compared them to their predecessors. One respondent believed that if a superintendent-principal left on bad terms with the school district, the incoming superintendent-principal would be labeled in a negative way.

Networking With Colleagues

Rural superintendent-principals participated in North Dakota Regional Educational Associations (REAs). REAs consist of multiple school districts in a region that work together "to improve their educational programs and services through cooperation and pooling of resources" (Davison, 2015, para. 1). School district superintendents and superintendent-principals who are members of REAs meet monthly. At REA meetings, respondents communicated and worked with veteran superintendents

and formed a network. Respondents also attended sporting events, district and county meetings, and North Dakota Council of Educational Leadership (NDCEL) conferences to create networks with other administrators. All participants identified networking with colleagues as a source of support. Brittney explained why networking was important, "Everybody has a niche. Everybody has a strength." Nicole met with local superintendents at "unofficial superintendent meetings" to "discuss issues and get advice." Unofficial superintendent meetings allowed Nicole to have lunch with regional superintendents and talk about school related issues and get advice from them. Nicole pointed out that some issues would have to be handled differently than how her colleagues handled the issues because each school district is unique. Nicole shared, "You can call other superintendents, trying to find out some things there, but so much is unique to my school." Overall, rural superintendent-principals found attending REA meetings and events beneficial in creating networks with area administrators.

Mentoring was another way experienced administrators supported new administrators. At the time of this study, mentoring was available for new teachers and was provided by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI). Two participants mentioned a state mentoring program. Brittney stated, "I know the superintendents were talking in the near future that they're going to have a mentoring program. They are looking at pairing up an experienced superintendent with those that are more inexperienced." Mckenna mentioned the North Dakota Council of Educational Leadership (NDCEL) already had a mentoring program for new administrators. Mckenna explained, "NDCEL is gonna do a phenomenal job adding to their mentorship program with this boot camp that's coming up." Mckenna was referring to a school

administrators' workshop that is sponsored by North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (NDDPI) and North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders (NDCEL). A review of the NDCEL website revealed the workshop was designed for new-to-the-field administrators and consisted of superintendent and principal boot camps. Topics covered for all administrators included statewide accreditation, school finance, special education improvement planning, school reports located in the new NDDPI website, educational law, and safe and healthy schools. The superintendent boot camp was facilitated by current superintendents, including one superintendent-principal. Topics covered in the superintendent boot camp included budget and foundation aid, school and community relations, principal and teacher evaluations, a superintendent's question and answer panel, and a regional meeting/mentorship to round out the day. The principal boot camp was facilitated by current principals and members of NDDPI and NDCEL. Topics covered in the principal boot camp included time management, teacher evaluations, school and community relations, professional development/staff meetings, a principal's question and answer panel, and regional meetings/mentoring/networking. Both boot camps were held on the same day.

Superintendent-principals with three or more years of experience were comfortable taking the role of mentor to novice practitioners. They believed they were strong in particular managerial aspects of the role and could assist incoming administrators. Mckenna said, "I see myself as that person to call if you have problem with PowerSchool, finance, scheduling, or technology. Call me 'cause I'll know, or know who to guide you to." On the other hand, one superintendent-principal, who had fewer than 3 years of experience, did not mind being paired up with a mentor. An area

that Brittney struggled with was budgeting and finance. She explained, "I'd openly take a mentor that's been around and even a team. Maybe this group here's good with accounting and working with the budget. This group here is good with how they work with their faculty and staff."

Superintendent-principals find support from other administrators through networking opportunities such as Regional Educational Associations, North Dakota Council of Educational Leadership conferences, and visiting with other administrators when attending district meetings or sporting events. They are able to ask questions, get advice, and learn from the experienced administrators. Respondents reported having successful relationships with other local and regional superintendents who were willing to listen and give advice. Superintendent-principals can be supported by their colleagues through mentoring. Respondents reported that they would like to be a mentor to offer support or work with a mentor to receive support.

School Board Members

A majority of the superintendent-principals interviewed experienced positive support from their school board. Jess had an encounter with an upset parent who complained to the school board. Jess stated, "The school board has been very supportive. The school board president was with me during that meeting. He was more supportive than he probably should have been." On the other hand, two of six superintendent-principals interviewed did not feel supported, and named a school board as the reason why they resigned from their position. Brittney shared, "Boards, no matter where you go, are unique. This board wants me to do everything, and then once I do it they always say after it's been done that they want me to go back and change." Jane mentioned not being

supported by the board and letting the board know. She informed the board at a meeting, "One thing to improve on is supporting this person [the newly hired superintendent-principal], letting them know that you have their back when they struggle."

Some school boards were considered to be "hands off" according to half of the superintendent-principals. Respondents stated "hands off" school board members expected them to do their jobs and report to them at monthly school board meetings. School board members were not part of a process but had the final say when making a decision. Brittney reported the school board would change their minds when it came to implementing initiatives such as the one-on-one technology initiative and Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model. She mentioned, "I hate doing everything twice. They don't want the vision. They just want me to do it. Then, when I get done doing it, they don't like it; so, I go back and change."

Half the participants believed school board members were uninformed about the amount of time and commitment needed to start new initiatives and how to complete administrative evaluations. Brittney planned a one-on-one technology initiative and presented it to the school board only to have the decision overturned by the board. She adopted the Marzano teacher evaluation tool and provided an 18-month period of professional development for the teaching staff through the REA. School board members asked if the district could choose another teacher evaluation tool. Brittney shared, "They don't understand how much work it is to put some of these things together." Jane referred to her school board as "ignorant" and said "they don't know how to evaluate." She believed she was being evaluated as a principal when she should have been evaluated only as a superintendent. Jane explained, "They'll give you a 'satisfactory' but also say,

'here's where you're faltering.' You look at them and say, 'that's not a superintendent issue. That's [a] high school principal issue.'" One superintendent-principal wanted school board members to disagree with her more. Nicole stated, "If I had a way to make them better, I wish they were more educated in education."

