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Kentucky Principal Preparation Programs: A Contemporary History

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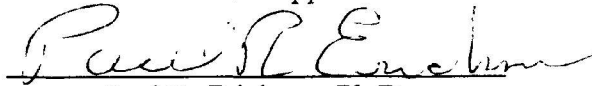KENTUCKY PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS:
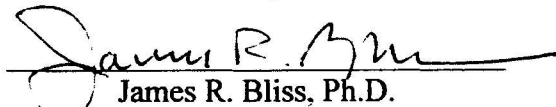
A CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

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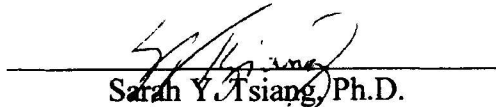
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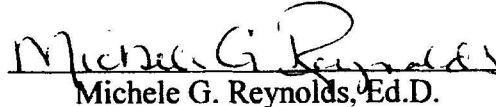
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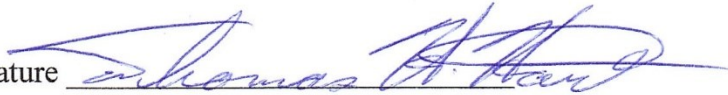
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KENTUCKY PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAMS:

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ABSTRACT

In this era of expectation that school principals will lead continuous improvement initiatives in their schools, this study investigates if principals receive instruction in continuous improvement concepts, methods, and tools through their formal principal certification program. This research evaluates the evolution of school principal preparation programs in Kentucky over the period from 1994 to 2014, a time of great change in academic expectations and accountability in American public schools. Using the report of a national study begun in 1975, <u>Preparatory Programs for Educational Administrators in the United States</u> (Silver and Spuck, 1978), as a baseline, accredited principal preparations programs in Kentucky and their published content were compared against the findings from this early study to determine if program content had evolved and, if so, in what ways. Snapshots of Kentucky programs and content were collected from the Kentucky Department of Education and available public documents for the years 1994, 2004, and 2014. Results of this literature search were supplemented with results from a statewide online survey of Kentucky middle school principals concerning their recollections of their principal preparation journey. The results of this online survey were further buttressed with results of personal interviews with ten practicing Kentucky middle school principals randomly selected from across the state. Finally, the principal preparation programs from a sample of 16 well-known colleges of education from universities outside of Kentucky were studied to compare those programs against current Kentucky programs. The intent of this comparison was to gain some perspective as to whether Kentucky programs were or were not representative of other programs across the country. If they were not, then perhaps some insight could be gained concerning the merits or failings of the differences. The results of this research suggest that, changed preparation program accreditation standards and embraced Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards notwithstanding, approximately one third to one half of the core content of principal preparation programs in Kentucky has changed little in 20 years. Also, unchanged since the time of the 1978 study report, the vast majority of students pursuing principal credentials today are fulltime teachers, pursuing a part-time credentialing program, and their number one reason for picking a particular institution is its proximity to home. New or significantly enhanced content over this period includes coursework in instructional leadership, curricular leadership, classroom assessment, and collaboration with stakeholders, with an overarching emphasis on ethics and equity in the educational endeavor. A significant increase in hands-on requirements in the form internships and embedded field work, with a culminating capstone project are also recent areas of change. Kentucky's statutory prerequisite requirement's for preparation program application appear to be among the most stringent entry requirements in the nation. Further, Kentucky's statutory, detailed institutional accreditation requirements also appear to be unique among states. Results of this study suggest that continuous improvement concepts, methods, and tools are not taught or studied in a meaningful way in principal certification programs in Kentucky or in academic institutions across the United States. This paper concludes with suggestions for further investigation of possible structural changes to principal preparation programs to better prepare principals for success in this era of expectation of continuous improvement in student learning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A contemporary history is a look at some aspect of current affairs and attempts to fathom the more recent influences that brought us to the current state. It is a fact based story of how we arrived where we are as it relates to our topic of interest. As with any good story, there needs to be a reason for why both the writer and the reader should be interested. My interest centers on a compelling concern that we, academia, are not adequately preparing aspiring school administrators, specifically school principals, with the management tools they reasonably need to successfully lead continuous improvement initiatives in our public schools. To substantiate, or refute, that concern a thorough understanding of today's principal preparation programs and how they evolved is required. To put some reasonable bounds on my investigation I chose to focus on accredited principal preparation programs in Kentucky and further limited my inquiry with current practitioners to middle school principals. While I limited my research with current practitioners to contacts with middle school principals to bound the scope of my efforts, the results can be extrapolated to all grades: current Kentucky principal preparation programs do not differentiate by grade level and award school principal, all grade (K-12) certificates of eligibility. The details of my research methodology and justification for that methodology are found at the beginning of Chapter III.

I became interested in investigating principal preparation programs while conducting a field study on the backgrounds and experiences of four central Kentucky middle school principals in the Spring of 2012. Three of the four schools I investigated

were in rural counties, each with 65 – 78% of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch. The fourth school was from a more urban, affluent area, but still with over 50% of its students eligible for free or reduced priced lunch. According to the No Child Left Behind Adequate Yearly Progress Report – 2011 for each of these schools , none of these four schools met their overall Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) goals in Reading and Math (Source: Kentucky Department of Education, District Combined (Math + Reading) 2011 Proficient + Distinguished % state map, 2012). On further investigation, I discovered these four schools were certainly not alone in not reaching their AYP goals: as of September 2011 over half of the school districts in Kentucky were performing at less than 70% on their Combined (Math+Reading) Performance rating (Source: Kentucky Department of Education website, 2012). From my interviews with the four principals, two men and two women: all were experienced classroom teachers, all had attended principal preparation programs at Kentucky institutions, all had been assistant principals for at least two years prior to becoming principals, and all were highly motivated and wanted their students and their schools to excel. Coincidentally, only one of these principals had ever worked, as an adult, outside of education, or even outside of the school they were in. The one principal with experience outside of education, the principal at the more affluent school, was a commissioned officer in the United States Army, with six years of Active Duty prior to entering teaching and approaching 30 years commissioned service, then serving as a drilling Reservist in the United States Army Reserves. This more urban school was the only one of the four schools to be near success in meeting each of ten AYP target goals for the year; they had meet eight of ten. In addition, this was the only one of the four schools with a clear, written plan to meet all

2

ten goals in the following year. Also of note, none of the four principals recalled receiving any formal training in undergraduate, graduate, or principal preparation education studies in team building, how to manage meetings, strategic planning, problem solving, or process improvement. The results of this field study were a revelation to me: These mature, educated, experienced, passionately dedicated school administrators were charged with leading their schools on a journey of continuous improvement in student learning yet had not, in their formal principal preparation experience, studied what I considered to be critical management skills to lead such a journey.

I came into the education community late in my career, having served over 30 years as a military officer in the United States Air Force on both Active Duty and in the Air Force Reserves. I also worked for over 10 years in mid-level management in private industry. In my experience, both the military and larger private business enterprises expended significant time and resources to train supervisors and managers at all levels on teambuilding, managing effective meetings, strategic planning, and problem solving and process improvement skills. However, to restate, from my interviews with these four middle school principals, classroom training – formal, institutional training - in these topics is not part of higher education coursework for school administrators. Even so, the Army officer/middle school principal interviewed in this early study had received recurring training on these topics, but not through the education community. This principal received training in these subjects as part of required military training. The relative academic success of this school and school principal compared to the other three in my study, and the content of the principal's answers to my other questions on school management and school leadership, seemed to indicate this principal was putting those

management skills learned outside of the education community to effective use in his school.

Piqued by my findings in this field study I began to wonder if perhaps part of the poor school performance equation was that school principals simply are not trained in the leadership and management skills of team building, running effective meetings, strategic planning, and problem solving/process improvement. If I was right, that these topics and skills are not taught to aspiring educational leaders, then why not? After all, to use some military vernacular, if these principals were to be held accountable for leading continuous improvement initiatives in their schools, where were they getting the training in the methods and tools to execute this mission?

Perhaps because these principals are experienced teachers and have completed a principal preparation program we, the local community and the education community, just expect them to know how to do these things. That said, from my interviews and reviews of school performance statistics and published school improvement plans, with the one noted exception, I found three of the four principals untrained in these management skills I felt were critical to effective school improvement efforts. With these initial observations in mind, I wanted to research principal preparation programs at institutions of higher learning across the state of Kentucky, and include representative programs from other institutions across the country, to validate if my suspicions were correct: organizational management skills (meeting/group dynamics, team building, strategic planning, problem solving, and process improvement) are not part of educational leadership training programs. If my initial impressions were correct, it would be interesting to investigate how these preparation programs have evolved and to gather

input from current principal practitioners about the utility and effectiveness of current principal preparation program content. Perhaps my findings could be a catalyst to revise the training programs to include these management skills and tools.

To bring some focus to what I consider the urgency of my concern: Ten years into the mandated national educational performance accountability standards imposed by the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Law of 2002, why are not more schools achieving the high academic standards called for in the law? To illustrate the severity of the problem, according to a recent Wall Street Journal article by Banchero, S. (2013, December 8), the results from the 2012 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), ranking academic achievement of students from 65 countries and locales representing 80% of the world economy, showed that U.S. 15-year-olds slipped from 25th to 31st in math, 20th to 24th in science, and 11th to 21st in reading over the period from 2009 to 2012. The nuances of comparing national education systems aside, the relative decline of U. S. student performance is disheartening. In a concurrent briefing article in Time magazine the U. S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan is quoted as calling the results a "picture of educational stagnation" with respect to U. S. performance (Rhodan, 2013, December 16). These test results and commentary notwithstanding, there is little doubt that principals in the United States are working very hard to try to advance the performance of their schools and the success of their students. The relentless pressures of being a school principal in America today, driven in large part by the increasing performance accountability requirements of NCLB, are well documented (West, Peck & Reitzug, 2010). Penalties for failing to meet the law's student academic performance standards range from probationary periods for first time offending schools to removal and

replacement of school and district administrators and teachers for chronic under performance. Yet even though NCLB has been the law of the land in public education for all this time, and recognizing these known sanctions for failure to achieve its academic targets, a tremendous number of schools across the socio-economic spectrum and across the country continue to be unsuccessful in meeting its defined academic standards. Kentucky's difficulties in achieving the mandates of the NCLB law are representative of a national problem.

Turning to Kentucky, the focus of this study, using the school district performance statistics for the state of Kentucky we have already established that as of November 2011 over half of the 174 school districts in Kentucky still achieve less than 70% proficient on their Combined (Math + Reading) Performance Rating.   To justify declaring that Kentucky is a median, representative state, using 2011 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) statistics of 8th grade students, Kentucky 8th graders' math scores were not statistically different from the national average (282 vs. 281) and their reading scores were slightly above average (269 vs. 264). Even though Kentucky's math score was average, they still ranked 34th nationally in math; Kentucky's slightly above average score in reading earned them a 14th place among the states in reading skills (Source: National Center for Educational Statistics, NAEP state profiles, 2012). With this in mind, significant central clustering of state NAEP achievement scores in math and reading would indicate that Kentucky is a representative state in illustrating the widespread failure of schools and school districts to meet NCLB driven state academic standards. This lack of a more reasonable level of AYP success in public schools makes one wonder: 'Where is the problem?' and 'Why aren't more schools

performing better?' Again using the state of Kentucky as a representative example of Middle America, 10 years into the mandates of NCLB the state seems stuck at less than a 50% success rate in meeting performance standards. Considering that so few schools are meeting their AYP goals, it is not surprising that school principals are stressed (West, et al, 2010).

In view of the widespread lack of success in meeting NCLB standards across the nation it is easy to declare the problem is a lack of leadership, or poor leadership, in the schools and school districts. Setting aside possible influences of student culture and socioeconomic status, leadership is nonetheless held accountable for overall student success, or lack thereof. While there are loud cries from some education critics for implementing tough teacher performance standards to improve student learning, it is leadership from school administrators, particularly school principals, that remains a central focus of much school performance research (Finnegan, K. S. & Stewart, T. J., 2009) (Leithwood, K., 2001). Perhaps contributing to this concern about school leadership, in the not too distant past there were less than rigorous standards of preparation for school principals. Fortunately, that lack of preparatory standards for principals is not typical practice in most states today. Today, in Kentucky, after no less than eight revisions to principal certification standards in the last 15 years (Kentucky Administrative Regulations, 16 KR 3:050, 2012), aspiring school principals must complete a demanding, professional, accredited graduate program in school leadership and pass a certification test based on the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards to be considered for a principalship (Source: Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, *School Principal Certification,* 2014).

Integrating these two lines of thought and focusing on principal preparation programs in Kentucky, with all of the research on the importance of school leadership to school and student success, and the now strict education and licensure requirements for individuals to be considered for principal positions, one must wonder why more Kentucky schools are not successful in meeting performance requirements?   Could it be there is something missing from the school leadership preparation programs (e.g., some key skill or skills) that would better or more completely prepare educational leaders for success?

To add structure and clarity to what I proposed to investigate, I initially looked at one contemporary principal preparation program: I used the Level II Principal Certification Preparation Program at Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) as a representative, accredited principal preparation program.   The EKU Level II program is a Master of Arts degree awarding program that includes a minimum of 30 hours of graduate studies comprised of ten 3-credit hour courses (2011-2012 EKU Graduate Catalog, pp. 77-78). The program includes required courses in:

- School Leadership and Administration
- Educational Leadership Practicum
- Technology and Leadership Practices for Program Improvement
- School Finance
- School Law
- School Program Collaboration
- Human Resources
- Community Relations
- Decision Making and Action Research
- Curriculum Development

Certainly all of these are important areas of study for aspiring principals, and the topic selection was no doubt based on years of experience and recommendations from the

Kentucky education administration community. However, looking back and remembering the published mission statements and strategic plans for the four central Kentucky middle schools that comprised my earlier field study project, it struck me that the principal preparation programs, at least the representative program as administered at EKU, did not include courses with significant, focused curriculum dedicated to the management tools and skills of meeting/group dynamics, strategic planning, problem solving, or process improvement. To illustrate the potential impact of lack of training in these areas, the vision and mission statements I read at these schools were rambling, and even contained misspelled words years after being first published. From my experience, this would indicated that these statements were written to fill a requirement, not to serve as cooperatively crafted and universally embraced guiding principles of the institution. The schools' mandated strategic plans also rambled, lacked focus, and some had not been updated or revised in years. It was the same issue as with the vision and mission statements: The documents were written to fill a requirement, not to serve as the strategic roadmap for the school in pursuing continuous improvement.

From my perspective of having been trained in these management and leadership skills in other professional venues in both the military and private industry, I found it striking that these ubiquitous managerial skills were not part of structured professional training for educational leaders. The results of that lack of training were apparent in these reviewed public documents. Further, aware that most public school teachers have little or no professional work experience outside of the classroom, and that the great majority of principals are drawn from the ranks of teachers, how is it, for example, that principals are expected to know how to plan, conduct, and control effective meetings?

Yet, being able to run effective, productive meetings, it would seem, would be an essential talent for effectively organizing and leading a school staff on any performance improvement effort. Recalling my professional education courses and recurring leadership and management seminars in both the military and private industry, studying and practicing the techniques and skills essential to conducting effective, productive meetings could easily consume several class periods in a 3-semester hour graduate course. Next, there is the subject of strategic planning: how do you cooperatively develop concise mission and vision statements, craft achievable goals and objectives, set realistic timelines for task completion, and develop meaningful, easy to follow and understand metrics for monitoring progress? These steps are all part and parcel of recurring strategic planning, which is integral to any continuous improvement initiative. As an example to illuminate the need for including strategic planning in school leadership training, while examining the published School Improvement Plan (SIP) for a central Kentucky middle school in 2011 I was astonished that it contained 38 separate objectives to be addressed in a single school year. It was a plan doomed to failure before it started for lack of focus. Strategic planning is a leadership topic that could easily consume if not a whole graduate level course, then a significant part of a course, or a significant part of more than one course. Finally, with regard to problem solving and process improvement, continuous improvement methodology always begins with defining the current process: dissecting a process into its most minute component inputs and activities that result in its ultimate output. For schools, their output is successful student learning, as measured by student performance on standardized tests. In pursuit of sustained, continuous improvement in academic performance a school, its leadership and its staff, must be able

to deconstruct and knowledgably analyze their current processes and practices, to include what they are teaching, how they teach it, how do they measure results, and what do they do with those results. That detailed analysis enables the staff to identify strengths and shortcomings in their current operations. Armed with this concrete information, the school can then more effectively begin to change and improve the process, eliminating non-value added activities to focus their energies and classroom time on standards based instruction and student learning.