A majority of school board members provided positive support for superintendent-principals. Respondents reported that school board members showed support by attending confrontational meetings between superintendent-principal and parents, serving on focus groups for building projects, and communicating with an administrator if there were problems or the administrator had questions. Two respondents received negative support from their school board members. Two reasons given by the respondents for this negative support were living in a conservative community with conservative school board members, and school board members having a negative experience with prior administration. Brittney and Jane believed the school board was uninformed and were not educated about education when it came to new educational initiatives and administrative evaluations. Half the respondents reported school board members were "hands off" and were part of the decision making process only when it was on the school board agenda.

Community Members

Rural community members provide positive or negative support for a superintendent-principal and a school district. Five of six superintendent-principals reported receiving very strong positive support from community members. Respondents reported that community members participated in community events, voted in favor of building projects, and attended tax increase meetings. Myah explained how she gained

support from community members at a tax increase meeting. "I felt my demeanor and style of getting all the facts and being transparent with the taxpayers created a very low key, comfortable meeting."

One superintendent-principal did not receive positive support from community members. She believed the community did not want to change and wanted to maintain the status quo. Community members provided conservative support for traditions of rural community values. Brittney explained, "I see this is a very small, rural conservative community that likes things the way it's always been." She believed that community members and staff members would not talk to her about problems; rather, they would go straight to the school board. This comment led me to infer that community members and staff members would go over Brittney's head to get what they wanted. For example, staff members did not like Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model. Staff members let the board know about their dislike of the evaluation model. School board members brought this to Brittney's attention and asked if it was too late to change to a different teacher evaluation model. However, a majority of the superintendent-principals received positive support from community members.

Community support is needed for school building projects and improvements. Four of six superintendent-principals interviewed discussed community support when it came to building projects or additions to their school. A friend of a community member donated around a million dollars to Myah' school district. Another community member donated $75,000 for a new playground to be put in at Nicole' school district. When it came to supporting a $4.3 million bond issue, 158 out of 229 (69%) members of a community voted for the bond measure. Mckenna stated, "We had a huge building

project that has gone through the last couple of years. We are one of the few schools that had a bond issue passed." One school district did not receive support for a new competition gym. The purpose of the gym was to compete with another school district to hold local and regional tournaments. The new competition gym project failed twice. Jane came into the position after the second failed vote. She shared, "It's very unlikely that we'll ever get a regional tournament or district tournament, so why do we need a gym? Let's put it more towards renovations for the elementary or high school." Respondents reported mixed reactions from community members showing support for or against building projects and improvements.

Community members showed support by contributing to fundraisers, attending school events, attending a public hearing to notify taxpayers of an increase in property taxes, and voting on building projects. Support can be for or against a superintendent-principal and school district. A majority of the superintendent-principals believed it is important to get out and introduce yourself to a community. Respondents believed that superintendent-principals need to be visible in their community and show support for their school district. In return, community members will show support for a superintendent-principal and school district.

Regional Education Associations/Other School Districts

Rural superintendent-principals find support from Regional Education Associations (REAs) and other school districts. Regional Education Associations provide a place for administrators to network and lead professional development activities for school districts. Three of six superintendent-principals mentioned working with REAs for networking and planning professional development activities. Mckenna

worked with a local REA to bring in Henry Wong for professional development. She led a book study at her school that focused on Harry Wong's *The Classroom Management Book*. Mckenna wanted to bring in Harry Wong to speak with her staff but did not have the funds for it. He put together a proposal for the REA to see if they would help with the cost of bringing Henry Wong to speak at the local university. The interest level was very high and five or six schools from the local REA were planning on attending Harry Wong's professional development in August.

Summary of Theme 3

Rural superintendent-principals collaborated with other school districts to support instruction for classroom teachers. Rural superintendent-principals worked with other administrators to set up teacher observations. Teachers from one school would go to another school to observe classroom teachers and take ideas back to their home school. Myah stated, "Most effective was coming up here to [a bigger school]. The bigger schools, they are going to have more PD and more advancement as far as collaboration because they have other people." Two of six superintendent-principals worked collaboratively with other school districts to improve instruction. Respondents reported not having the resources that larger school districts received. They worked closely with their REAs and worked with other school districts to share resources. Respondents reported having teachers go into other school districts to observe classroom teachers, but did not specify that the observed teachers returned the favor and came into respondents' school districts to observe.

Theme 4: The Rural Context and Its Impact on Superintendent-Principals

Individuals accept rural administrative positions for different reasons. Participants in this study identified growing up in a rural community, gaining administrative experience, or being close to family members as primary reasons to accept rural positions in a rural school district. A majority of participants in this study weren't necessarily looking for a dual-role position, but accepted it for experience. When respondents were asked where they see themselves in 5 years, only one superintendent-principal mentioned staying at their current school. The other five respondents were planning on moving into bigger school districts and serving in a single administrative role.

The impact of rural life on a superintendent-principal is an interesting phenomenon. Participants reported personal challenges and occupational stressors related to leading a rural school as a superintendent-principal.

Why Rural Superintendents-Principals Choose Rural Schools

A majority of respondents were raised in rural areas and returned to those rural areas to take up administrative positions. Four of six rural superintendent-principals mentioned growing up in a rural community. Myah shared, "I was from a small town, and I'd be totally comfortable in a position in a small town. My parents are educated in a small town. That kind of drove me to apply for these small town positions." Jane explained, "I grew up in a rural community. I'm a farm kid; so, it seemed natural to migrate towards an area that I could relate [to]." Nicole shared, "I was a small town girl and think living in a small town is something I'm comfortable with, especially raising my daughter."

A majority of participants reported having immediate family in a rural area. A few participants lived in a rural area where they applied for an administrative position and were raising their own family in that area, while other participants moved to be closer to their parents and siblings. Five of the six rural superintendent-principals reported having some kind of family connection in the area surrounding their school district. Three superintendent-principals were rooted in another town or city than where their job was located and had to commute daily to and from work. Jess lived in one small town and worked in a nearby small town. She explained the connection, "I live in a rural community. I feel like, for my family, at this time, this is the best place for me. . . . being close to home." The other three superintendent-principals lived in the community where they worked. Mckenna lived and worked in a small town near a larger city. She shared, "It came down to how close we were to [a specific city], because my [spouse] and I are both from that area."

Four of six rural superintendent-principals accepted their positions in a search for experience. Myah stated, "Honestly, this is definitely a position for me to gain experience." Brittney said, "I'm realistic. Fresh off the boat from another state, I'm going to have to put in some time, get some experience, get a few years behind me before a bigger school system may be interested in looking at me."

Five of six superintendent-principals shared a goal to become administrators in bigger school districts within the next 5 years. Mckenna shared, "Probably in a larger school district but in a singular role." Myah stated, "I'm hoping to be an administrator in [a specific city]. If that opportunity doesn't arise, I'm perfectly happy." Two of six superintendent-principals had accepted a position with another school district at the time

of the study. The other superintendent-principal planned on staying at their current school. Jess stated, "Honestly, I think I will be here. It's right for my family. I'm happy here. I'll be here for probably 5-10 years."

Respondents chose to be administrators in rural school districts for the following reasons: they grew up in a rural community, they had immediate family in the area, and they wanted to gain administrative experience. However, a majority of respondents did not see themselves in the superintendent-principal role in a rural school for a long period of time. Five respondents reported that gaining experience would help them achieve their goal of becoming administrators in larger school districts in the next 5 years.

Why Administrators Choose Superintendent-Principal Positions

A majority of administrators reported the superintendent-principal role was not their first choice. Half the participants were looking for a principal role but accepted the dual-role position. Respondents reported accepting a dual-role position for reasons such as being familiar with the rural area, gaining administrative experience, and being close to family and friends. Brittney came back to North Dakota to become an administrator. She chose a dual-role position because she was familiar with the area. Brittney stated, "It could have been a principal, superintendent, or both. I wanted this area because I was familiar with the [rural] area." However, one respondent reported that the job advertisement for their dual-role position listed the position as only a principal position. Jess stated, "I wasn't really looking for the dual-role. If I could have my choice, I would be a principal and not the superintendent." Jess reported the position was advertised as elementary principal. Jess explained, "Actually they hired me to be elementary principal; and when they hired me, they told me, 'and you are superintendent, too'." Five of six

respondents reported that the job advertisement for their jobs stated the position was for superintendent and principal. One respondent, Jess, stated that the job advertisement was posted as an elementary principal position only.

Impact of a Rural Superintendent-Principal Position on Professional Life

Superintendent-principals encounter occupational stress in the dual-role positions. Rural superintendent-principals take on additional roles and responsibilities that contribute to an increased workload. An increased workload causes occupational stress and has an impact on the effectiveness of the performer once in the superintendent-principal role. Five of six superintendent-principals mentioned stress in relation to their dual-role position. Jess stated, "The dual role. I feel there's too much on your plate to really do anything well." Jess also mentioned, “I don’t feel I can be a success at either role because every time you are doing something good for the superintendency, the principalship is suffering. Every time I’m doing something good for principal side, superintendent side is suffering.” Myah shared, “I was mentally drained by the end of the day. Then I felt my job performance really took a drop.” She also shared, “It felt like a lot of different things being planned that I didn’t feel prepared for, a lot of those things, because there were extra duties taking up my time. Overall, I felt effective. I felt average at both.”

Respondents reported that occupational stress can have an impact on their overall job performance as a superintendent-principal. The additional managerial roles and responsibilities taken on by respondents demanded additional time from either the principal or superintendent role. Respondents reported not feeling effective in either role but rather felt average.

Impact of a Rural Superintendent-Principal Position on Personal Life

Carrying out a dual-role position, and adding other roles and responsibilities as a result of working in a rural area, can have an impact on a superintendent-principal and his/her family. Respondents reported not being able to spend time with their family as much as they wanted because they lived in another town or city and had a daily commute to and from work. Myah stated, “I wasn’t home as much as I wanted to be. It created stress at home because my kids had activities, and I was always hurrying.” Mckenna lived in the rural community that she served, but her spouse commuted daily. She said, "[My spouse] is running a 60 miles commute one way every day when school starts. That'll be a big strain on our family, and I'll look to get into [a specific city] or a whole lot closer."

Rural superintendent-principals also struggled to find balance with their job and their home life. With additional roles and responsibilities, comes additional time away from family. Brittney explained, "You lose a lot of time with your spouse. I just got remarried, and this has been a hard year for my [spouse]. [My spouse] doesn't understand why I have to do all things I have to do." Myah shared, “I always felt run down and by the end of the night I had very little energy left to spend with my family.”

Occupational stress can have an impact on a superintendent-principal’s health. Jess mentioned, “The learning curve, from being a teacher to principal and superintendent, caused me a lot of anxiety.” Jess also stated, “It was so overwhelming. The first 6 months on the job, I thought I might die. It was brutal.” Brittney explained, “The burnout part. I’m tired. For 2 years, I’ve tried to learn different hats and do the best I can.” Myah shared, “Draining physically and mentally when you have all these other

roles." Respondents reported the following problems as new dual-role administrators: learning the role, time commitments, lack of balance between work and family life, and restrictions on spouses.

Superintendent-principals utilized different outlets when relieving occupational stress. Two of three superintendent-principals stated the commute to and from work allows time to debrief and make phone calls. Jane shared, "I am lucky to have an hour commute, so I can debrief, call my friends on the way back, my other administrators in other towns and say, 'where are we at on this?'" Myah said, "The drive home would be a wind down time for me. I was able to process everything that happened in the day and make an extra phone call or two if I need to."