These three leadership/management topics - managing meetings/group dynamics (including team building), leading strategic planning, and leading problem solving and process improvement initiatives - would seem to be critical, essential subjects to include in any comprehensive school leadership preparation program to equip principals for success in school performance improvement. I believe these three subjects should be included, in depth, in all comprehensive school administrator preparation programs.

Applying the problem solving/process improvement methodology to my inquiry, the process begins with describing and understanding the starting point, or in this case, perhaps the end point: where are we today? My study focuses first on describing current, accredited, principal preparation programs offered at colleges and universities in Kentucky. As I started with a look at the referenced EKU program as it existed in the 2011-12 academic year, I expand on that to identify and research the remaining Kentucky institutions offering accredited principal preparation programs, and re-verify the EKU program, for the current academic year. Further, I feel it wise to include an evaluation of principal preparation programs as conducted at a representative sample of universities from outside of Kentucky that are well known for their research and expertise in

educational administration. While this side evaluation is not critical to defining or

describing the contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation programs, it may

be an enlightening comparison to see how closely Kentucky programs resemble those of

these other universities. Next, a review of national events and attitudes that may have

influenced determining the subjects, content and emphasis of these principal preparation

programs are researched and discussed. To shed light on how Kentucky's principal

preparation programs have evolved over recent history, as influenced by these national

events and changing attitudes, I look back at how those programs were structured 10

years ago and then 20 years ago. There is also a 1978 national study of principal

preparation programs conducted by Silver and Spuck that I use as a baseline starting

point for the history. The evidence will suggest what changes have taken place, if any, in

principal preparation programs over the intervening 45 years. One question that begs an

answer: Were the management topics that I feel are so important to principal success ever

included in principal preparation programs, at least during this relatively recent history?

Follow-on questions include: If these management subjects are not covered in today's

formal principal preparation programs, can we speculate on, "Why not?" Then, is there a

consensus among educational leaders and practitioners in Kentucky that these

management topics are important, or could be important, to effective school leadership,

and should these subjects be included in school leadership preparation studies? Finally, if

these skills are important, and if they are largely absent from current school leadership

training today, what are the possibilities for including them in future training for new

leaders and continuing education for current leaders?

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review has two main themes. The first is that the preponderance of

contemporary literature on school administrator preparation has been essentially

rhetorical rather than practical in that it extolls certain broad values and expectations yet

offers little in the way of techniques and/or routines. It presents the virtues of pursuing a

vision of continuous improvement yet is short on practical suggestions and instruction

regarding how to achieve that goal. The second theme focuses on two seminal events

that occurred in contemporary educational history that both drive the urgency of

successful school improvement initiatives and direct the focus of current principal

preparation programs: 1) the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001

established concrete national expectations for school performance improvements, and; 2)

the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, first

promulgated in 1996 and revised and reissued in 2008, set broad guidelines for beliefs,

values, and attributes expected in graduates of school administration programs. A

working understanding of the history of both of these events is essential to understanding

the compelling influences behind the structure of today's principal preparation programs

in general, and Kentucky's programs in specific. Concluding the literature review, Silver

and Spuck (1978) provide a national baseline against which to compare the findings of

this contemporary study of Kentucky principal preparation programs. The results of their

1976 study of school administrator preparation programs in the United States, which

reads much like the early twentieth century Flexner Report (Flexner, 1910) on medical

education in the United States and Canada, provides a kind of benchmark for comparing

both how much and how little principal preparation in Kentucky, as a practical craft, has evolved not only over the 20 years researched for this study, but over the 40+ years since this early national study.

General

Looking back 20 years, one finds a seeming absence of professional training programs or academic course offerings for school leaders in the management skills and tools for initiating and leading continuous improvement efforts. Early initiatives to improve school operations and enhance student instruction and learning often borrowed from business and industry practices. For example, as a direct result of growing foreign manufacturing competition Total Quality Management (TQM) programs were widely embraced by American businesses in the 1970s and 1980s as practices and methodologies to improve business quality and productivity. A few, but not many, public schools and school districts embraced these TQM practices from industry to use in evaluating and improving school cultures and academic achievement with notable successes (Murgatroyd, 1993; Schargel, 1996; Schmidt, 1998; Weller Jr. and Hartley, 1994). Schargel (1996) noted that the George Washington Vocational and Technical High School, New York City's largest technical high school, attributed to their TQM program a reduction in class cutting, a 92% reduction in student failure rates, reduced drop-out rates, an increased percentage of students going on to college, and higher parent participation among a lengthy list of other benefits to the school and students. TQM and similar organizational improvement strategy programs emphasized top down leadership and setting standards of excellence, as well as team building and team work to analyze processes for opportunities to improve. Driving out fear, empowering people, and

14

pushing decision making down to the lowest levels are key aspects of TQM, as is accountability for results. TQM programs include methodologies and tools for strategic planning and problem solving, and require collaboratively crafted mission and vision statements, planning, consensus building, goal setting, establishing metrics to measure progress, and communication. Having said all this, and noting the flurry of references to TQM in education articles in the mid-1990's, it is ironic that following these early reports of successful TQM initiatives in both U.S. manufacturing and these early successes in public education, TQM has all but disappeared as a subject for contemporary articles on school improvement.

While the term TQM can be found infrequently in recent articles addressing school improvement, references to components of TQM programs are woven throughout. Angelle & Anfara (2006), for example, emphasized the need for having a strategic outlook and developing collaborative plans. Fuller, Young, & Baker (2010) emphasized setting high standards, hiring good people, and holding people accountable. Butcher, Bezzinz & Moran (2010) speak to collaborative and shared leadership, and the fact that that is hard to establish and sustain. Chance & Segura (2009) speak to Organizational Development (OD) in schools. Their OD model incorporates many TQM facets: team building and team work; having structured meetings with dedicated, collaborative time set aside for team work; setting goals and expectations; establishing and using metrics, and; holding people accountable.

There is a tremendous amount of literature on school improvement and success subsequent to the NCLB Act that draws attention to the importance of strong school leadership to creating and sustaining a culture of school excellence. Scribner, Cockrell,

Cockrell & Valentine (1999) speak to the role of leadership in creating School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and the importance of incorporating a strategic, long-term view in those plans. Conrath (1987) listed a number of leadership styles and encourages school administrators to tailor their style to the needs of the organization as they address essential problem solving tasks. Finnegan & Stewart (2009) emphasized building leadership capacity in the school through distributed leadership, and further emphasize the need for creating a vision, drafting goals, setting expectations, establishing a positive school climate, and buffering teachers from external distractions. Leithwood, Hopkins & Harris (2008) in their article on successful school leadership refer to three functions of Yukl's managerial taxonomy: motivating and inspiring, clarifying roles and objectives, and planning and organizing (p. 30). Heck (1992) again speaks to the essential element of leadership in goal setting, gate keeping (allowing time to teach), observing classroom practices, communicating, and using data to drive actions. In his 2001 article *School leadership in the context of accountability policies,* Leithwood laments no one uses the term "manageable" (p.228). He suggests leaders need to be able to collect and interpret data; collaboratively develop clear, manageable goals and priorities, and; monitor progress and refine goals and priorities as needed. Further, in a 2009 article Leithwood & Stauss emphasize the need for educational leaders to change the organizational culture, set direction, develop people, redesign the organization, and manage the instructional program. As far back as 1991 Lezotte created a list that he called the *Correlates of Effective Schools*. High among the correlates were: setting high expectations, establishing a clear and focused mission, strong instructional leadership, and making data driven decisions.

While the above articles all include some or many of the business and industry derived components of TQM programs, or variations on those components, papers on school and district leadership published in the wake of the NCLB Act contain little in the way of the nuts and bolts of the methodologies and tools for how to make school improvement happen, how to design and implement the actions. Broad discussions of personal values and attributes somehow superseded pointed discussions of techniques of how to make things happen in schools and districts. Which begs the question, where do school administrators or aspiring administrators look for training on how to implement these ideas? A couple of cases in point: Saunders, Gallimore & Golden (2009) reported on a university sponsored and supported initiative with several schools aimed at establishing grade-level teams to improve classroom training and student learning. At first only the school principals were trained in the essential elements of the project. The principals were expected to return to their schools and set up grade-level teams and establish Integrated Learning Teams (ILTs). For 2 years nothing happened; there was no discernible change in student learning. Researchers returned to the schools to investigate the lack of progress, only to discover that the principals did not know how to train the grade-level teams or ILTs, and the grade-level teams did not know how to organize and manage meetings. With intervention by the university to provide additional training to all school administrators and grade-level team members, as well as university provided facilitators to guide the grade-level teams in establishing and implementing meeting protocols, the project took off to great success. A second study by Graham (2007) looking at establishing Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in a middle school noted that the success of individual PLCs was strongly influenced by leadership and

organizational practices, to include team building efforts and establishing protocols for detailed, structured meetings.

This lack of specificity in the literature of the means to implement school improvement programs has led to a number of recent studies recommending changes to school administrator preparation programs, particularly principal preparation programs. Ballenger, Alford, McCune & McCune (2009) note the failure to produce leaders with the right skills, and cite a 1993 National Policy Board for Education project report that even then called for more problem solving and decision making skills in school administrators. They suggest the inclusion of field based internships in aspiring administrator training programs with an emphasis on training as a change facilitator. Myran, Sanzo & Clayton (2011) suggested that university based certification programs are not connecting the classroom instruction to real life in the schools. They speak to results from a 2007 study by Salazar where practicing principals cited a need for training in: team building, creating learning organizations, continuous improvement, and setting instructional direction. Leithwood, Jantzi & McEtheron-Hopkins (2006) noted that schools and school staffs need administrator and team training to successfully create effective School Improvement Plans (SIPs), plans that include distributed leadership, strong planning, clear goals, priorities, and metrics. Sheridan-Thomas (2006) in an article concerning a mandated action research initiative noted the lack of training for school staff in team building, meeting dynamics and problem solving processes. In his 2007 dissertation concerning new principals assigned to turn around schools, Kosch declared that university training programs failed to provide the practical knowledge and experience needed by these new principals. Hegedus, in his 2010 dissertation, wrote that

educators should identify and attack root causes of problems, yet they have no guidance or training in methodologies for how to do that. The entire second half of Hegedus' dissertation is a recommended process, including tools and protocols, for problem solving. Finally, to rephrase some of these identified program shortcomings as a challenge, Spillane, White & Stephan (2009) summed up their observations by posing the question: " … is [it] possible to teach expert problem-solving processes to aspiring principals. "

Pulling all of this together, the literature on a structured, focused methodology for addressing improvement in school processes and outcomes has been scant. Since the NCLB Act, much of the subsequent 15-20 years of literature concerning school excellence, achievement, and improvement focused on certain values and the essential nature of strong school leadership to turning failing schools around. With certain exceptions, including references in the literature to the post WWII total quality movement rooted in U.S. manufacturing, the literature has featured an emphasis on the certain broad personal values and attributes codified in the ISLLC Standards rather than techniques for improving school practices. While the elements and characteristics of effective schools and effective school improvement programs seem well established in the rhetoric of school leadership, the literature suggests that school leaders simply are not schooled and trained in how to manage and continuously improve education processes beyond adhering to such values and attributes.

Dufour and Marzano (2011) extol the virtues of Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams (p. 21, 22, 40, 51, 56, and 67). PLCs, perhaps not oddly, strongly suggest a new name for the Process Improvement Teams (PITs) and Process

Action Teams (PATs) so integral to TQM programs. That similarity aside, their noted essential elements for successful PLC teams of top down leadership (p. 52, 63, 84, 85, 201), establishing clear expectations (p. 76), having a manageable number of clear, shared goals and objectives (p. 40, 41, 72, 77, 78), measuring results (p. 76, 83), building collective capacity through collaboration (i.e., teamwork) (p. 19-21, 23, 52, 67), shared leadership (p. 56, 57, 201), and the essential element of training everyone in how continuous improvement works and the mechanics of its components (vision and mission statements, strategic planning, process improvement, problem solving, team building, and having effective meetings) were all part and parcel of TQM programs. Also of note here, Dufour and Marzano make abundantly clear that, as with failures in many early TQM initiatives, lack of top down leadership, lack of focus, and poor or inadequate training will likely lead to disappointing results and disillusionment with the PLC concept (p. 21, 40, 41, 57, 63, 72, 79, 80, 201).

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards, first issued in 1996 with revised standards published in 2008, constitute a "set of high-level policy standards for education leadership. It provides guidance to state policy makers as they work to improve education leadership preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development" (Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2008, p. 1). They are, at their essence, a set of expectations and guiding principles the education profession believes should be exhibited by school leaders. However, since their inception the Standards have been praised and maligned, criticized for being too broad or not broad enough, lacking in specificity or too specific, and unfounded on empirical evidence

(Murphy, 2005). Yet even with all of this criticism baggage, the Standards have survived and evolved, now embraced in whole or in part by more than 40 states and territories (CCSSO, 2008, p.2). Further, without doubt, they are an influence on the standards of school leader preparation and licensure programs in the remaining states. This section will look at the history of the creation and evolution of the standards as well as the social and political landscape surrounding their drafting, approval, publication, and implementation. As a matter or relevance to this contemporary history, Kentucky first embraced the ISLLC Standards as the basis for principal preparation program accreditation in the state at a Kentucky Education Professional Standards (EPSB) Board meeting in May of 1998 (May 1998 EPSB Board Meeting Minutes), shortly after the standards were first promulgated. The history of the events that drove the drafting of the ISLLC Standards is the history of the events influencing the contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation standards.

There are a variety of starting points from which to embark concerning what eventually culminated in the effort to draft the ISLLC Standards for school administrators. Murphy (2005) takes his starting point back to the 1800s and the ideal of an education administrator as a philosopher-educator (p. 156), then cites Callahan (1962), Farquhar (1968) and Harlow (1962) in declaring that few of those ideas made it into the 20th century blueprint for the profession (p. 156). Inspiring an in depth look at educational administration, there were a couple of seminal events in the mid-second half of the 20th century that got people in the United States thinking that something might be amiss in the way we were leading and managing public schools. First, there was the "Equality of Education Report" (also known as the Coleman Report), which was

published in 1966. This report, authorized as part of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and

commissioned by what was then the U. S. Office of Education, found that:

> …academic achievement was less related to the quality of a student's school, and
> more related to the social composition of the school, the student's sense of control
> of his environment and future, the verbal skills of teachers, and the student's
> family background. (Kiviat, 2000, p. 2)

While, according to Wikipedia's short biography of James S. Coleman, these and other

findings of the report were a catalyst for the school busing programs begun in the 1960s

to reduce segregation and improve racial integration in public schools (3/5/2013), the

findings also called into question the issues of social justice between schools and within

schools. In other words, were all children being given the same opportunity to succeed?

It would seem not, in that Murphy and others found that for most of the 20th century

schools educated well only about one third of their students, another 40 percent of

students were schooled but not well educated, and something close to 25 percent of

students were left behind in the education process (Murphy, 2005). The second report to

shake the foundations of American public education was, "A Nation at Risk: The

Imperative for Educational Reform", issued in 1983 by a blue ribbon panel

commissioned by U.S. Secretary of Education T.H. Bell. This panel, the National

Commission on Educational Excellence, began its report with, in part:

> … the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a
> rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people…
> If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre
> educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act
> of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves." (Toppo,
> 2008; Wikipedia, 2013; Allen, 2013)

These reports, particularly the scathing rebuke of the national quality of education in the *Nation at Risk* report, in no small part lead to the proliferation of a myriad of councils, committees, and boards all focused on improving the quality of education in the country through associations of schools, colleges, and educators at every level, from elementary schools through the university level and from state level to national level, from practicing teachers, to school administrators, district administrators, chief state school officers, college educators, and associations of colleges. These new collaborative organizations, as well as others established earlier, also came together in a number of forums to sponsor new studies or to establish collective working groups to combine or coordinate their efforts.

One such early organization was the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), established in 1956. Today, 2013, UCEA "is a consortium of 67 universities that offer doctoral programs in educational administration. UCEA's mission is to advance the preparation and practice of educational leaders for the benefit of all children and schools." (State University, 2013). Following the *Nation at Risk* report, the UCEA commissioned a study to look at the state of educational leadership in the United States. Their report, focusing on the roles of principals and superintendents, was published in 1987 and titled *"Leaders for America's Schools*: The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration". This report, piggybacking on the findings of the *Nation at Risk* report, called for a drastic overhaul of the educational administration field at all levels, from practitioners to administrator preparation programs (UCEA, 1987, Young, Peterson & Short, 2002). This 65 page report listed nine deficiencies of the educational administration field in general and

included significant, specific recommendations for "public schools, professional

organizations, universities, state and federal policy makers, and the private sector"

(UCEA, 1987). It went so far as to recommend terminating at least 300 college and

university educational administration programs as being ineffective (p. 1). The

importance of this report to our narrative here is that the report called for establishing a

National Policy Board on Educational Administration (p. 1).

The National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA) was founded

in 1988 (Murphy, Jost & Shipman, 2000) quickly following the release of the *Leaders for*

America's Schools report. It included membership from the Council of Chief State

School Officers (CCSSO), the National Association of Elementary School Principals

(NAESP), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the

National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the National Council

of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), the American Association of

Colleges of Education (AACTE), The American Association of School Administrators

(AASA), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the

National School Boards Association (NSBA), and the University Council for Educational

Administration (UCEA) (NPBEA, 2013)(CCSSO,2006). The first three points of

NPBEA's purpose statement are:

1. Developing and advancing professional leadership standards for administrator
    preparation programs and state licensure standards;
2. Encouraging the development of high-quality school and district leadership
    preparation programs;
3. Conducting national reviews of programs undergoing national accreditation
    which prepare educational leaders and professors. (NTACE/ELCC) (NPBEA,
    2013)

In furtherance of pursuing these three goals, the NPBEA established the Interstate School

Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) in 1994 "to develop standards to anchor the

profession as it headed into the 21st century (Murphy, 2005; Jackson & Kelly, 2002)".

Dr. Joseph Murphy of Vanderbilt University was asked to be the ISLLC

chair/coordinator (CCSSO, 2006). Murphy tells us that at its founding the ISLLC

comprised members from 24 states, representatives from most of the members of the

NPBEA, and other key stakeholder groups, such as the National Alliance of Business,

with an interest in the health of leadership in America's schools and school districts

(Murphy, 2005, p. 155).

The ISLLC authored an original vision of effective school leadership:

> The ISLLC *Standards* acknowledge that effective leaders often espouse different
> patterns of beliefs and act differently from the norm in the profession. Effective
> school leaders are strong educators, anchoring their work on central issues of
> learning and teaching and school improvement. They are moral agents and social
> advocates for the children and the communities they serve. Finally, they make
> strong connections with other people, valuing and caring for others as individuals
> and as members of the educational community. (ISSLC, 1996, p.5 - from Council
> of Chief State School Officers, 2006).

Using this vision as a touchstone, the Consortium endeavored to look at the then

current consensus of thought concerning educational leadership: what were its

foundations, what was not working, and then what to suggest to reorient the profession

and the preparatory programs that supported it. At the time the Consortium was formed,

Murphy felt that the educational administration field was founded on two pillars: (a)

concepts of management, especially from the private sector, and (b) theories and

constructs borrowed from the behavioral sciences (Murphy, 2005). The tugs and pulls of

new innovations from these two pillars moved the administrator field from one emphasis

to the next over the better part of the 20th century (p. 156-158). There was also a general

recognition that educational administration and the administrator preparation programs,

in their emphasis on the management and science of directing the business of schools,

had lost sight of the purpose of schools: to impart learning and teach students, all students

(Murphy, 2005; Murphy & Shipman, 1998; Perez, Uline, Johnson, James-Ward &

Basom, 2011). As a result of this recognition the Consortium felt that revising

foundations of the then current principal preparation programs would be less than

productive. What was needed was a new foundation to reground the profession (Murphy

& Shipman, 1998; Murphy, 2005). The Consortium made a conscious effort in their

deliberations to move beyond the traditional educational leadership emphasis on business

management and social sciences, instead focusing on the theme that: "Instructional and

curricular leadership must be at the forefront of leadership skills, and administrators must

maintain a focus on teaching and learning in the school" (Murphy & Shipman 1998). The

Consortium also decided the best avenue to drive improvement in the field was to

develop standards (Murphy & Shipman, 1998). The idea of developing standards had a

number of advantages. First, standards were being used with success in other areas of

education reform, notably the Interstate New Teachers Assessment and Support

Consortium (INTASC), yet there was a conspicuous lack of common standards for

educational administrators. Second, the Consortium believed that having concrete

standards would allow the various stakeholders in the reform movement the leverage to

compel change in such areas as training program development and accreditation,

licensure/re-licensure of current and future leaders, professional development, and

26

administrator evaluation (Murphy, & Shipman, 1998; Murphy, Jost & Shipman, 2000; Jackson & Kelly, 2002; Murphy, 2005).

The Consortium crafted three "Central Tenets" to guide their work: 1) There is a single set of standards that applies to all leadership positions; 2) The focus and ground of the standards should be the heart and soul of productive leadership; and 3) The standards should not simply codify what is, they should help push and pull the profession to a higher level (Murphy and Shipman, 1998). Using these tenets the Consortium developed a set of seven guiding principles to direct and bound their work (Murphy, & Shipman, 1998; Murphy, Jost & Shipman, 2000). The result of the Consortium's collaborative deliberations and labors was a set of six school administrator standards: The ISLLC Standards. The original 1996 ISLLC Standards were:

1. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.
2. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
3. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

4. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

5. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (Murphy, & Shipman, 1998; Murphy, Jost & Shipman, 2000; Murphy 2005; CCSSO, 2008).

To complement, clarify, and illuminate these six standards the Consortium compiled nearly 200 indicators aligned under the subtitles of Knowledge, Disposition, and Performance to help facilitate understanding of each standard. The Knowledge indicators reflected the knowledge needed to accomplish the standard, the Dispositions the attitudes that evidenced meeting the standard, and the Performance indicators the actions that might be observed of an administrator accomplished in meeting or executing the standard (Velesky, 2013). The Consortium approved the standards in July of 1996 and they were published and distributed by and through the CCSSO. The NPBEA adopted the Standards through formal resolution the same year (CCSSO, 2006).

Recalling that the ISLLC included membership from 10 national organizations directly involved in the development of educational leadership preparation programs, the training and certification of educational leaders, the management of educational leaders at the state level, and the execution of educational leadership at the primary and secondary school levels, and further included educational representatives from 24 individual states,

one would think that the first publication of concrete standards for the educational leadership profession would have been enthusiastically embraced by the profession. In part they were. The ISLLC Standards were developed under the auspices of the CCSSO. The CCSSO "… is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions" (CCSSO, 2006). The CCSSO had participated in the development of the standards, had a vested interest in the implementation of the standards, and, at the state and national levels, was a powerful bully pulpit for disseminating and driving acceptance of the standards, to include their incorporation in the professional development of current practitioners, the licensure/relicensure of future and current school principals, and the evaluation of school principals. Also, recall that the Consortium had developed a multi-part leverage strategy to implement the standards (Murphy, Jost & Shipman, 2000). In this regard, the Consortium partnered with the Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop a new principal licensure exam called the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA) (Jackson& Kelly, 2002). Further, in 2000 the NPBEA convened a new working group to design performance-based standards for the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) to use in the review and accreditation of educational leadership programs at colleges and universities across the country (p. 195). These accreditation standards for educational leadership preparation programs, closely aligned to the ISSLC Standards, were promulgated in the Spring of 2002 and implemented by the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELLC) for NCATE institutional accreditation review (p. 195).

The steady march of implementation actions following the release of the ISSLC

Standards notwithstanding, this rapid dissemination of the Standards and the exercise of

leverage points to bring them to fruition was not without vocal opposition. Consider that

about 25 percent of the U.S. population is involved in education in one area or another,

and somewhere close to 7.3 percent of the gross national product goes toward educational

institutions (Brimley, Garfield, & Verstegen, 2012). With this many people and that

much money involved and invested in the status quo of the then current system, push

back was inevitable. Even though the Consortium represented a broad swath of

educational leadership and leadership development organizations, and included

representatives from nearly half of the states, it still only had just over 30 members.

Education researchers and research organizations that were not included in the process

were vocal and varied in their criticism of the standards. As with all change, the politics

of change can be messy.

According to Joseph Murphy, Chair of the original ISLLC, in his paper

addressing the concerns of the academic community, criticisms were generally focused

along six areas of argument (Murphy, 2005). Briefly addressing each and his rebuttal

from the article:

1. The Standards lack and empirical base. English (2000) declared that some of
   the dispositions and performances were neither scientific nor empirically
   supportable, calling the standards non-empirical and akin to a religion,
   accepted on faith and enforced by authority. Murphy concurred the
   Consortium had been remiss in not disseminating the empirical evidence upon

which the standards were based, but insisted the standards rested heavily on research of productive schools and school districts (pp. 169-170).

2. <u>The Standards are based too heavily on nonempirical ideals</u>. This is closely related to the issue of lacking an empirical base, above, in that the concern was the standards were too loose and vague, not prescriptive. Here Murphy tells us the Consortium acknowledges the criticism, yet insists on the importance of some nonempirical factors (i.e., beliefs) that are grounded in values and morality (pp. 170-171).

3. <u>The Standards do not cover everything; or they do not include "X" concept or examine "Y" concept deeply enough</u>. To the chagrin of some, the standards replaced a heavy emphasis on conventional management theory with a singular focus on student learning and emphasizing the school "community". Others noted the lack of a standard for technology. Marshall (2004) raises concerns that the ISLLC Standards pose a potential danger in marginalizing social justice in schools. Here again, Murphy acknowledges the critiques, but says the Standards were never meant to be all inclusive of every dimension and indicator of educational leadership in every context, their goal was to capture essential knowledge at the center of school leadership focused on learning and teaching (pp. 171-173).

4. <u>The Standards are over- (or under-) specified</u>. With the nearly 200 Knowledge, Disposition, and Performance indicators (184 to be exact) it is easy to see where some might see the six standards with their detailed clarifications as being too specific and rigid. Others, like Hess (2003), felt the

Standards were vague and lacked specificity, failing to define criteria for success in meeting the standards. In defense, Murphy explains again that the Standards and their clarifiers were meant to be broad and not all inclusive, but "examples of important knowledge, practices and beliefs", citing the truism that "Leadership is a complex and context-dependent activity." He goes on to say that the standards were designed to direct, not determine action and that the under specification was deliberate (pp. 173-175).

5. <u>There is no legitimate place for dispositions in the standards</u>. The Dispositions were/are values and beliefs the Consortium believed should be endemic in educational leaders. They used the term "dispositions" because it was already in use in the education community in the INTASC's standards for teachers. The Consortium was motivated to create the dispositions in the belief that educational leadership is a moral activity, and that educational leaders need to be morally grounded in the belief that all children, even the socially and economically disadvantaged, can learn and they should act accordingly (pp. 176-177).

6. <u>The Standards are exerting undue influence on the profession</u>. This might seem somewhat of an odd critique of the Standards, particularly in light of the fact that that is what they were meant to do: to redirect and reground the profession away from an emphasis on management and toward a singular focus on teaching and learning for all students. Murphy reminds his readers that, contrary to the accusations of some, there was nothing surreptitious or secret about the crafting of the standards. The NPBEA created and chartered

the Consortium. The nine professional organizations with the closest ties to

school leadership, including all those representing professors of school

administration and colleges/universities offering school administration

programs, appointed members to the Consortium. Also, each of these

organizations was deeply involved in the development of the Standards and

signed off on them, through their representatives on the Consortium and as

organizations, twice, before the Standards were published. And yes, the

ISLLC did consciously and deliberately partner with other organizations to

attempt to control leverage points of the profession (i.e., licensure/relicensure

of practitioners and accreditation of educational leadership programs) to force,

inculcate, and ingrain the changes sought by the Standards. (pp. 177-180)

In the end, the Standards weathered their critics and criticisms. The NPBEA, its

member organizations and affiliates, held firm on the Standards and aggressively took

actions to control the leverage points to force change in the profession. Dr. Murphy, the

Chair of the ISLLC, and associates were staunch defenders and advocates of the

Standards, repeatedly detailing the foundations of the Standards and the process and

rationale of their development (Murphy, 2002, 2005) (Murphy & Louis, 1999) (Murphy,

Jost & Shipman, 2000) (Murphy & Shipman, 1998) (Murphy, Shipman & Pearlman,

1998). The CCSSO members distributed the Standards to their states and pushed to

implement or incorporate them at the state level. As mentioned earlier, in 2002 the

NPBEA published *Instructions to Implement Standards for Advanced Programs in*

Educational Leadership for Principals, Superintendents, Curriculum Directors, and

Supervisors. These instructions included a history of the issuance of the first set of

NCATE-approved guidelines for advanced programs in educational administration in 1995: the Educational Leadership Constituent Council's (ELCC's) *Guidelines for Advanced Programs in Educational Leadership* (p. 5). While these ELCC Standards, used by the NCATE in assessing and accrediting advanced degree programs in educational leadership, were similar to the ISLLC standards, there were enough differences to cause some consternation at educational institutions. The ELCC Standards were revised in 2000-2001to closely align with the ISLLC Standards (p. 6), thus further integrating and imbedding the ISLLC Standards into advanced programs in educational leadership across the country through leveraging the national accreditation process for those programs.

In 2006, ten years after the release of the 1996 ISLLC Standards, the CCSSO felt the Standards had been in place long enough, weathered their critics and deployment pains, and should appropriately be reviewed and perhaps revised, now with ten years of history and additional research to inform and guide that review process. They called for support of the NPBEA in updating the ISLLC and ELCC Standards for school leaders (CCSSO, 2006). Indicative of the widespread incorporation of the ISLLC and aligned ELCC Standards across the nation at this time, the CCSSO in their request for support cited that 41 states had adapted, adopted, or used the ISLLC Standards in their licensure and certification polices; 16 states required passing the ETS administered SLLA as a state licensure examination for new school administrators and 7 other states were considering adopting it, and; 152 colleges and universities had achieved national accreditation of their educational leadership programs through the NCATE, having complied with the ISLLC based ELCC Standards (p. 1). In their request for support from the NPBEA the CCSSO

outlined their review plan and detailed their preliminary work. At the time of their request they had already selected a design team to plan the review effort. Interestingly, the design team included a representative from Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL) (p. 7), a highly respected private education research organization. I say interesting because McREL was an early critic of the ISLLC Standards and had published a working paper in 2003 containing what some might consider a competing set of 21 leadership responsibilities (Waters, Marzano & McNulty, 2003). Dr. Kenneth Leithwood of the University of Toronto, a well-respected and longtime researcher in educational leadership who was also an early critic of the Standards, was invited to participate on the design team, as was Dr. Joseph Murphy of Vanderbilt, the Chair of the original ISLLC Standards team (p. 7). Revisions to the ELCC Standards were to proceed on an abbreviated path immediately following the final submission of the revised ISLLC Standards with the intent that both revised standards could be released concurrently (pp. 5-6).