The second outlet used to relieve occupational stress was participating in athletic activities. Four of six superintendent-principals participated in other activities to relieve stress. Brittney explained, "I learned how to like fishing. It gets me away from the building, and [I] get out on the ice. A lot of times, you don't have phone reception." Myah participated in athletic activities such as running and playing basketball to alleviate stress acquired from her dual-role position. These activities allowed Brittney and Myah to de-stress and focus on things outside their school buildings.

The final stress reliever identified was support of friends and family. Four of six superintendent-principals counted on friends and family for support. Jess "played 'Words With Friends'" and "hung out with friends and family to get away from it." Jess explained that "Words With Friends" is a digital version of Scrabble that she plays with friends. Brittney recommended finding a "support group of friends where you can be yourself and not have to worry about demands of the job, crossing over that line."

Summary of Theme 4

Respondents identified two areas of concern in the dual role position; additional roles and responsibilities and loss of time with family. Increased workloads and missing out on childrens' activities lead to an increase of stress. Respondents used different outlets such as using commute time to debrief and make calls, participating in athletic activities, and relying on the support of friends and family to reduce the stress.

Theme 5: Superintendent-Principal Training

Rural school districts looking to hire superintendent-principals may struggle to find highly qualified applicants for their dual-role positions. A superintendent-principal position requires an applicant to qualify for an elementary or secondary principalship and obtain a superintendent credential. The elementary or secondary principalship credential is obtained through a masters degree program that prepares students for building leadership. All of the participants in the study had completed a masters degree program. The superintendent credential is acquired through specialist and doctoral programs that prepare individuals for district leadership. Half the superintendent-principals in this study did not have a superintendent credential. Many superintendent-principals lack coursework needed or have not had training for a district leadership position.

College Preparation Programs

Participants in this study believed their college preparation program(s) did not prepare them to be superintendent-principals. All participants completed a masters degree program. Masters degree programs are usually designed to prepare principals, not superintendents. Two of six superintendent-principals believed the masters program they studied under prepared them to be a principal. Jess and Myah reported having good

instructors and advisors. Two of six superintendent-principals did not have the same experience with their masters program. Mckenna said, “For my masters courses, it was all theory and smoke. I like to describe it as smoke, because I probably learned more in my first 2 years with my feet than I did in my masters program.” The four participants responding to college preparation were split on whether or not their masters program prepared them to be principal.

Jess, who believed her masters degree program prepared her for a principalship, questioned if the program was geared towards rural school districts. She believed masters program was “geared toward more urban school districts.” Jess also stated, "Don't know instructors have experience with smaller school districts."

After graduating from a masters program, superintendent-principals are being hired without having their superintendent credentials, but they are being required to obtain it. Superintendent-principals are going into their positions without needed knowledge in some areas. Reported areas of concern included finance, state reports, demographic reports, non-renewal processes, and deadlines. Mckenna explained, “Even with school finance. It was unbelievable to me what you were taught for your day-to-day application of state reporting and state budgeting.” Nicole discussed the challenges, “Talking about fighting with Title I at the state and the bureaucratic stuff and everything that goes with that. They don’t give classes to undergrad or college graduate classes dealing with that side of the stuff.”

Respondents reported being hired for dual-role positions after completing a Masters of Education program in Educational Leadership. Two respondents believe their Masters program prepared them to be principals. However, one of the two respondents

believed their program was geared toward urban schools, not rural schools. Two respondents reported their Masters program did not prepare them to be principals, and instead, they learned through experience. Respondents reported not being prepared for superintendent responsibilities such as finance and state reporting. Superintendent-principals were required to take additional coursework in order to obtain their superintendent credential.

Self-Preparation

Superintendent-principals usually begin their dual-role position without having all needed and required coursework. They usually learn "on the fly" or are "baptized by fire" through experience. Brittney stated, "I think you learn or are prepared through your experiences." Myah shared, "I jumped in, just literally jumped in. I had zero training." She also mentioned, "I was learning all that on the fly, calling DPI [Department of Public Instruction] a lot. I had to do a lot on my own." Five of six superintendent-principals reported they were prepared through on-the-job experience.

Additional coursework is another way superintendent-principals prepare themselves for a superintendent position. Three of six superintendent-principals did not have their superintendent credential and were taking additional courses to obtain it. Jane intended to complete her coursework for a superintendent credential by the end of the summer. Jess had eight credits left and planned to complete her coursework in the next year and a half. Myah had two more courses to complete to obtain a superintendent credential at the time of this study. Brittney had a superintendent credential, but wanted to take additional classes through the North Dakota Lead Center.

State Reporting

North Dakota Department of Public Instruction requires administrators to fill out paperwork on the State Automated Reporting System, also known as STARS. Reports required by NDDPI include foundation aid, Title I federal programs, enrollment, school calendar, personnel, and suspension/expulsion to name a few. Five of six superintendent-principals reported not being prepared to fill out state paperwork. Jess stated, "If someone can sit you down and explain the financial pieces, Title pieces, and state paperwork. All the stuff the state expects from you." Some administrators had come from other states or private schools and were not familiar with STARS. Brittney shared, "[In] North Dakota, there's no training for starters. They send you reports that are due. You have to figure out the software. You have to go back and figure out what piece[s] go in there." The State Automated Reporting System was mentioned directly by Myah and Mckenna. Myah explained, "I was in a private school; we didn't have any STARS. I was very knowledgeable with PowerSchool, but with STARS and reporting, no clue." Mckenna shared, "You know how to set up, how to work with PowerSchool or STARS. Any of those things, it didn't have any of that in our program at all."

Organization of Study

Chapter IV presented findings from the rural superintendent-principal interviews. Chapter V contains a conclusion and summary of the aforementioned data as well as recommendations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This qualitative research study utilized phenomenological methods to investigate lived experiences of rural superintendent-principals. The study focused on roles and responsibilities, with an emphasis on identifying leadership and management skills, successes, and challenges of the superintendent-principal position. In-depth interviews (see Appendix A) were employed to gather data to better understand perceptions of six dual-role administrators in North Dakota.