The result of this review initiative was the issuance of the revised Educational Leadership and Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (CCSSO, 2008). Revised ELCC Standards, aligned with ISLLC 2008 Standards were presented by the NPBEA in March of 2009. ISLLC 2008 retained six standards. The introduction to each standard was changed from "A school administrator is an educational leader who…" to simply state "An education leader…". The term "all students" was replaced with "every student". Some additional minor wordsmithing rounded out the changes (p. 18). In essence, the Standards themselves emerged from the review rather unscathed with a few word

changes to simplify, focus, or add emphasis.   The new, more succinctly worded

Standards were:

1. An educational leader promotes the success of every student by facilitating the
    development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of
    learning that is shared and supported by all stakeholders.

2. An educational leader promotes the success of every student by advocating,
    nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to
    student learning and staff professional growth.

3. An educational leader promotes the success of every student by ensuring
    management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient,
    and effective learning environment.

4. An educational leader promotes the success of every student by collaborating with
    faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and
    needs, and mobilizing community resources.

5. An educational leader promotes the success of every student by acting with
    integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

6. An educational leader promotes the success of every student by understanding,
    responding to, and influencing the political, social, economic, legal, and cultural
    context.

The big change in the document, however, was in the Knowledge, Skills and

Dispositions. Those descriptors, 184 in all, were completely eliminated and replaced

with a total of 31 functions aligned under the individual standards. The six standards had

as few as three functions under Standard 6 to as many as nine under Standard 2 (p. 18).

In responding to concerns from academic institutions and practitioners the ISLLC 2008 working group felt that educational institutions had inconsistently used the 1996 standards, confusing policy standards with practice and/or program standards. To eliminate this confusion and ambiguity, the new Standards state clearly and definitively that the Standards are policy standards, meant to be used at the policy making level to influence leadership policy and practice (p.6). The new Functions further incorporated research findings and input from the field since the issuance of the 1996 ISLLC Standards (p. 6). Certainly, the ISLLC 2008 Standards, with the associated functions aligned under each, brought much needed clarity and brevity to the Standards.

This history of the ISLLC Standards is now full circle, from the events leading up to a ISLLC team being commissioned by the NPBEA in 1994 to draft the original Standards, to their issuance in 1996, then the call to review the Standards in 2006, and the issuance of revised Standards in 2008. To fully grasp their story, though, a review of the political and social context surrounding the push to create the Standards is appropriate. Those influences are woven through and bound up in the history of the Standards. However, even before summarizing that history it is important to briefly recognize the critical influence rapidly changing technology had on the entire story.

It was only through the rapid advances in computing technology following World War II that the means became available to quickly and efficiently collect, collate, correlate and otherwise process the mountains of data to compare educational results between schools in school districts, between school districts within and between states, between states, and between countries. Education leaders and educational researchers may have asked the questions that initiated the inquiry, but it was the rapidly evolving

computer technology that provided the enabling means for the collection and comparison of the data. That computing power provided for the quick reduction of the raw data into facts and trend lines that highlighted the declining quality and equity of education in the United States. Complimenting this power to uncover the problems, those same improvements in computing technology, and the continuing leaps forward in that technology, have enabled the profession to far more quickly track improvements or failures resulting from changes to educational programs from the university classroom to practice in local schools. Also, while not to discount the many other advances in technology that have impacted education in the last half century, two other technology areas stand out and deserve mention for their enabling influence on development of the ISSLC Standards. Those advances were in the areas of transportation and communication. Prior to WWII the most common means of traveling across the United States was several days by train, and the route to Europe or the Pacific Rim was by boat. Today educators and academics can travel to meetings or conferences anywhere in the country, or around the world for that matter, comparatively inexpensively, by air in a matter of hours. Concerning communication technology, prior to WWII the majority of homes in the United States did not have telephones, much less reliable phone service across the country. Communication by phone between countries was sporadic and expensive. Today, cell phones are so ubiquitous across the industrialized world that many people are forgoing hardwired, landline phones altogether. Web cams on office and home computers allow streaming video and audio communications with anyone, anywhere, inexpensively, and in real time. Video conferencing capabilities are common in education facilities, government facilities, and public buildings allowing multiple

individuals in far dispersed locations around the country or around the world to come together for meetings and to coordinate actions – inexpensive capabilities today that were little more than science fiction, or limited and very expensive, just a very few years ago.

While this brief discussion of technology may seem out of place in the history of the ISLLC Standards, and therefore to a contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation programs, these advancements in computing, transportation, and communication technologies have been tremendous enablers of comparatively rapid change in the education community. They were instrumental in creating unprecedented ease of collecting, processing, interpreting and comparing data. They made coming together for face-to-face meetings between and among educators affordable and timely. And finally, and very importantly, they facilitated real-time discussions, coordination, and collaboration – anytime. The importance of the impact and empowering nature of advancements in these core technologies to research in education, development of change proposals, creating implementing strategies, collaboration and coordination between and among educators and educational organizations, and the general sharing of information within the profession, cannot be overstated.

Returning now to a review of the political and social influences involved in the push to draft the ISSLC Standards, their approval and promulgation, and their revision, most of the highlights have indirectly been mentioned already. The *Coleman* and *Nation at Risk* reports informed and galvanized public opinion sufficiently to move the national polity, writ large, to bring pressures on the academic community to investigate and address the issues of social inequities within and between schools as well to confront a rising mediocrity in public education in general. To be expected, the inquiry into the

shortcomings of the educational system and the poor achievement results they were generating focused on school leadership, and then turned to how those leaders were being prepared. That inquiry into school leadership preparation brought the political spotlight on academic institutions and their advanced programs that purported to train individuals for educational leadership positions. These national political pressures generated the social pressures for the UCEA, a national affiliation of universities offering doctoral degrees in educational administration, to commission their own study to look at educational leadership on a national scale. In retrospect, their study, focusing on practicing school principals and school district superintendents, was essentially looking at the progeny of their educational leadership programs to see how they were doing on the job. The result of that study was the aforementioned highly critical *Leaders for America's Schools* report. This report confirmed that, on whole, educational administration leadership training programs were not doing a good job at adequately preparing future principals and superintendents for success on the job. The *Leaders for America's Schools* report, in turn, provided the political framework for the UCEA to lead the establishment of a new affiliation of those organizations directly involved in the development of educational leadership preparation programs, the training and certification of educational leaders, the management of educational leaders at the state level, and the execution of educational leadership at the primary and secondary school levels – a 'circling of the wagons', so to speak, of the major national stakeholder groups involved in the preparation for and execution of educational leadership. This new grouping of organizations, the National Policy Board on Educational Administration (NPBEA), would collaborate on the 'what' and 'how' actions for addressing the

shortcomings in educational administration preparation programs. Part of the charter of the NPBEA was advancing professional leadership standards for administrator preparation programs. This charge set the stage for establishing the ISLLC. From its outset, the ISLLC was organized to formulate a political consensus on its proposals. The member organizations of the NPBEA were represented on the ISLLC, as well as 24 states and other key stakeholder groups. Researchers and practitioners, educational institutions and professors, policy makers and policy implementers were all represented. If they could form a consensus recommendation, the political justification for calling it a recommendation from the profession would be there. While individual researchers and organizations may have felt left out of the consultations and/or disagreed with the results, the inclusionary composition of the ISLLC created sufficient political consensus to sustain the Standards they developed and to pursue the ISLLC's recommended implementation actions virtually unchanged for 10 years. When the CCSSO decided to pursue a review of the Standards at the 10 year point following their initial publication, it was in part to recognize the criticisms of the 1996 Standards, in part to review and incorporate relevant research conducted since the publication of the original Standards, and, perhaps, in part to invite some critics into the review and revision process to broaden the appeal of the results (i.e., Leithwood and McREL) (CCSSO, 2006). Thus, the political factors and implications of inclusion and broad consensus were strengthened even more in this review, revision, and reaffirmation of the Standards, reissued in 2008.

As to the direction taken in what to include in the original Standards, the pressures were more social than political. While the *Coleman Report* raised the political level of discourse, it highlighted social issues about equal education opportunities for all

children. Also, Murphy (2005) tells us the ISLLC made a conscious effort to move beyond concepts from business management and theories from the behavioral sciences. He specifically mentions as examples of less than successful prior initiatives: management by objectives, total quality management, and benchmarking as practices borrowed from business, and; organizational theory, politics of education, and qualitative methods as concepts borrowed from the social sciences (pp. 156-158). The Consortium apparently saw these concepts and constructs as failures. New values and beliefs were needed to move forward in meeting the demands for greater equity in education and improved quality of education to prepare students for success in a more global world. This turning away from an emphasis on business and behavioral science practices notwithstanding, some of the vocabulary from these fields crept back into the language of the Standards and their associated indicators, to include such terms as developing a vision, culture, management, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Looking forward, instead of electing to repackage the old ideas into new standards, the Consortium chose to build the standards based on actions, attitudes, and values observed in the administration of successful schools, schools that had demonstrated high levels of student achievement, with achievement equitably distributed across the student body, and that these high outcomes could be attributable to the school. There was an emphasis in each standard incorporating the idea that all students can learn, and a recognition that schools are responsible for student outcomes (p. 159). The Consortium then renamed the business practice of flowcharting and "backward mapped" from successful student outcomes to the educational leadership actions that facilitated the high levels of student achievement.

In addition, while the Consortium may have frowned on past initiatives concerning the politics of education, recognition and acknowledgment of the social realities of the micropolitics of education within schools and school communities is evident in each Standard. There was much research to draw on here as the Consortium drafted the 1996 Standards. To cite just a representative sample, the British educational researcher Steven Ball had written extensively on education policy and the sociology of education. His selected works (2006) may focus on the British education system, but his research and findings on the issues of education policy in general and social class distinctions in public education are well respected on both sides of the Atlantic. Bolstering Ball's works, Malen wrote on the power relations of school politics (1994). Marshall & Shribner (1991) quoted Iannaccone (1975) in declaring that everything that happens in and around schools is political. And Blasé and Anderson in their 1995 book *The Micropolitics of Educational Leadership: From Control to Empowerment* investigated the effects and outcomes of different leadership styles and leadership goals in school settings. By the time of the 2006 review of the ISLLC Standards there was additional published research which largely supported the foundations of the ISLLC and ELLC standards. Among others, Young, Peterson & Short (2002) called for continued interdependence and greater collaboration among all stakeholders to find common ground to effect substantial and positive change in educational administration preparation programs; Murphy (2002), a staunch supporter of the Standards, called for reculturing the profession; Peterson (2002) identifies promising innovations and opportunities in the professional development of principals; Jackson and Kelly (2002) hold up as examples exceptional and innovative educational leadership programs, and; Scribner, Aleman &

Maxcy (2003) belatedly note the presence of politics in education in their article *Emergence of the Politics of Education Field: Making sense of the messy middle,* not so much recognizing the presence of politics in education but recognizing politics of education as a separate field of study.

In summary, the ISLLC Standards are a set of expectations of educational leaders. They are based on actions, values, and morals that the education profession believes all school leaders should exhibit. They describe leader attributes that are fair, just, equitable, and collaborative within schools and with school stakeholders. A central theme is a belief that all children can learn and that the school leader's responsibility is to do those things that make it possible for all children to have an equitable opportunity to learn. The Standards were drafted in response to social and political winds generated by a recognition of social inequities in the education system and cries concerning a growing mediocrity in the level of primary and secondary school performance results. These concerns drove a critical look at educational leadership preparation programs in general, which was the genesis for creating the standards. The Standards were then, by extension, policy planning expectations of educational leadership training programs for what the profession expected graduates of those programs to act like. The Standards were developed with a sense of urgency. It is a testament to the enabling power of the mentioned technologies that the ISLLC team could be brought together and complete their task in the time they did, and the review, approval, and promulgation of the Standards happened as rapidly as they did. Today the Standards themselves are widely embraced across the United States. 45 states and the District of Columbia have either adopted or adapted the Standards (CCSSO, 2014). The Standards based SLLA test is

used in school leader licensure in 15 states 2 territories, and the District of Columbia (ETS, 2013). Two hundred fifteen (215) college/university educational leadership programs have received accreditation using the ISLLC Standards based ELCC Standards (CAEP, 2013). However, the work of the Standards is as yet incomplete. They have not been universally accepted as the national standard; all states do not accept that the SLLA is the right test to use for school leader licensure, and; all college/university educational leadership training programs do not feel compelled to submit to the ELCC accreditation process. Also, there remain significant voices saying that more needs to be done to revise the training programs and improve the selection of candidates who enter them (Levine, 2005; Hitt, Tucker & Young, 2012). In recognition of the continuing evolution of expectations of school leaders and school leadership preparation programs, the ISLLC Standards and their acceptance will remain a work in progress for the foreseeable future.

That said, for the purposes of this study it is significant to note that Kentucky was an early supporter of the ISLLC Standards and one of the first states to embrace them as the standard for accrediting principal preparation programs within a state (Kentucky EPSB meeting minutes, May 10-11, 1998). The Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) adopted the ISLLC Standards on November 5, 1998 (Source: Kentucky Department of Education, EPSB, *Educator preparation standards,* 2014*)*. Kentucky also requires successfully passing the ETS administered SLLA exam as part of their principal licensure process (Source: Kentucky Department of Education, EPSB, *School principal certification*, 2014).

No Child Left Behind

While an in depth, detailed look at the ISSLC Standards is important to understanding the framework within which Kentucky principal preparation programs are supposed to be constructed to attain accreditation, a more summary look at the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110) is important to understanding the context of this study and the environment within which primary and secondary school principals find themselves today. The Standards speak to the professional ethos the education body politic believes that principal preparation programs should impart to aspiring school administrators. The NCLB Act drives the urgency of including the right skill development in those same programs.

According to the New America Foundation's 2014 *Federal Education Budget Project*, NCLB is the most recent iteration of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). ESEA was part of President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty initiative and focused on providing additional funding to improve educational opportunities for schools and school districts serving lower income students. That is still the primary focus of ESEA, even in this current iteration. The NCLB authorizes 45 programs under 10 sections of the law and was funded at $25.7 billion dollars in fiscal year 2014. Title I of the 2014 authorization claims over half of the funding, at $14. 4 billion, and is designated for local school districts to improve the education of disadvantaged students (p.4). Considering that nearly half of all public schools receive Title I funds, most school districts receive some federal funds under the law and are therefore obligated to comply with its conditions, to include: annual testing, accountability, school improvement, and highly qualified teachers (p.4).

From the perspective of school administrators at both the school and district levels, the most publicly visible requirements of complying with the law are:

1. <u>Annual testing</u> of students in grades 3-8 in mathematics and reading. Also, testing of students in science is required at least once in elementary, middle, and high school. Schools could create their own tests, but the tests had to be aligned with state academic standards. Also, perhaps to create a level playing field between states in the assessments, or at least to create a common reference for comparing results between states, every other year a sample of 4th and 8th graders in each state are required to take the National Assessment of Educational Progress test in math and reading. (Source: Education Week Research Center, *No Child Left Behind* issue paper, Sept 19, 2011)

2. <u>Academic progress.</u> States had 12 years to bring all students up to a proficient level on state tests. In other words, by the end of the 2013-2014 school year all students were to be proficient in math and reading. Each school had to meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) targets set by the state as they advanced toward the 2013-2014 goal of all students being proficient. Progress is measured by school and by various racial and demographic sub-groups within the school. (Source: Education Week Research Center, *No Child Left Behind* issue paper, Sept 19, 2011)

3. <u>Report Cards</u> are required annually of school districts, to include details of student achievement broken down by student racial and demographic subgroups. The school districts, in turn, are required to provide report cards on each school within the district. (Source: Education Week Research Center, *No Child Left Behind* issue paper, Sept 19, 2011)

4. Accountability. Perhaps one of the most onerous aspects of the bill, maybe threatening is a better word from the perspective of school principals, is the accountability part of the law. From the U.S. Department of Education's 2014 Executive Summary of the NCLB Law: " School districts and schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward statewide proficiency goals will, over time, be subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures aimed at getting them back on course to meet State standards."

This last little area of "accountability" is the hammer to enforce the provisions and intent of the law: "… to close student achievement gaps by providing all children with a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education." (State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2014). While there are a few exceptions and loop holes in the enforcement process, what the accountability section of the law holds are penalties for failure to progress. In brief, those penalties include: for schools that miss AYP two years in a row, they are publicly labeled as "In Need of Improvement" and must create a two-year improvement plan. A third year of missing AYP requires the school to offer tutoring and supplemental education services to struggling students. A fourth year of missing AYP targets results in the school being labeled as requiring "Corrective Action", which may include, among other things, replacing staff (teachers and PRINCIPAL). A fifth year of failure requires planning to restructure the whole school, with a variety of options to achieve that restructuring. (No Child Left Behind Act, *Wikipedia*, 2014).

There is certainly a lot more detail and specifics in this lengthy law. The Table of Contents alone, as published on the U.S. Department of Education's web site, is 34

pages. However, those other provisions of the law are not germane to our interests in this study of Kentucky principal preparation programs. From the perspective of practicing principals, the annual testing requirements, public disclosure of testing results and standings, an annually increasing achievement target of success, and the threat of penalties, including being removed from the job for failure to meet targets, are a source of constant anxiety and stress (West, et al, 2010). One of the middle school principals I interviewed in my early field study effort felt that with the ever increasing pressures and expectations placed on principals schools soon would not be able to find anyone willing to enter the field.

As the year 2014 approached there was a growing realization at both the state and national levels that achieving the lofty mandates of the NCLB law might be a bridge too far. With the growing recognition that great numbers of schools were not achieving their AYP goals there came a slow acknowledgement that 100 percent proficient was a goal that simply might not be achievable. Deferring to a general disillusionment with the law (Dufour & Marzano, 2011, p. 12) and an ever growing clamor from states and interest groups for relief from or change to the law, the federal government under the Obama administration offered and granted states waivers to provisions of the law. Kentucky was one of the first group of states granted a waiver, on February 9, 2012 (No Child Left Behind Act, *Wikipedia*, 2014). The waivers did not exempt the waivered states from the provisions of the law; they just gave those states more time to develop alternate schemes to demonstrate compliance with the law.

As is evident from this short discourse on the NCLB law, from the perspective of a practicing principal in the state of Kentucky the law's student achievement expectations

are high, annual testing requirements make the success or failure of meeting the annually

increasing achievement expectations very public, and the penalties for not leading his or

her school in successfully attaining and sustaining a 100 percent proficient level for all

students are quite severe – including being replaced. So drives the importance and

urgency of studying Kentucky principal preparation programs: while all of the programs

are purportedly designed within the framework of the ISSLC Standards, do they also

prepare aspiring principals with the tools they need to successfully lead their schools on a

journey of continuous and sustained improvement?

Silver and Spuck Study Report

The results of this early study of preparatory programs for school administrators

(1978) serve as the starting point for comparing today's principal preparation programs in

Kentucky with principal preparation programs as they existed, broadly speaking, in the

United States circa 1978. The study leading to this report was the U.S. contribution to a

larger international study conducted in cooperation with parallel studies being conducted

by member nations of the Commonwealth Council for Educational Administration (p. 1).

The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) was responsible for the

U.S. portion of the study. From the introduction to the report:

> The Purpose of this study is to describe preparation programs in educational
> administration in the United States. It is intended to provide baseline descriptive
> data about what goes on in such programs – how they are structured and
> governed; what body of knowledge they treat, and how; whom they serve, and
> why. Its purpose is to provide an overview of preservice preparation in
> educational administration from the perspectives of those most closely involved –
> department heads, professors, and students. It was designed to generate a profile
> of preparation programs and to explore the degree of homogeneity or variance
> they exhibit. (p. 7)

The report notes that at the time of the study there were somewhere in the neighborhood of 375 U.S. institutions offering graduate programs in educational administration, with the number increasing annually.   Approximately 320 of the programs were master's degree level, another 100 were two-year programs (presumably awarding a certificate), and approximately 140 programs offered an EdD and/or PhD. (p. 6)

In the end, 342 institutions were surveyed in the U.S. study. (p.15) Questionnaires were mailed to the department chairperson of each institution. As part of that survey the department heads were asked to nominate a faculty member most knowledgeable about the program contents and current students that they might be asked to participate in a second round of surveys. Those faculty members were, in turn, asked to nominate five students representative of the students enrolled in their program to participate in a third round of surveys. (p. 16) In summary, the survey involved a cascading survey regimen where questionnaires were <u>mailed</u> to institution department heads, who nominated a knowledgeable faculty member to participate at the program level, who nominated five students to provide input from the student level. The entire study was conducted using hard copy, paper questionnaires and the U.S. mail.

The initial mailing of the Questionnaires went out to institution department heads in the fall of 1975. Duplicate questionnaires and pleadings to respond were twice sent out to non-respondents at 6-week intervals. In the end, 75% (258) of department heads responded. Based on the results of the survey of department heads, 633 questionnaires were sent to professors. Those requests were followed-up one time, again at an interval of six weeks following the initial request. 39% of the professors responded. Based on the results of the professors' responses 3,165 questionnaires were mailed to responding

professors to distribute to their students. No second requests were sent to students. 904

students responded for a 29% response rate. (p. 19)

Institutions were queried concerning all of their graduate level educational

administration programs.   Data was segregated by masters, certification, specialist, and

doctoral programs. For the purposes of using the resulting data as a baseline for looking

at the contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation programs, only the

master's level program data, from Chapter 4, is considered. 235 of the 254 institutions

responding to the survey offered a master's degree and nearly a quarter of those offered

only a MA degree. (p. 52) Also, as declared in Chapter 9 of the report, "Preparation for

elementary and secondary school principalships predominates at the master's level…"

(p.202), so it is this group that most closely aligns with the purposes of this history.

To quote, paraphrase, and condense from the report's summary profile of

master's-level programs as it relates to this contemporary history:

1. The orientation of the programs was toward conceptual, human relations, and technical skills in about equal proportions.

2. Students were attracted to specific programs because of their convenient location (i.e., close to home).

3. The major admission requirement for students was a minimum grade point average in undergraduate studies.

4. Programs averaged 32 credit hours.

5. Of the required courses, 65% were in educational administration, 25% were elsewhere in the college of education, and 10% were outside the college of education.

6. Class size was 10 to 30 students.

7. There was no residency requirement.

8. Programs were perceived to be current, relevant and useful, and the courses were interrelated.

9. There was much faculty-student communication but little innovativeness or individualization.

10. Research and statistics courses were required. (p. 54, 166)

The preponderance of professors felt the programs prepared students for principalships, assistant principalships, and building-level supervisory positions. (p.54) The study found the major purpose of most MA programs to be to prepare building-level administrators through an emphasis on curriculum development and administrative theory course work in which conceptual skills, human relations skills, and technical skills were equally stressed. (p. 55). Student ranking of topics, in order of program emphasis, was curriculum development (1), administration theory (2), decision making (3), education law (4), instructional supervision (5), and leadership and human relations (tied for 6th). (p. 56)

Most students in the study were employed fulltime (83%), attended their program on a part-time basis (79%), and were taking fewer than 12 hours per term. (p. 56). The primary reason for students choosing an institution to attend was "convenient location", with "reputation" a distant second. (p. 57). The study further found that most MA students were white males (approximately 70%) who worked near the university (53% within 25 miles) as classroom teachers and were studying part-time at the institution from which they earned their bachelor's degree. (pp. 58 - 76)

Concerning program instructional process, the lecture mode was declining in popularity with just over 30% of instructional time devoted to that mode, on average 56%

of the time was spent in group discussions, and something over 10% of instructional time

was devoted to independent study. (p. 59)

Program courses taken outside the field of educational administration included

research/statistics, psychology, business administration, history, management science,

and law. (p. 61) About 35% of programs included some sort of non-paid activities

constituting a field experience. (p. 63) While most MA programs required a

research/statistics course(s) (p. 72), less than 30% of the departments required and

original research project (p. 66). Curriculum development and administrative theory

were the major focus of most MA programs (p. 71). Program regulations regarding the

number of credit hours, required courses, and terminal exam were strictly enforced. (p.

64)

The study identified five areas of recent and projected program changes:

1. Review and clarification of program purposes and objectives. Departments were
    engaged in goal setting activities and intended to continue doing so.

2. Departments were moving toward competency based programs and expected the
    trend to continue.

3. Improvement of facilities.

4. Higher or more stringent admission requirements, to include higher test scores,
    letters of recommendation, etc.

5. State guidelines and/or certification requirements had been driving departments to
    modify their programs to align with state certification requirements. This outside
    influence was expected to continue influencing program content and
    requirements. (p. 192)

Even so, the study notes that program changes have not been radical or dramatic, but

more gradual and cumulative. The authors surmised that self-assessment within

departments of education was becoming an ongoing activity and that continued renewal and change could be expected. (p. 193)

The final chapter of the Silver and Spuck report also holds some thoughts for comparison against contemporary principal preparation programs. The author voiced concern over possible parochialism of the graduate programs. As most students live and work near the university, she had a concern as to whether fresh and new ideas could penetrate such local orientations or whether alternative styles of administration were believable to students steeped during the day in familiar workplace school environments. (p. 204) Also, the localism of students raised questions about program homogeneity. The predominance of local students suggested that programs were not distinctive enough to draw students from greater distances. (p. 204) MA programs in educational administration required about 32 hours beyond the baccalaureate degree, and most courses were within the department of education. (p. 205) Again stressing that typical students live and work within a 25-mile radius of their university, and that many aspiring administrators received their undergraduate degree at the same institution they were attending for their graduate work, there appeared to be little geographic movement of students for the sake of acquiring specialized training. (p. 206) Self-initiated inquiry and recommendations of friends seemed to be the most common sources of awareness about graduate programs. Convenience of location as well as faculty and program reputation were the primary reasons for enrolling in a particular program. (p. 206)

CHAPTER III
METHODOLOGY

To create and validate a road map of the path followed by Kentucky's principal preparation programs in a contemporary historical context the researcher had to first declare the period of historical interest. The window of review was set at 20 years, beginning in 1994 and ending in 2014. My investigation began with reviewing documented Kentucky programs at three distinct points in history: 2014, 2004, and 1994. Then, having backed into the 1994 data, the picture of Kentucky principal preparations programs in 1994 would become the starting point for describing the evolution of the preparation programs over the 20 year period of interest.   Concurrent with this paper study of Kentucky principal preparation programs, I arbitrarily chose 16 universities from outside of Kentucky with well-known graduate level programs in education to compare their current school administrator preparation programs against those of Kentucky. Having earlier established a reasonable justification for declaring that the academic performance of Kentucky schools is a median, representative example of academic performance in public schools across the United States, the intent of this comparative look at Kentucky and other than Kentucky programs was to perhaps gain some insight into whether or not Kentucky's principal preparation programs could be seen as representative of a general, national preparation program construct, and if not, where did the differences lie. The results from the initial paper study of Kentucky programs were supplemented with collected and collated responses to an online survey sent to all Kentucky middle school principals to garner their insight into what they remembered about what their programs were really like. To further strengthen the now emerging

image of the contemporary historical story of Kentucky's principal preparation programs, 10 randomly selected Kentucky middle school principals were chosen for in-depth personal interviews concerning their remembrances of their principal preparation journey. In the final step in the synthesis of study information, with the contemporary historical information on Kentucky programs in hand, as well as the comparative data with other current programs from outside Kentucky analyzed, this collective data was juxtaposed with the Silver and Spuck study results from 1978 to draw some conclusions as to if, how, and to what extent programs had changed. The subsequent review of these findings established the basis for suggesting areas for further study.

Unlike the Silver & Spuck study, which was conducted entirely with paper survey instruments and through the U.S. mail, today's electronic search methods and online information data sources made initial research for this contemporary history study a straight forward computer search for program details. Information on currently accredited Kentucky programs and a representative sample of 16 other than Kentucky programs was gathered online. Stepping back in time to gather historical information on the evolution of Kentucky principal preparation programs, available online information was gathered for the years 2004 and 1994. As I could gather no insight into additional Kentucky schools which may have had principal preparation programs in the past, the population of current (2014) Kentucky schools with principal preparation programs served as the base population for preparation program investigation for 2004 and 1994. When online historical information was not available, every effort was made to contact the currently accredited institutions to collect information directly from their historical archives.

Detail on the methodology of data collection for each study component follows.

Review of Accredited Kentucky Principal Preparation Programs

2014 Kentucky program entry requirements, required hours, required courses, and course descriptions were researched and readily available online. While some institution web sites were easier to navigate than others, all of the program information was present online. According to the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board's (EPSB) website, as of January 1, 2014 there were 11 institutions in Kentucky with accredited School Principal (Grades P-12) (Instructional Leadership) programs. Those programs were:

Asbury University	Spalding University
Bellarmine University	University of Kentucky
Eastern Kentucky University	University of Louisville
Morehead State University	University of the Cumberlands
Murray State University	Western Kentucky University
Northern Kentucky University	

Program details were cataloged by pre-requisites, required hours, method of instruction, and course content. Course titles did not necessarily belie content, so course descriptions were used as the real discriminator as to how to catalog each course.

In gathering information on Kentucky programs as they existed in 2004 and 1994 the search was confined to the list of schools accredited in 2014. As mentioned earlier, I was frustrated in my attempt to gain insight into to whether additional Kentucky institutions offered principal preparation programs in 2004 and 1994. No information was available through the Kentucky EPSB, the program accrediting agency. Emails were

exchanged with the longtime Executive Staff Advisor/Legislative Liaison of the Kentucky EPSB, Ms. Marcie Lowe, to further investigate if the Board had any records to indicate if additional Kentucky institutions had principal preparation programs at these points in history. Ms. Lowe was most helpful, but she advised that there is no repository of such legacy information. Each time the list of accredited programs is updated, the old is replaced. Ms. Lowe did invite me to visit the Board offices in Frankfort, Kentucky to search through Board meeting minutes for the information I was looking for. A three hour search through old meeting minutes yielded no information that might indicate additional institutions had accredited principal preparation programs in 2004, much less 1994, thus driving my historical program search to concentrate on the population of schools with programs in 2014. The investigation of legacy programs began with a search of each currently accredited institution's web site for legacy graduate department catalogs/bulletins, program details, required courses, and descriptions.

Some institutions had legacy program information available online for both 2004 and 1994. Others had historical information online for 2004 but not 1994. Some had no information online for the years of interest. For institutions that did not have legacy catalogs available online, current catalogs were searched for points of contact within each institution's department of education and/or graduate program office within the department of education. Requests were sent via email to each of these institutions requesting legacy program information. As with the 2014 program information, retrieved program detail was cataloged by pre-requisites, required hours, method of instruction, and course content.

Review of Representative Programs from Outside of Kentucky

Sixteen colleges of education at institutions from outside of Kentucky were selected to evaluate their current principal preparation programs and to compare them against current Kentucky programs. The intent of this comparison was simply to gain some perspective as to whether Kentucky programs were or were not representative of other programs across the country. If they were not, then perhaps some insight could be gained concerning the merits or failings of the differences. The selected schools reviewed for this study were:

California State University, Fresno	University of Georgia
East Tennessee State University	University of New Mexico
Fordham University	University of Missouri, Columbia
Harvard University	University of San Diego
Hofstra University	University of Utah
Miami University of Ohio	University of Washington
Rutgers University	Vanderbilt University
University of California, Berkley	Wichita State University

Selection of these particular schools was completely arbitrary. For the most part, they were schools that routinely appeared in articles from my literature search. One school, Rutgers University, was selected because my committee co-chair taught there for many years. Vanderbilt University was selected because it was the longtime academic home of Dr. Joseph Murphy, Chair of the original ISLLC Standards working group and tireless defender and supporter of those standards.