In the first part of this chapter, I give a brief summary of the research findings in order to better explain the dual-role position of rural superintendent-principal. Then, I discuss conclusions I have reached as a result of interviewing six rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. The conclusions are organized according to three major findings: (a) superintendent-principals spend more time on management than on leadership, (b) superintendent-principals experience isolation and occupational stress, and (c) superintendent-principals do not feel prepared for their positions. Next, I make recommendations for: (a) superintendent-principals, (b) school board members, (c) North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs, (d) the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, (e) the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Educational Leadership Program together, and (f) for further research. The chapter concluded with my final thoughts on this study.

Conclusion

I used the following question to guide this qualitative, phenomenological study: What are the shared experiences of rural superintendent-principals in their first 5 years of a dual-role administrative career? The conclusion from this study is that novice superintendent-principals take on additional managerial and leadership roles on top of the dual-role responsibilities. The additional managerial responsibilities have an impact on instructional leadership, job performance, and personal life. Superintendent-principals look to balance their personal and professional lives with support from family, friends, colleagues, community members, and school board members.

Discussion

The results of this study are framed around John Kotter's (1990) leadership theory. The theory helped interpret meanings and compare processes of leadership and management. Kotter defined leadership as "a process that helps direct and mobilize people and/or their ideas" (p. 19) and "produces movement" (p. 21). Kotter defined management as "bringing a degree of order and consistency" (p. 20) to an organization by keeping it "on time and on budget" (p. 21). John Kotter provided examples of processes of leadership and management. Kotter (1990) argued that the leadership process consists of establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring. The management process consists of planning and budgeting, organizing and staffing, and controlling and problem solving. Both processes were used to categorize leadership roles and responsibilities of the superintendent-principal. However, the classification of leadership according to Kotter is contended through recent research conducted by Torrance and Humes (2015). They questioned beliefs underlying leadership theory.

Torrance and Humes stated that putting leadership ahead of management is easier to do in theory; however, in practice, it is much harder. Torrance and Humes mentioned that defining leadership is difficult as there are many ways it has been defined and interpreted over the years.

The conclusions from this study follow the research question and the findings, addressing three areas: (a) superintendent-principals spend more time on management than on leadership, (b) superintendent-principals experience isolation and occupational stress, and (c) superintendent-principals do not feel prepared for their positions. The following is a discussion of major findings and conclusions based on this research. After the discussion, I included some recommendations and concluding thoughts on this study.

Superintendent-Principals Spend More Time on Management Than on Leadership

The first major finding of this study was: superintendent-principals spend more time on managerial roles and responsibilities than on leadership roles and responsibilities as defined by Kotter (1990). In a dual-role position, both leadership and management responsibilities are often performed by individual administrators in order to make sure a school district runs smoothly. However, rural superintendent-principals take on more additional management roles and responsibilities than their urban counterparts. Additional management roles, not normally expected of district administrators but assigned to other personnel, include bus driver, assessment coordinator, substitute teacher, janitor, cook, and hallway and lunchroom supervisor. Some of the reasons superintendent-principals reported taking on additional roles was to fulfill contractual duties assigned when hired, to fill in empty job positions resulting from the scarcity of qualified individuals within a reasonable traveling distance, and unexpected resignations.

Respondents reported fulfilling a variety of management responsibilities including dealing with student and staff behavior, driving students to and from extracurricular activities during school hours, and preparing meals for all students in the school. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that, in a rural setting, superintendent-principals take on additional management roles and responsibilities that affect their ability to be instructional leaders in their school district. Superintendent-principals reported having to leave school early to drive bus so students could attend sporting events and practices, which limited the time available for professional development and other activities defined as instructional leadership. For example, districts in North Dakota often reserve time for teachers to meet for professional learning at the end of a school day, but if an administrator is driving bus after school that may require missing professional development time with staff.

Novice superintendent-principals reported trying to figure out what a dual-role position entails and were busy "putting out fires" on a regular basis. The extra managerial roles and responsibilities impacted instructional leadership and rural superintendent-principals were not in classrooms as often as recommended by advocates for hands-on supervisory practices (Ashton & Duncan, 2012; Preston, Jakubiec, & Kooymans, 2013; The Wallace Foundation, 2006). Lack of instructional leadership can have a negative impact on staff looking for feedback to improve instruction and students who may be in a classroom with poor instruction.

Superintendent-Principals Experience Isolation and Occupational Stress

The second major finding of this study was that superintendent-principals in the study reported experiencing isolation in rural school districts and occupational stress due

to additional roles and responsibilities. Rural superintendent-principals may have one principal, or sometimes, no other administrator in the school district with whom to network and share problems. McCloud (2005), Ashton and Duncan (2012), and Hobson et al. (2003) all referenced the importance of professional networks for novice administrators. Superintendent-principals often feel they work in isolation without peer support. Respondents reported looking for support outside their school districts from sources such as prior administrators, colleagues, school board members, community members, consortiums, and other school districts. Two respondents reported maintaining contact with prior administrators after taking their dual-role position.

Demands of a dual-role position and additional roles and responsibilities of rural administrators required position holders to expend a great deal of time and energy on tasks that might be considered less likely to impact learning directly. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that some tasks are likely to be neglected in favor of others. Individuals in the dual-role position do not feel effective in their superintendent or principal role due to additional roles. As one respondent put it, she felt "average at best." Superintendent-principals also experience personal stress due to a lack of balance between time spent on the job and time spent with family members. Superintendent-principals cope with occupational and personal stress by using commute time to debrief and communicate with colleagues, by participating in athletic activities, and by relying on the support of friends and family to reduce stress.

Superintendent-Principals Do Not Feel Prepared for Their Positions

The third major finding of this study was that superintendent-principals did not feel that the Educational Leadership Programs prepared them for a dual-role position. In

North Dakota, most masters degree programs are designed to prepare students to serve as building principals and reflects the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards for building leadership. Specialist and doctoral degrees are designed to prepare participants for district level standards and leadership. A conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs prepare individuals for building leaderships or principalships, but not superintendencies, through a Masters Degree program in Educational Leadership. North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs offer Specialist Degree and Doctoral Degree programs to prepare an individual for district leadership or superintendency. However, even though masters degree programs from the North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs reflect ELCC standards, two of the superintendent-principals did not feel prepared.