As with the research into Kentucky principal preparation programs, program entry requirements, required hours, required courses, and course descriptions were researched and readily available online. Program details were cataloged by pre-requisites, required hours, method of instruction, and course content.

On-Line Survey

To gather what practicing Kentucky principals remembered about what was really taught in their preparation programs and how it was taught, versus what institutional documents described as program intent, an online survey was crafted and emailed to all middle school principals in Kentucky. Questions were also included in the survey to gather a level of demographic information and experience background on this population of principals, as well as questions designed to gather practicing professional insight, in hindsight, into these principals' perceptions of the efficacy of their preparation programs and suggestions for possible program improvement.   Only middle school principals were included in the study for two reasons. First, limiting the scope of the study to a manageable population had merit. As it was, the initial list of middle schools in Kentucky obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education contained 239 schools. As to the second reason, I believe that for young students the middle school journey is that critical academic and maturity bridge between being children in elementary school and becoming young adults in high school. If students do not successfully navigate that bridge and enter high school prepared for the academic rigors of high school, it is likely too late for them to successfully catch up. Middle school principals, therefore, carry that burden of seeing that their students are ready for high school. This limiting of the survey population notwithstanding, the survey results may be reasonably considered as reflective

of the Kentucky principal population as a whole. Principal preparation programs in Kentucky do not differentiate by grade level and yield a School Principal all grades certificate.

Administering the survey was preceded by the routine institutional requirements of completing Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) curriculum and submitting an Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application for Exemption Certificate. The application for exemption was submitted to the Eastern Kentucky University IRB on April 18, 2014. IRB exemption approval, Protocol Number: 14-189, was issued on April 22, 2014.

The emailed introduction to the survey and the survey can be found in the Appendix. Dr. Paul Erickson, my committee chair, was instrumental in transcribing the survey into a Qualtrics Survey Solutions format such that the electronic responses could be received and manipulated on the EKU College of Education server. Survey responses were anonymous. The initial survey mailing went out to all known middle school principals in Kentucky on July 9, 2014. A supplemental mailing was sent out on July 22. A second appeal for responses was sent on August 11, and a final appeal was sent on September 3. As responses to the survey were anonymous, all three mailings went to all known middle school principals.

A group email list of Kentucky middle school principals for this survey was obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Division of Communications. Before they would release it for my use I was required to craft and forward a request through their legal department for review and approval. Once the

request was approved a further procedural issue was uncovered in that the first group email list the Division provided could not be used by other than a KDE computer address. In the end, KDE Information Technology people interceded and were able to provide an alternate, password protected list of schools, physical addresses, principal names, and email addresses. I was warned that principal names and email addresses might not be current – schools were notorious for not updating KDE on personnel changes in a timely manner. The list contained 320 schools that could be identified as middle schools, junior high schools, or consolidated schools that contained some or all of grades 6 thru 8. From the initial mailing fully one third of the emails came back as "Undeliverable", hence the supplemental mailing that went out on July 22 after spending several days online and on the phone updating names and emails for schools with outdated information. Updated school information was shared with the KDE Division of Communications to use in updating their records.

The number of responses received from the survey was disappointing. Following three requests over a three month period only 62 principals responded, for a response rate of just less than 20%. Even so, I am given to believe that such a response rate to online surveys is not unusual and there were a sufficient number of responses to draw reasonable inferences from the data. The online survey portion of the study was declared complete on October 10, with the last survey response having been received on September 24.

Personal Interviews

To add further depth to the study of Kentucky principal preparation programs, 10 practicing Kentucky middle school principals were randomly selected for personal interviews concerning their principal preparation journey. These interviews served to validate the results of the online survey responses as well as to tease out further remembrances of program content and efficacy. In addition, the interviews were structured to encourage deeper reflection on suggestions for possible improvements to those preparation programs. Understanding that middle school principals are busy people with a lot of demands on their time and an ever changing plate of priorities, I scheduled interviews to last no more than one hour. Actual times were from 45 minutes to 75 minutes.

To effect this random selection of principals 11 middle schools (ten primary schools and one alternate) were selected from the updated list of middle schools provided by the KDE Division of Communications using random numbers to target schools from an alphabetized list of schools. Interestingly, as a validation of the random selection concept, the process did indeed yield a list of schools scattered across the state. Schools and principals were contacted by phone and interviews were scheduled during the month of September 2014. Day trips sufficed for visiting schools in northern, central, and eastern Kentucky. An overnight trip was required to visit two schools in western Kentucky. One principal in the Jefferson County school district refused to return repeated phone calls over a ten day period. I fell back on the alternate school which, by happenstance, was also in the Louisville metropolitan area, though not in the Jefferson County school district. Other than the one principal who refused to return my calls, the

remaining principals were more than accommodating in making time in their busy schedules to help with my research. As I had no visibility into who had responded to the online survey, there was some overlap with online survey respondents. In other words, some of the principals interviewed remembered having completed the online survey. That was expected.

The online survey instrument was used as a note taker for the personal interviews. Interviews were not recorded, but notes were taken during the interview and fleshed out in the school parking lot immediately after the interview. Unlike with the online survey, the personal interview provided an opportunity to clarify responses and pick up on and expand on random comments to gain further insight into recollections of individual principal preparation journeys and to garner personal perceptions of those journeys. Also, the personal interview is a far better format for coaxing out thoughts from individuals on non-value added portions of their graduate course work and thoughts for possible improvements.

Issues

The execution of this research methodology was straightforward, but did have its issues and pitfalls. The online search of program detail on current preparation programs both in Kentucky and outside of Kentucky was at times a challenge, sifting through online catalogs to find the real program description and then jumping from program descriptions to courses and course descriptions, sometimes in completely different catalogs. Inaccurate editing of catalogs at times yielded conflicting program credit hour requirements between general program descriptions and detailed program descriptions

located elsewhere in the same catalog. Using course descriptions rather than course titles to group courses by content across institutions was certainly the most accurate method of collecting and generalizing program structures. Even then, understanding that course topics may be grouped differently into semester long courses at different institutions, a level of interpolation was sometimes required in declaring which category a given course from a specific institution fit into.

The results of the online survey were not as clean and insightful as hoped. Some of the demographic and background experience information gathered was interesting, but in light of the low response rate no general conclusions could be drawn. For instance, I had hoped to draw some correlation between work and management experience outside of education and level of leadership success within education. There simply were not enough data points in the responses to compare these factors. Also, when this study began Kentucky reported annual school performance data under the NCLB Act using terms and metrics spelled out in the law – using nationally universal terms and metrics. However, by the time the online survey was administered, which incorporated school performance questions using those standard terms and metrics, Kentucky had received a waiver to the mandates of the NCLB law and completely changed its metrics, making the survey answers to the school performance questions worthless in aggregate. I was able to recover from this survey blunder somewhat in the personal interviews, in that I could discuss school performance data under the new metrics with these principals. Nonetheless, the performance data pool was significantly diminished.

The final analysis in this study, comparing the results of the 1978 Silver and Spuck report on educational administrator preparation programs in the United States circa

1978 with the results of the contemporary look at Kentucky and other than Kentucky

administrator preparation programs was, again, very clear and straightforward.   The

similarities in the findings, particularly relative to core course subjects, reasons for

program selection, program change catalyst, and concerns for the future were perhaps

startlingly familiar, but significant differences between 1978 and 2014 became clear on

deeper reflection.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Before presenting the findings it is important to recall the concerns that drove the overarching purpose of the study. Principals are challenged and expected to lead continuous improvement initiatives in their schools, yet I had a great concern that the tools and methodologies for conducting and leading those continuous improvement initiatives were not included in Kentucky principal preparation programs. Therefore, aspiring principals were entering the field ill-prepared for the challenges and expectations they faced. So the question was, are the means for conducting continuous improvement initiatives included in Kentucky principal preparation programs, and if not why not? Answering that question was the primary focus of the study. Then, to gain some insight into understanding whether these skills were ever, within a contemporary historical period, included in Kentucky principal preparation programs, became a secondary goal. To answer the question a scheme was proposed to study the contemporary evolution of Kentucky principal preparation programs, to include identifying major influences and changes in the field during the time frame of interest. To add both breadth and depth of understanding to the study of Kentucky preparation programs, a comparative look at Kentucky programs with peer institutional programs from outside of Kentucky was included in the study. Finally to put the history of Kentucky preparation programs into and even broader historical context, the results of the Kentucky history are compared against the results of an even older study. The expectation was that the answer to the original question would become obvious, and the peer and historical context would add to

a better understanding of the evolution of current program content, perhaps suggesting opportunities to improve those programs.

Following the methodology outlined in Chapter III, this chapter looks initially at the content of Kentucky principal preparation programs as gleaned from official university documents at three points in history: 2014, 2004, and 1994. Introducing each of these historical segments will be the direction given under Kentucky law as to how principal preparation programs were to be structured at those points in time. This direction was and is included in Kentucky Administrative Regulations (KAR). Following this 20 year look at Kentucky programs will be a more general investigation of the principal preparation programs at selected educational institutions from outside of Kentucky. The findings of the Kentucky and extra-Kentucky schools' records search are followed by the review of responses to the administered on-line survey. The detailed findings from the personal interviews complete the research findings. Determinations to be drawn from synthesizing the findings, along with comparisons to the findings of the 1978 Silver and Spuck report, conclude the chapter.

Program Documentation from Kentucky Schools

The study of documented principal preparation programs in Kentucky begins with accredited programs as they exist in 2014. 2014 preparation program guidance is found in KAR Title 16, Education Professional Standards Board, Chapter 3 Administrative Certificates, Part 050 Professional certificate for instructional leadership – school principal, all grades (i.e., 16 KAR 3:050) (retrieved 7/28/2014). Salient sections of Part 050 for our study include:

Section 1. Definitions. (1) "Level I" means the standards-based program of studies designed for minimal preparation to serve in the position of instructional leadership - school principal.

(2) "Level II" means the standards-based program of studies to attain the first five (5) year renewal of the certificate for the position of instructional leadership - school principal.

Section 2. Conditions and Prerequisites. Prerequisites for admission to the program of preparation for the provisional or professional certificate for instructional leadership – school principal shall include:

(a) A master's degree;

(b) Three (3) years of documented teaching experience ……

(d) An agreement from a school district pledging support that includes opportunities for the candidate to participate in a high quality practicum experience. The agreement shall include:

1. A description of how the district will provide opportunities for the candidate:

a. To observe school and district leadership; and

b. to participate in school and district leadership activities;

2. Confirmation that the candidate shall be permitted to utilize aggregate school and district information and data; and

3. The signature of the district superintendent or the district superintendent's designee.

Section 3. Kentucky Administrator Standards for Preparation and Certification. The approved program of preparation for the provisional certificate for instructional leadership - school principal shall:

(1) Prepare a candidate for the position of school principal as specified in the standards included in:

(a) The "Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008"; and

(b) The "Technology Standards for School Administrators"; and

(2) Document candidate performance using "Dispositions, Dimensions, and Functions for School Leaders".

Section 4. Principal Preparation Programs.

(2) Beginning May 31, 2009, in addition to the requirements established in 16 KAR 5:010, Section 22, the educator preparation unit shall prepare and submit to the Education Professional Standards Board for each principal preparation program for which the institution is seeking approval a concise description of the preparation program which shall provide the following documented information:

(a) Signed collaborative agreements with school districts that include the following:

1. Joint screening of principal candidates by both district and university;

2. Joint identification of potential program leaders and mentors;

3. District and university codesign and codelivery of courses; and

4. The manner in which the principal preparation program is based on the identified leadership needs of each district;

(b) The protocol for screening applicants that ensures the identification and admission of high quality candidates into the program;

(c) A matrix that illustrates the alignment between the standards and performance indicators identified in Section 3 of this administrative regulation and the program's curriculum and field experiences;

(d) A syllabus for each of the program's required courses identified in the documentation required by paragraph (c) of this subsection;

(e) The program's plan to collaborate with academic disciplines and programs outside of the field of education in order to supplement the candidate's knowledge and skills set;

(f) The program's plan to collaborate with each district in providing high quality field experiences that:

1. Enhance courses throughout the entire program;

2. Ensure that the candidate has a continuum of school-based experiences that range from observing, to participating, to leading; and

3. Expose the candidate to diverse student populations and school environments;

(g) The program's plan to use rigorous formative and summative evaluations of each candidate's:

1. Knowledge and skills to advocate, nurture, and sustain a school culture that promotes and supports high levels of learning for all students; and

2. Knowledge and skills to manage a school for efficiency, accountability, and safety; and

(h) The program's plan to require all candidates to conduct a capstone project and defend it to a panel of program faculty and practicing school administrators at the end of Level I preparation.

(*certain other sections, paragraphs, and subparagraphs are intentionally left out*)

To repeat from Chapter III, according to the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) website, as of January 1, 2014 there were 11 institutions in Kentucky with accredited School Principal (Grades P-12) (Instructional Leadership) programs. Those programs, and their associated credit hour requirements, were:

Asbury University (36)   Spalding University (39)

Bellarmine University (36)   University of Kentucky (36)

Eastern Kentucky University (30)   University of Louisville (30)

Morehead State University (33)   University of the Cumberlands (36)

Murray State University (36)   Western Kentucky University (36)

Northern Kentucky University (36

One would expect all of these programs to conform to the 16 KAR 3:050 guidelines enumerated above. All programs do include the required prerequisites, to include holding a master's degree.

Rather than listing each individual program's content, I will focus on program similarities and highlight unique aspects of specific programs. Each school has pursued an independent path to satisfy the requirements of 16 KAR 3:050 and gain accreditation through the Kentucky EPSB.

Program length ranges from 30 to 39 credit hours, with 36 hour programs being the most common. It should be noted that the University of Kentucky program is advertised as a 33 credit hour program, but there is a required 3 credit hour course in Foundations of Inquiry, outside of the 33 hour program, for a total of 36 hours. Average program credit hours are 34.9 hours.

As a point of information here in discussing Kentucky principal preparation programs, principal preparation in Kentucky, and the associated academic programs that support that preparation, is a two phase endeavor. The Level I portion of a program leads to initial principal licensure. The Level II segment earns the applicant their first 5-year principal certificate renewal (16 KAR 3:050, 2014).

The Level I portion of each program, required to prepare students for initial principal licensure, is most commonly 30 credit hours, with Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, and the University of Louisville requiring less, at 24 hours. Typically, following the initial Level I certification an additional 6 credit hours of course work are required to earn the first 5-year principal certificate renewal (Level II certification). Morehead State University and Spalding University each require 9 additional hours for Level II certification. These additional Level II credit hours usually also complete degree requirements for a master's degree or specialist degree.

There are a few outliers in program credit hour requirements and the fruits of program completion. Typically, completion of Level I and Level II coursework, and any additional program requirements (e.g., reports, presentations), yields a master's level degree. Nine of the eleven programs result in an Educational Specialist (EdS) degree. Murray State University awards a Master in Education (MEd). However, Spalding University, whose program requires the greatest number of credit hours at 39, does not purport to offer a degree for program completion: it is a certification, non-degree program. Two other program anomalies are worth noting. First, Bellarmine University's EdS/principal certification program does not mention a required capstone project, as required by 16 KAR 3:050 Section 4(2)h (see above). It does speak to a capstone project

73

requirement in an Alternate Certification Option VI program, but not in their primary

program requirements. A second anomaly concerns Western Kentucky University.

Western Kentucky University has the only Kentucky principal preparation program with

a stated residency requirement. Their EdS program requires that students complete a

minimum of 2 terms in residence during the course of the program. What this means for

the aspiring principal is they must be a full-time student during two terms of their

program. In practical terms for students, however, the requirement can be met by taking

two courses during each of two summer terms. For students not in a position to take two

courses in two consecutive summer sessions, Western also offers a certification only

(non-degree) program. Unlike their EdS program, the certification only program has no

residency requirement. The Level I curriculum for this certification-only program

includes 18 hours of core courses and 9 hours of "co-requisite courses", for a total of 27

credit hours to complete Level I principal certification requirements. Level II

requirements include an additional 12 hours, for 39 total hours in the certification only

program (vs. 36 total hours in their EdS program).

Two of the 11 accredited principal preparation programs are advertised as being

"On-Line": Asbury University and University of the Cumberlands. From the program

descriptions, Asbury's is completely on line and there is no mention of any requirement

to ever physically meet with classmates or faculty. Contact with students, faculty, and

outside speakers is in a virtual environment (Asbury College: Principal licensure,

retrieved 10/29/2014). The University of the Cumberlands program, on the other hand,

does require face-to-face Saturday sessions with students and faculty for each course: 2

Saturdays for each 8-week course and 3 Saturday sessions for each 18-week course

(University of the Cumberlands: Education Administration Degree – Online, retrieved 10/29/2014).

Looking at actual program course content, it is instructive to begin with what these programs are not. Recall from reading the 2014 version of 16 KAR 3:050, above, the Kentucky Administrative Regulation does not dictate program credit hours, topics, courses, course titles, course content, or presentation medium. Nor does it direct that administering institutions coordinate or collaborate on program design or content. It lays out certain standards around which the programs are to be designed and defines the process for requesting accreditation. As a result, looking at the 11 programs there is no indication of any collaboration between or among accredited principal preparation programs in Kentucky concerning program design, courses, course content, and credit hours awarded. It appears that each institution independently built their unique program and requested and achieved accreditation. This makes the process of evaluating the content and structure of programs challenging to say the least. Course titles differ across institutions and course titles do not necessarily clearly link to the course content. For this study, course descriptions were used for a more clear indication of content. Content was then correlated into categories to draw a more general picture of the topics covered across programs.

Considering first the most common curricular content across programs, all programs contain a course in human resources, to include varying emphases on selecting, hiring, and retaining staff, personnel evaluation, and supervision. Every program includes at least one course concerning evaluating/ building organizational culture/ structures/operations/ conditions for learning. 10 of 11 programs have a course either

dedicated or largely focused on: school finance and resource allocation, as practiced in Kentucky; school law, often paired with an emphasis on ethics, and; leading teaching and/or instuctional/curricular leadership. Mobilizing/leveraging/collaboration with parents and community is a dedicated course in 9 of 11 programs. Eight of 11 programs have either one or two courses dedicated or largely focused on assessment (classroom assessment/ needs assessment) and/or using data (data driven strategies, qualitative/quantitative analysis, technology). Professional learning-communities (PLCs) is a recurring topic with a dedicated course in 3 programs, but it is often also included in courses on improving school culture. "Leadership for" is a common preface used with course topics, or a suffix, as in "Instructional Leadership". But leadership, as a stand-alone topic, or a more tightly focused course on school leadership, is present in only 4 programs.

Less common program courses include: leading differentiated instruction (3 programs), administering special populations/at risk students (2 programs), school safety and discipline (2 programs), collaborative performance appraisals (1 program), and separate courses on "Administering the Elementary School" and "Administering the Secondary School" (1 program).

In comparing required program credit hours it is useful to consider how the different programs treat with field research and the required capstone project. Looking at just the Level I programs, the initial principal licensure level at each institution, we have already noted that the programs range from 24 to 30 credit hours.   However, individual institutions include a wide range of field work credit hours at this program level. Bellarmine University, with no defined capstone requirement in their program

76

description, includes eight credit hours of field work in their 30 hour Level I program (two 3-credit hour courses and two 1-credit hour courses). Spalding University includes six 1-credit hour lab courses in their Level I program and Northern Kentucky University's program includes five 1-credit hour field experience courses. The remaining Level I programs all include require field experience in most course descriptions, but award no separate credit hours for the effort. Turning to credit hours awarded for the required capstone project, Western Kentucky University has a 6 credit hour Specialist Project. Asbury University and University of the Cumberlands each have 3 credit hour capstone projects; Northern Kentucky University awards 2 credit hours for their capstone project. Murray State University imbeds the capstone in a 3-credit hour practicum course, as does the University of Louisville. The remaining programs with defined capstone requirements, Eastern Kentucky, Morehead, Spalding, and the University of Kentucky, award no credit hours for the capstone project.

Stepping back in time to look at how principal preparation programs in Kentucky were structured in 2004, program guidance was found in KAR Title 16, Education Professional Standards Board, Chapter 3 Administrative Certificates, Part 050 Professional certificate for instructional leadership – school principal, all grades (i.e., 16 KAR 3:050) (Source: 2004 Kentucky Administrative Regulations Service, Vol. 1). Salient sections of the 2004 version of 16 KAR 3:050 for our study include:

Section 2. Conditions and Prerequisites.
  (3) (a) Qualification for a Kentucky classroom teaching certificate;
  (c) Successful completion of the Kentucky Teacher Internship Program …
Section 3. Kentucky Administrator Standards for Preparation and Certification.
  (1) The approved program of preparation for the provisional certificate for instructional leadership – school principal shall:
  (a) Include a master's degree in education, and
  (b) Be designed to:
  1. Address recommendations of relevant professional organizations including:
  a. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration;
  b. The University Council for Educational Administration;
  c. The National Council of Professors of Educational Administration;
  d. The National Association of Secondary School Principals;
  e. The Collaborative for Technology Standards for School Administrators; and
  f. The American Association of School Administrators; and
  2. Prepare a candidate for the position of School Principal as specified in the standards included in "Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders" and "Technology Standards for School Administrators"
  (2) The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders are as follows: (*six ISLLC Standards are defined, taken directly from the 1996 ISLLC Standards*).
  (3) The Technology Standards for School Administrators are as follows: (*six technology standards are defined*).

Section 5. Statement of Eligibility for Internship. (1) A statement of eligibility for internship for the provisional certificate for instructional leadership – school principal shall be issued for a five (5) year period to an applicant who:
  (a) has successfully completed an approved program of preparation;
  (b) Has three (3) years of full-time teaching experience; and

(*Certain other sections, paragraphs, and subparagraphs are intentionally omitted.*)

Of the 11 Kentucky principal preparation programs accredited in 2014, five had detailed principal preparation program descriptions for 2004 available in legacy graduate school catalogs/bulletins available online: Eastern Kentucky University, Morehead State University, Northern Kentucky University, the University of Louisville, and Western Kentucky University. The Office of the Registrar at Murray State University responded

to my inquiries and provided copies of their 2004 principal preparation program curriculum and course descriptions from their in-house legacy files. Asbury University had no principal preparation program until 2010. Bellarmine University, Spalding University, and the University of the Cumberlands did not respond to my inquiries for legacy information concerning their programs. The eleventh school of interest, the University of Kentucky, did have its legacy catalog online, but the program description lacked any detail concerning program content, other than the required credit hours. Interested students were encouraged to write to the Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Administration and Supervision for additional detail (Graduate School Bulletin – Fall 2004, Administration and Supervision, p. 4). Fortunately, Dr. Tricia Brown-Ferrigno, PhD, Professor/Teacher Leadership Program Chair, Educational Leadership Studies at the University of Kentucky, responded to my inquiry for additional information and provided me with an article she had co-authored that contained the 2004 program detail in Appendix B (Brown-Ferrigno & Fusareli, 2005).

As a result of the inquiries listed above, seven Kentucky principal preparation programs were reviewed for content as it existed in 2004. Those programs, with their associated credit hour requirements, are as follows:

Eastern Kentucky University (30)	University of Kentucky (33)
Morehead State University (30)	University of Louisville (30)
Murray State University (42)	Western Kentucky University (36)
Northern Kentucky University (33)	

One noteworthy difference in program prerequisites for admission between the 2004 and 2014 was that in 2004 a master's degree was not a prerequisite for admission to

the school administrator preparation program; the preparation program itself was required to award a master's degree on completion of Level I and Level II requirements. Even so, state guidance for both years directed that the principal preparation programs would be designed around the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards for School Leaders and Technology Standards for School Administrators. Other differences in program requirements for accreditation were significant as well. 2004 requirements do not include a signed agreement of support from a school district pledging support for the student's (candidate's) studies, to include supporting implied field work. Also, there is no requirement for collaborative agreements between school districts and servicing university principal preparation programs calling for: joint screening of candidates, joint identification of potential program leaders and mentors, codesign and codelivery of courses, and defending how the principal preparation program is based on identified leadership needs of the supported districts. Further, 2004 accreditation did not require students to conduct and defend a capstone project at the end of Level I preparation. As might be expected from these significant differences in the thrust and detail of accreditation guidance, there are major differences in overarching program content.

The length of the 2004 programs ranged from 30 hours to a rather amazing 42 hours. Level I, initial certification programs ranged in length from 18 hours (Morehead and University of Louisville) to 30 hours (Murray State), with Eastern, Northern Kentucky, and the University of Kentucky at 21 hours and Western Kentucky at 27 hours. Level II programs were either 9 hours (Eastern Kentucky and Western Kentucky) or 12 hours (Morehead, Murray, Northern Kentucky, University of Kentucky, and the University of Louisville). Also of some interest, while the 2004 version of 16 KAR

3:050 clearly states that approved programs shall include a master's degree in education (Section 3, above), the University of Louisville and Western Kentucky University programs were declared as non-degree, certification only.

There was much greater uniformity of program content across institutions in 2004 than in 2014, though not so much as to suggest collaboration and coordination between and among institutions to create a common program. As witness to the differences in program accreditation requirements between 2014 and 2004, capstone projects were not part of any program in 2004. There were no advertised online programs in 2004. While a 3-credit hour leadership practicum or internship was included in six of the seven programs, and the seventh program (Western Kentucky University) included field work in four of nine course descriptions, no separate credit hours for field work were awarded in any of the seven programs.

Courses most common across programs included at least one course in each program on School Leadership and Administration, or some variation on this theme (i.e., Introduction to Educational Leadership, School Principal, or Fundamentals of School Administration). Murray State's program included two courses focused on topic, Western Kentucky's program included three courses, including a seminar on leadership, and the University of Louisville's program included four courses – 12 hours out of their 30 hour program. Education Law and Ethics was included in all programs. Murray State University's program included a second course on this topic titled Educational Policy and Ethics. Finance and Support Services or Resource Management was included in six of seven programs. The seventh program (Western Kentucky) included a course in School Business Management, which addressed school finance. Six of seven programs included

a course dedicated to Human Resources or Personnel. Murray State's program did not.

Six of seven programs included a course on Community Relations. Six of seven

programs also included a course on Curriculum and Assessment or some variation on this

theme (i.e., Instructional Leadership, School Program Improvement). Two programs

(Murray State and Western Kentucky) had two courses addressing this subject. Four

programs included a course in Collaboration. Three programs contained a course in

Problem Solving and three a course in technology. Other courses delivered in individual

programs included: Research Methods, Supervision, Advanced Organizational Theory,

Group Processes, Safety and Discipline, and Legal and Parent Issues in Special

Education.

The final historical waypoint in this contemporary history of Kentucky principal

preparation programs, 1994, revealed even more significant differences with current

programs than did the look at 2004. First, remembering that this study is about Kentucky

principal preparation programs, and is further limited in focus to middle school

principals, in 1994 Kentucky required principal preparation programs to be tailored to

grade school, middle school or high school – with certificates issued by grade level. For

1994, principal preparation program guidance (middle grades) is found in KAR Title 704,

Education Professional Standards Board, Chapter 20 Administrative Certificates, Part

100 Administrators and Supervisors (i.e., 704 KAR 20:100) and Part 390 Certification for

middle grade school principal, grades 5-8. (i.e., 704 KAR 20:390) (Source: 1994

Kentucky Administrative Regulations Service, Vol. 5). Salient sections of the 1994

version of 704 KAR for our study include:

704 KAR 20:100. Administrators and supervisors.

Section 1. (1) The Professional Certificate for School Administration and Supervision shall be issued in accordance with the pertinent Kentucky statutes and State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education regulations to an applicant who has completed the approved program of preparation for one (1) of the school leadership positions –elementary school principal, middle school-junior high school principal, secondary school principal, supervisor of instruction, or school superintendent – at a teacher education institution approved under the standards and procedures included in the Kentucky Standards for the Preparation-Certification of Professional School Personnel.

704 KAR 20:390. Certification for middle grade school principal, grades 5-8.

Section 1. (1) The professional certificate for instructional leadership – middle grades school principal, grades 5-8, shall be issued in accordance with the administrative regulations of the Education Professional Standards Board to an applicant who has completed the approved program of preparation which corresponds to the certificate at a teacher education institution approved under the standards and procedures included in 704 KAR 20:05, the Kentucky Standards for the Preparation-Certification of Professional School Personnel.

(2) The professional certificate for instructional leadership – middle grades school principal for grades 5-8 and also for any other sequential combination of the grades K through twelve (12) that includes any grade 5-8.

(3) As prerequisites for the Level I program of preparation for the initial professional certificate for instructional leadership – middle grade school principal, grades 5-8, the candidate shall:

(a) Have been admitted to the preparation program on the basis of the criteria developed by the teacher education institution pursuant to 704 KAR 20:005;

(b) Have completed three years of full-time teaching experience;

(c) Have completed the master's degree; and

(*certain other sections, paragraphs, and subparagraphs are intentionally omitted*)

Of the seven Kentucky principal preparation program institutions accredited and researched for the 2004 section of this chapter, two had detailed principal preparation program descriptions available in legacy graduate school catalogs/bulletins for 1994 available online: Eastern Kentucky University and the University of Louisville. Northern Kentucky University, while they had a 2004 Graduate School Catalog available on line, did not have one available for 1994. Northern Kentucky did not respond to my request

for information concerning if they had a principal preparation program in 1994 and, if so, how was it structured. Western Kentucky University had their 1994 Graduate School Catalog available online, and it described a principal preparation program, but unfortunately it contained no program detail other than prerequisites, total hours, and "… a planned program designed to provide the student with appropriate administrative competencies." (p. 61) The Graduate School at Morehead State University and the Office of the Registrar at Murray State University responded to my inquiries and provided copies of their 1994 principal preparation program curriculum and course descriptions from their in-house legacy files. The seventh school included in the 2004 review, the University of Kentucky did have their legacy 1994 catalog online, but, as with their 2004 catalog, the program description lacked any detail concerning program content, other than prerequisites and the required credit hours. Fortunately, the Brown-Ferrigno & Fusarelli (2005) article mentioned above in the 2004 program review also contained adequate information to describe the principal preparation program at the University prior to 1998 (p. 132), the year Kentucky adopted the ISLLC Standards to guide their principal preparation programs. The upshot here is that we are left with five programs with solid historical data from 1994 to compare and review. Those programs and their required credit hours were:

Eastern Kentucky University (30)   University of Kentucky (30)

Morehead State University (31)   University of Louisville (30)

Murray State University (30)

There was more uniformity of program content across institutions in 1994 than in 2004, though, again, not so much as to suggest collaboration and coordination between

and among institutions to create a common program. Program guidance in the Kentucky Administrative Regulations was less detailed in 1994 than in 2004. For example, the prerequisite requirement to hold a master's degree in an educational field prior to full admission into the principal preparation program existed in 1994, was removed prior to 2004, and was subsequently reinstated by 2014. Required program credit hours in 1994 were consistent across all institutions save one: 30 hours, except for Morehead State which required 31 hours. Level I certification required 18 hours at all schools except Morehead State, which required 19. Level II programs were consistent across all programs at 12 credit hours.