Another conclusion to be drawn from this finding is that superintendent-principals are hired by rural school boards without having a lot of administrator experience or a superintendent credential. Superintendent-principals are required by the state of North Dakota to take additional coursework to obtain a superintendent credential. Respondents reported learning on the job to be the main way they prepared for their dual-role position. Superintendent-principals also reported that budgeting, finance, and STARS were major challenges. Participants in this study accepted dual-role positions: to be closer to family, because they grew up in a rural community and wanted to stay there, and because they wanted to gain experience in administration. Findings from this study support the research that rural school districts receive fewer applications from individuals who are considered highly qualified and have the required credentials for their positions. At the time of this study, three of six (50%) participants did not have their superintendent

credential but were working with a provisional license and taking coursework. At the time of this study, it was becoming more common to see job advertisements on the North Dakota Council of Educational Leadership website stating positions must have credentials or "be able to obtain" a credential.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study was the small number of participants. This study was limited to six interviews only in the state of North Dakota. Participants were selected based on certain criteria. Participants were novice administrators, in their first 5 or fewer years in a dual-role position.

Another limitation of this study was that administrator's satisfaction was mentioned in Chapters 1, 2, and 3, but not mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5. Although there were interview questions that focused on satisfaction, the interviewees did not provide a lot of information in this area where I could have reached a point of saturation. Despite these limitations, I believe participant interviews supported findings from other similar studies conducted in rural areas in other states (Canales et al., 2008; Canales et al., 2010; Geivett, 2010; Hesbol, 2005).

Recommendations

In this study, I found that novice superintendent-principals enter dual-role positions lacking experience and credentials needed for their role as superintendent. Respondents reported having difficulties preparing budgets, understanding the financial aspect of their roles, and filling out state reports in the STARS system. Superintendent-principals stated they take on additional roles and responsibilities because of their rural setting, most of which are managerial. They reported increased roles and responsibilities

created additional stress on the job and often questioned how effective they were at fulfilling principal and superintendent responsibilities. Respondents were critical about members of the school boards understanding a dual-role position, especially when it came to evaluations. The following recommendations have been developed based on data collected as part of this research. Recommendations are being made in six categories.

1. Superintendent-principals,
2. School board members,
3. North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs,
4. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction,
5. The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs combined, and
6. Further research.

Superintendent-Principals

In this study, I found that rural superintendent-principals took on additional roles and responsibilities not considered traditional principal or superintendent tasks, whether by choice or necessity. Superintendent-principals coached, drove bus, monitored hallways and lunchrooms, and worked as groundskeepers. Additional managerial duties caused additional occupational and personal stress on superintendent-principals. Superintendent-principals reported finding support from other administrators, family and friends, and school board members. The recommendations listed below were developed to relieve superintendent-principals of additional managerial duties that in turn should alleviate some stress.

Superintendent-principals pursuing a dual-role position in a rural school district should consider:

1. Accepting a dual-role position without contractually adding extra-curricular roles such as coaching, athletic director, etc., for at least the first 3 years of service.
2. Distributing leadership and management roles and entrusting delegated duties to all school personnel.
3. Learning how to prioritize tasks without being consumed by daily management issues. Superintendent-principals need to leave work at the office and spend time with family at the end of each day.
4. Requiring staff members to acquire their bus license upon hiring.
5. Creating a network consisting of colleagues, family, and friends. A network would provide positive support for superintendent-principals.
6. Inviting school board members to a one to two day retreat to create a positive working relationship.
7. Taking additional coursework through local universities to obtain their superintendent credential and beyond and attend conferences through North Dakota Council of Educational Leaders.

Rural School Board Members

In this study, none of the six respondents were given a job description. One superintendent-principal reported that she was misled by her job advertisement, as it was only posted as a principal position. I also found that rural school boards hired administrators for superintendent-principal positions, but many do not have the necessary

credentials for a superintendency role. Individuals without required credentials have been offered a provisional license and must complete additional coursework. Most superintendent-principals reported that their school boards were "hands off" and uneducated about education and the dual-role position of principal/superintendent and its associated responsibilities. At the time of this study, two superintendent-principals who did not have a positive relationship with their school boards were leaving their dual-role positions at the end of the year.

Current and potential school board members should consider:

1. Hiring people with appropriate credentials for a dual-role position.
2. Being honest with applicants about an open position and create a detailed position description.
3. Gaining a better understanding of all the roles and responsibilities associated with a superintendent-principal position.
4. Familiarizing themselves with a school district's superintendent evaluation form. A board committee should be accountable for making sure an evaluation process is well designed and the evaluation can be carried out. An evaluation should consist of well-defined performance targets linked to the leadership role. Performance targets should be negotiated on with a superintendent-principal. School boards and superintendent-principals must reach formal consensus and document evaluation. The whole board must be fully informed of their evaluation process and invited to comment on a superintendent-principal's performance.

5. Participating in professional development opportunities provided by the North Dakota School Boards Association.
6. Attending a one or two day strategic retreats with their superintendent-principals to provide input at a high level early enough in a process to make a difference.

North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs

North Dakota Educational Leadership faculties need to collaborate with rural school districts to gain a better understanding of current challenges facing novice superintendent-principals. With input from these administrators, faculties can look at making changes to their educational leadership preparation programs. In this study, one respondent reported that her preparation program "was geared toward urban school districts" and wasn't sure if "instructors have experience with smaller school districts." Another superintendent-principal mentioned having a residence program similar to the Teacher-in-Residence program at the University of North Dakota.

North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs should consider:

1. Preparing leaders for all settings: suburban, urban, and rural. McCloud (2005) and Murdock (2012) stated that each school district is unique. Suburban and urban schools offer more resources to administrators such as assistant superintendents and principals, full-time guidance counselors, school psychologists, and behavioral strategists to assist with managerial responsibilities. Rural school leaders do not have these supports and need to be prepared to handle anything and everything. Superintendents, superintendent-principals, and principals need to collaborate and set up

dates and times for educational leadership instructors to come in and observe school districts and interview administrators to determine challenges that are faced in each context.

2. Implementing a Superintendent-in-Residence or Principal-in-Residence program. This could be a one-year program and would allow future administrators an opportunity to receive high quality professional development and to work and network with local, regional, and state leaders, and gain experience.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

In this study, I found that novice superintendent-principals look for support outside their school district. Respondents mentioned networking with other administrators as their main way of receiving support. Novice superintendent-principals were supportive of working with a mentor. Superintendent-principals with 3 or more years experience were interested in being a mentor for new administrators. After reviewing research and recommendations by Hopkins-Thompson (2000), I have built on Hopkins-Thompson's ideas to make recommendations in the context of North Dakota.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction should consider:

1. Establishing a state mentorship program for all principals, superintendents, and superintendent-principals during their first 2 years in administration. The following would be major components of the mentorship program.

    - Mentoring would be a voluntary activity. NDDPI should request retired administrators be mentors before asking current administrators.
    - The mentorship program would train both mentor, current and retired, and mentee. The mentorship program should benefit both parties.

- Mentors need to be assigned immediately within 30 days of mentee accepting a new position. Mentors would check in with mentee to answer any immediate questions.

- A mentor could be assigned to groups of three to six new administrators.

- A mentee would need to complete a self-assessment and organization assessment to determine training needs.

- Mentor and mentee should meet to discuss needs and create goals for a school year. Mentor and mentee should agree on a clear set of priorities focused on instructional leadership.

- A mentor would help create new learning and networking opportunities.

- The mentor and mentee would meet face-to-face with current and retired administrators. The mentor would provide modeling, guidance, coaching, and encouragement in a one-on-one relationship. Communication could also take place through phone calls and email.

- Reflection logs could be required by both mentor and mentee for documentation purposes to determine the effectiveness of the program. Mentor and mentee could attend an end of the year mentor-mentee event to celebrate successes and reflect on what to improve on for the following year.

2. Supporting recruitment and retention initiatives for rural school districts in North Dakota.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Educational Leadership Programs Combined

In this study, I found superintendent-principals were not prepared to fill out state reports in STARS required by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. Five of six respondents reported that they were not familiar with the STARS reporting system. One superintendent-principal came to North Dakota from [another state] and one

superintendent-principal came from a private school to a public school and both were unfamiliar with the process.

The North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and North Dakota Educational Leadership faculty should consider:

1. Working together to create a mock state reporting system to help novice superintendents practice entering data. The mock state reporting system should be identical to North Dakota's State Automated Reporting System (STARS). Aspiring superintendent-principals would then have an opportunity to practice working on the following reports: compensation, federal Title, MIS, school calendar, enrollment, financial, transportation, professional development, suspension expulsion, graduation rate, scholarship, and ACT non-participation. A mock reporting could be offered to future administrators as part of a class in their Master of Education program. This practical application would allow future administrators an opportunity to work together, make mistakes, and learn about each report.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research to explore perceptions and lived experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota and the United States is highly recommended. The purpose of this research has been to gain an understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota. I would recommend the following research topics to further develop and verify the findings of this research:

1. Six rural superintendent-principals with 5 or less years of experience in North Dakota were the focus of this study. This study could be replicated with an increased number of participants including participants with more than 5 years experience in North Dakota.
2. Conduct a study among all rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota and focus on the satisfactions of the dual-role position.
3. Conduct a comparison study among rural superintendent-principals, principals, and superintendents in North Dakota and focus on leadership and management, successes and challenges of rural school districts.
4. This study focused on superintendent-principals in North Dakota. This study could be replicated in other states in the United States to compare findings.
5. This study sought experiences and perspectives of superintendent-principals through personal interviews. Experiences and perspectives of stakeholders and families associated with superintendent-principals are unknown. Interviewing stakeholders and family members would add to the validity of this study.

Concluding Thoughts

Individuals accept rural dual-role positions often without experience and are often not qualified for the superintendent position. Individuals are able to obtain a provisional superintendent credential through the North Dakota Education Standards and Practices Board. The provisional credential allows individuals to be a superintendent without the required coursework or credentials but the individual must be attempting to complete 8

additional hours of graduate coursework specific to superintendents. The limited amount of time and coursework required by ESPB for a superintendent credential is not enough to prepare individuals for serving in a superintendent role.

Superintendent-principals take on too many roles and responsibilities early in their career. Superintendent-principals often accept additional roles and responsibilities that are not administrative in nature, willingly or unwillingly, to prove they are effective leaders. Most roles and responsibilities taken on are managerial, which has an impact on a superintendent-principal's ability to lead a school district. As a former superintendent-principal, I experienced similar experiences as those reported in this study. I was unqualified and unprepared for the superintendent role, took on multiple managerial roles and responsibilities, and found myself managing the school district rather than leading it.

Rural superintendent-principals that take on additional roles and responsibilities experience additional stress, personal and occupational, in the dual-role position than those who do not. Superintendent-principals experience an increase of time spent at work and a decrease of time spent at home with family compared to their urban counterparts. Superintendent-principals need to realize that they cannot "do it all." They need to distribute leadership and management roles and responsibilities to all staff members. Superintendent-principals must learn how to balance work and home life, otherwise one, if not both, may suffer.

Finally, superintendent-principals need to find support early after being hired and often. A dual-role administrative position is a lonely position; and in a rural community, the superintendent-principal often feels isolated. Superintendent-principals need to align themselves with family, friends, and colleagues who will provide positive support.

Novice superintendent-principals need to attend district and regional meetings, NDCEL conferences, and seek help through REAs to begin networking with other superintendents and principals in North Dakota.

APPENDICES

Appendix A
Interview Questions

Background:

1. How many years have you been in the field of education?
2. How many years have you been an administrator?
3. How many years have you been a superintendent-principal?
4. What percentage are you superintendent? What percentage are you principal?
5. Tell me about your school.
6. Why did you choose to become an administrator?
7. Why did you choose to become a superintendent-principal?
8. How were you prepared for the administrator role?
9. How were you prepared for the superintendent-principal role?
10. How did you prepare yourself for the administrator role?
11. How did you prepare yourself for the superintendent-principal role?
12. Why did you choose to work in a rural community?

Leadership:

1. If you were to define "leadership" in your current position, how would you define it?

2. What are some leadership responsibilities that you encounter on a daily basis?
3. What are some leadership responsibilities that you encounter on a weekly basis?
4. How would you describe your leadership style?
5. How do you fit in instructional leadership during the school day?
6. How do you support instruction?
7. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership in your current position?

Management:

1. If you were to define "management" in your current position, how would you define it?
2. What are some management responsibilities that you encounter on a daily basis?
3. What are some management responsibilities that you encounter on a weekly basis?
4. How would you describe your management style?
5. Tell me about a time when you demonstrated management in your current position?

Successes:

1. How would you define a "successful" superintendent-principal?
2. What do you think it takes to be successful in this position?

3. What has been your most rewarding accomplishment? Why?
4. Tell me about a time when you were successful in this role.

Challenges:

1. What are the primary challenges of your current role?
2. How do you handle the challenges?
3. What were the primary challenges that you encountered in prior years?
4. How did you handle these challenges?
5. What unique challenges have you encountered in your position?
6. How did you handle these unique challenges?
7. Tell me about a time when the going got really tough? How did you handle it?

Closing:

1. What advice would you offer other aspiring superintendent-principals?
2. Where do you see yourself in five years?
3. Now that you know about this research on superintendent-principal roles and responsibilities and have heard my questions, is there anything that I should have asked you but didn't?
4. Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix B
District Consent

Date:

Dear Superintendent-Principal:

I am following up on our phone conversation regarding your participation in a research study that I will conduct under the direction of Dr. Pauline Stonehouse, advisor, at the University of North Dakota. The purpose of this study will be to use qualitative research methods to understand the roles, responsibilities, and experiences of rural superintendent-principals in North Dakota.

I will be interviewing six to ten superintendent-principals in the state of North Dakota, and I would like to interview you. I would like to conduct this interview at your school for approximately 45-60 minutes with as little interruption as possible. Your name and school district will remain anonymous in this research. I have enclosed an informed consent form and potential interview questions. If you will allow me to conduct this research, please sign the bottom of this letter. You may return the informed consent form and signature at the bottom of this page to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope.

If you have any questions regarding this research project, please contact my advisor, Dr. Pauline Stonehouse or me at the phone numbers or email addresses listed below. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Chad Clark
UND Doctoral Candidate
(701) 265-2839
cclark@west-fargo.k12.nd.us

Pauline Stonehouse
UND Associate Professor
(701) 777-4163
pauline.stonehouse@und.edu

_____ _____

Signature indicating approval of research Date

Appendix C
Informed Consent

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE:	Roles, Responsibilities, and Experiences of Rural Superintendent-Principals
PROJECT DIRECTOR:	Chad Clark
PHONE #:	701-265-2839
DEPARTMENT:	Educational Leadership

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH
A person who is to participate in the research must give his or her informed consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only subjects who choose to take part. Please take your time in making your decision as to whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?
You are invited to be in a research study about perspectives of dual role administrators because you are a superintendent and principal in a rural school district.

The purpose of this research study is to understand the roles, responsibilities, and experiences of superintendent-principals.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?
Approximately 6-10 people will take part in this study across the state of North Dakota.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?
Your participation in the study will last approximately two to three months to generate the data from rural superintendent-principals. Your participating in the interview will last 45 to 60 minutes. If you consent to participate, the researcher will come to your school site and interview you. Any follow-up questions will be completed over the phone.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

1. The researcher will contact Management Information Systems at North Dakota Department of Public Instruction to get a list of superintendent-principals.
2. The researcher will email each superintendent-principal in the district to gain consent from them to participate in the study.
3. The researcher will establish an interview time with each participating rural superintendent-principal at their school site.
4. The researcher will interview the superintendent-principal for 45 to 60 minutes. The researcher will use an audio recorder to record the interview.
5. The interview will be transcribed and no identifiable names will be used.
6. The subject will be given an opportunity to correct errors and challenges that are perceived as wrong interpretations.
7. Subjects will be provided the opportunity to volunteer additional information.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?
There are no foreseeable risks to participating in this study.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?
You will not benefit personally from being in this study. However, future superintendent-principals may benefit from this study because they will have a better understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and experiences of a superintendent-principal in rural North Dakota schools.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY
There are no alternatives to participating in this study.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?
You will not have any costs for being in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?
You will not be paid for being in this research study.

WHO IS FUNDING THE STUDY?
The University of North Dakota and the research team are receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified. Your study record may be reviewed by Government agencies, the UND Research Development and Compliance office, and the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Any information that is obtained in this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

No identifiable information will be used in this study.

The researcher will keep the recordings for 3 years at his home office and will destroy them after 3 years. Consent forms and personal data will be kept for 3 years and will be stored in a locked file cabinet at the researcher's home office. The researcher, researcher's advisor, and UND IRB will have access to the recordings, consent forms, and personal data for that period of time. No name or identifying factors will be used in any publication or presentation.

If we write a report or article about this study, we will describe the study results in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified.

The subject will have the right to review/edit all recordings, who will have access, if they will be used for educational purposes, and when they will be erased.

IS THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with The University of North Dakota.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS?

The researcher conducting this study is Chad Clark. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research please contact Chad Clark at 701-265-2839. You may also contact my advisor Dr. Pauline Stonehouse at 701-777-4163.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at 701-777-4279.

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