Beginning with courses most common across programs in 1994, all programs contained an Introduction to Educational Administration course and a course on school law. Four of five programs included a course wholly or mostly dedicated to Human Resources or Personnel Management as well as a course titled School Finance. To tailor the programs to focus on the middle school grades, three of five programs had courses focused on the unique aspects of the middle school principal or middle school administration; four included a course in middle school curriculum. Three programs included a course on Supervision of Instruction and three included courses on Community Relations. Other courses included in individual programs included: Test and Measurements, Current Research in Instructional Leadership, Current Research in effective Middle Schools, Computer Applications for School Administrators, Clinical Supervision, and Managing Task Teams (to include small group management, collaborative leadership, and collaborative decision making).

Of note here, the term "Leadership" is missing in the individual course titles of all but two programs. Morehead University included one course titled: Instructional Leadership of the School w/ field experience/middle school. The University of Louisville included three courses with leadership in their title: Principals of Educational Leadership, K-12 Leadership, and Internship in Educational Leadership. The 1994 principal preparation program at the University of Louisville was also the only Kentucky program at the time to include an internship in their curriculum, and they had two, one at Level I certification and one at Level II.

Program Documentation from Programs Outside of Kentucky

Sixteen departments of education at institutions from outside of Kentucky were selected for evaluation of their principal preparation programs. Those programs, along with their associated degree or certificate credit hour requirements, were:

California State University, Fresno (31)   Miami University of Ohio (33)

East Tennessee State University (37)   Rutgers University (36)

Fordham University (30)   University of Georgia (30)

University of Missouri, Columbia (30)   University of New Mexico (36)

Harvard University (32)   University of San Diego (24)

Hofstra University (30)   University of Utah (42)

University of Washington (36)   Vanderbilt University (n/a)

University of California, Berkley (40)   Wichita State University (33)

Program details were cataloged by pre-requisites, required hours, method of instruction, and course content. The intent of this portion of the study was simply to

draw some inference as to whether Kentucky principal preparation programs were reasonably aligned with principal preparation programs from around the country, or not. And if not, in what ways were they different and were those differences of possible import. The program details for these schools were reviewed entirely online through official university web sites, accessing publicly available program descriptions, curriculum, and course content.

There were two surprises in the initial review of programs at this stage of the study. The first surprise was that Vanderbilt University does not have a program advertised in their graduate school catalog to prepare school administrators for the principalship in public schools (Vanderbilt University, *Peabody College Catalog 2013/2014*). They have a Master of Education in Independent School Leadership designed to prepare students for leadership positions in private, non-public schools, but no advertised program to prepare students for leadership in public schools. I say this was a surprise because Vanderbilt University is well known for their research activities in public education and because Vanderbilt for many years was the academic home of Dr. Joseph Murphy, Chair of the original ISLLC Standards working group, yet they do not appear to host a principal preparation program for public school administrators. The second surprise was with Harvard University's program. It is a one year, fulltime program, including two year-long core courses and a half-time practicum requirement at a district, pilot, or charter school (Harvard Graduate School of Education, *School Leadership Program*, retrieved online 2/8/14). Though a number of other institutions have residency requirements associated with their programs, usually satisfied by being a fulltime student during summer sessions (e.g., Western Kentucky University), Harvard's

is the only principal preparation program identified in this contemporary history that requires the student to be fulltime for the duration of the program. With the exception of the Harvard University program, the remaining principal preparation programs in this study, both in Kentucky and outside of Kentucky, are designed to allow working professionals to complete the program on a part-time basis.

Removing Vanderbilt University from the group of schools in this principal preparation program review, 15 programs from outside of Kentucky were included in the evaluation. Looking at prerequisites requirements to enter these far flung programs, the first requirement of note is that few schools require a master's degree as a prerequisite for entry. Recall that in Kentucky in 1994 there was a prerequisite for having a master's degree for entry into a principal preparation program. By 2004 that requirement had been deleted and was subsequently reinstated by 2014. Of these 15 schools from outside of Kentucky only one required a master's degree as a condition for application: Hofstra University (Hofstra University, *2013-2014 Graduate Studies Bulletin*). One additional school, the University of San Diego, required that if a candidate did not possess a master's at the time of application to the program a master's degree must be earned concurrent with the credentialing program (University of San Diego, *2013-2015 Graduate Course Catalog*).

The only universal program prerequisite for all of these schools was admission into the graduate school. While the process for admission varied across schools, common application steps included letters of recommendation from associates, minimum undergraduate grade point averages (generally waiverable), letters of introduction/intent, and a resume. Some programs also required letters of support from individuals or school

districts: East Tennessee State and the University of Georgia require letters of support from the candidate's school district or school system pledging to support the student's internship activities (East Tennessee State University, *2013-2014 Graduate Catalog* and University of Georgia, *Spring 2014 UGA Bulletin*); the University of Washington program carries an implied contract of support to allow the student a half-time release from teaching for the duration of the program to focus on a half-time internship (University of Washington, *2012-2014 UW General Catalog*), and; Wichita State University requires a letter of support from the student's school principal pledging to mentor the student and to facilitate the student completing their practicum requirements (Wichita State University, *2013-2014 Graduate Catalog*).

Only six of 15 programs had a stated requirement for applicants to hold a valid teaching license/certificate: East Tennessee State, Miami University of Ohio, University of San Diego, Hofstra University, Fordham University, and Wichita State University. One additional program stated that it was designed for practicing teachers: the University of Missouri (University of Missouri, Columbia, *2013-2014 Undergraduate/Graduate Catalog*).

A requirement for having classroom teaching experience prior to entering a principal preparation program was also not a universal prerequisite, required by only six schools: East Tennessee State University, Miami University of Ohio, and the University of San Diego each required three years of teaching experience; Hofstra University required two years, and; Fordham University and Wichita State University each required one year. Again, the University of Missouri states that its program is designed for

practicing teachers, but there is no admission requirement for a minimum amount of teaching experience.

Harvard University, Rutgers University, the University of New Mexico, the University of Utah, and California State University, Fresno have no stated prerequisites for entry into their principal preparation programs other than acceptance into their respective graduate schools (Rutgers University, *Graduate School of Education 2012-2014 Catalog*, Miami University of Ohio, *General Bulletin of Program Requirements and Course Descriptions 2013-2014*, University of Utah, *2014-2015 General Catalog,* and California State University, *California State University, Fresno 2013-2014 CATALOG*).

Three programs are credential only, non-degree programs: Hofstra University, the University of San Diego, and the University of Washington. All three of these credentialing programs do offer the student the opportunity after credentialing to transfer the credits to a master's degree program (University of San Diego and University of Washington) or a doctoral program (Hofstra University).

Most programs appear to be a primarily traditional classroom based presentation. Miami University of Ohio, the University of Georgia, and the University of Missouri present their programs as a combination of face-to-face, online, and hybrid combination courses. The East Tennessee State University program, a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership, is available online.

The non-degree, certification only programs range in duration from 24 credit hours at the University of San Diego to 30 hours at Hofstra University and 36 hours at the

90

University of Washington. The masters level preparation programs range from 30 credit hours to 42 hours. The 12 master's degree awarding programs average 34.2 credit hours.

One or more internship requirements are included in all programs save one, the University of California, Fresno. The University of California, Fresno is the only program requiring either a thesis or project. How these extra-Kentucky schools treat the award of credit hours for internships/practicums is diverse. East Tennessee State University, with its online, 37 credit hour, M.Ed. awarding principal preparation program includes a zero credit "extensive internship" that extends through the duration of the program. The University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program includes a half-time internship program for the duration of the public school year, but does not break out credits for any courses, simply awarding 36 credits at completion toward the 48 credits required for their concurrent master's program. Other programs award as few as 3 credit hours for the internship at Miami University of Ohio, to 12 credits at Wichita State University, and 15 credits at the University of Utah (one 5-credit internship over each of three semesters).

Including Harvard University, 11 of these 15 programs are advertised as cohort based, including East Tennessee State's online program. California State University, Fresno, Rutgers University, the University of Georgia, and the University of New Mexico programs are not advertised as cohort based.

Focusing on the academic content of these varied programs it is important to recognize first that these institutions, including Harvard University, represent 12 different states, with 12 independent state departments/offices of education, each providing their

own set of guidance for program content and accreditation. Of these states, two have adopted the ISLLC Standards as their state school leader licensure program standards (New Jersey and New York) and nine have adapted the Standards, tailoring them to meet the individual character of the state (California, Georgia, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee, Utah, and Washington) (Source: CCSSO, 2014). New Mexico is an outlier here relative to the ISLLC Standards, having opted to developed independent state standards (Source: CCSSO, 2014). The only real common denominator between these programs, other than the influence of the ISLLC Standards on program content, is that they are all accredited to deliver graduates prepared to pursue a principalship credential in their home state. Even so, accepting that the overarching mission of schools is teaching and educating students, and acknowledging that principals have not only the charge of leading that mission but guiding their school through the institutional, organizational, and social environment in which it exists, these graduate level institutions from across the United States have developed principal preparation programs with far more similarities than differences.

Each of these extra-Kentucky school administrator programs has at least one course in school law, usually as a stand-alone topic but in a few instances combined with ethics, finance, or personnel management. The Rutgers program includes two courses on school law, one looking at school law in general and one investigating New Jersey school law. Every program includes one or more courses with school administration as the main topic or a major focus of the course. A common course or major course topic closely aligned with school administration is Human Resources, to include hiring and keeping good people.

One or more general leadership courses are included in each program. The qualifiers for the many leadership classes include such descriptors as: Educational ( ), ( ) in Urban Schools, Cultural ( ), Dynamics of Change ( ), Organizational ( ), Diversity and Social Justice ( ), Theory and Practice of ( ), and ( ) in Learning Organizations. Separately, every program includes a course in instructional leadership. Topics falling under this broad heading include courses in Instructional Leadership, Building Learning Communities, Educational Program Development, Curriculum Alignment, Curriculum Development, Supervision of Learning, and Supervision of Instruction.

Community relations or community partnerships is a common course or major topic in most programs, explicitly included in nine. The closely tied topic of Politics in/of Education is included in five programs.

A separate course in school finance or school finance and budgeting is common to 11 programs. A focused course on collecting and using data is also common to 11 programs.

Less common program course topics included: Adult Learner/Professional Development (6 programs), The Principalship (3 programs), Supervision of Teaching/Teachers/Instruction (6 programs), and Problem Solving ideas/concepts/strategies (3 programs).

In addition to the course topics listed there are two themes common across all programs: ethics and equity. While there were no specific courses identified dedicated solely to these themes, these two ideas, often coupled with the challenge of achieving social justice, are specifically embedded in courses across all programs.

On-Line Survey

Returning to the study of Kentucky preparation programs and summarizing the on-line survey methodology, a group email list of Kentucky middle school principals was obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) Division of Communication. The list contained 320 schools that could be identified as middle schools, junior high schools, or consolidated schools that contained some or all of grades 6 thru 8. The survey was structured in a Qualtrics Survey Solutions format such that the electronic responses could be received and manipulated on the EKU College of Education server. The initial survey mailing went out to all known middle school principals in Kentucky on July 9, 2014. Warned by my Kentucky Department of Education contact that certain principal names and email addresses might not be current I expected a number of the emails to come back as undeliverable. From the initial mailing fully one third of the emails came back as "Undeliverable". After spending much time online and on the phone updating principal names and emails for schools with outdated information, a supplemental first mailing went out on July 22. A second appeal for responses was sent on August 11, and a final appeal was sent on September 3. As survey responses were anonymous, all three mailings went to all known middle school principals. The online survey portion of the study was declared complete on October 10, with the last survey response having been received on September 24.

Responses were received from 62 principals, for a response rate of nearly 20%. Of the respondents, 40 were male (65%) and 22 were female (35%). Ages of the principals ranged from 32 to 62, with an average age of just over 46 years. Not all respondents replied to all questions.

One third of the principals were employed in the same school district they attended as a child. Another one third were employed within 50 miles of where they attended school as a child. Only eight of the responding principals did not attend school in Kentucky as a child (13%).

Twenty-eight of the respondents (45%) replied that, at some point in their lives, they had worked fulltime outside of education. Outside experience was primarily in private industry, with 19 respondents having worked for between 1 and 10 years in the private industry sector. Four others spent between two and eight years in other private business; three had been self-employed for between two and five years, and; three principals had spent between one and five years working in government. Two of the principals had served on active duty in the military, one for four years and one for ten years. These numbers do not add up to the 28 total respondents stating they had worked outside of education as several respondents had experience in more than one sector. Three additional principals had served in the National Guard or one of the Reserve components.

Classroom teaching experience among the respondents was quite varied. It ranged from 3 (the minimum required to be considered for a principalship in Kentucky) to 24 years. The average classroom teaching experience level of the respondents was 10.5 years. Serving as an assistant principal, though not required by statute, was the common step to reaching the principalship for all respondents. Respondents had spent between 1 and 15 years as an assistant principal, with the average being 5 years. Even so, well over half of the respondents to this question (26 of 45) spent 4 years or less as an

assistant principal before being selected for a principal ship, and 10 of those had spent 2 years or less as an assistant principal.

The average tenure of respondent principals at their current schools was rather short. While tenure ranged from first year to 20 years, the average was 4 years serving as a principal. 25% (15 of 62) were in their first year as principal in their current school, another 35% (22 of 62) had 3 years or less experience, and only 5 (8%) had 10 or more years' experience. Interestingly, 19 principals (31%) had served as a principal in another school before coming to their current school, 13 of them for 6 years or less, but 3 of them for 14 or more years as principal in a different school.

Just less than one third of the principals (31%) were serving in the same school where they served as a classroom teacher. Of the remainder, over one third were serving in the same school district where they served as a classroom teacher. In sum, nearly two thirds of the principals (60%) were serving in the same school district where they served as a classroom teacher.

Nearly half of the principals (43%) were employed in the same school where they had served as an assistant principal. Of the remainder, 30% were employed in the same school district where they served as an assistant principal. In sum, just over 70% of principals were serving in the same school district where they were employed as an assistant principal.

Eighty-four percent of the responding middle school principals earned their bachelor's degree from Kentucky institutions, but there was certainly no favorite Kentucky institution for entering the teaching profession. The 51 Kentucky institution

alumni answering this question attended 20 different public and private colleges and universities. The University of Kentucky and Western Kentucky University had the most alumni, with eight apiece. Murray State University, the University of Louisville, and Eastern Kentucky University had four alumni each. The remaining 15 institutions had between one and three alumni from this group.

Sixty principals responded to the question asking where they attended their principal preparation program. Forty-nine of the respondents attended Kentucky institutions; seven attended two institutions in neighboring states with current cooperative agreements with Kentucky concerning principal preparation programs. Kentucky institutions represented by these principals, including the number of their alumni, were:

Eastern Kentucky University (7)	University of Louisville (6)
Murray State University (6)	University of the Cumberlands (4)
Western Kentucky University (10)	University of Kentucky (6)
Northern Kentucky University (1)	Morehead State University (2)
Asbury University (1)	Union College (6)

Union College no longer has an accredited principal preparation program. The two institutions in neighboring states having reciprocal or cooperative agreements with Kentucky are Indiana University Southeast (IUS) and Xavier University. IUS actively recruits students from six counties in the Louisville metropolitan area (Bullitt, Jefferson, Meade, Oldham, Shelby, and Trimble), offering in-state tuition and other accommodations for these students (Indiana University Southeast, 2014). IUS had four

alumni in this group of respondents. Xavier University is a private school in Cincinnati, Ohio, just across the Ohio River from the Covington, Kentucky metropolitan area. Xavier had three alumni in this group. The remaining four institutions with one alumnus each were the University of North Carolina Wilmington, the University of South Florida, George Washington University, and Austin Peay State University. Austin Peay is another school that may or may not have had a mutual agreement with Kentucky at the time this alum graduated: 1993. Austin Peay is immediately across the southwest Kentucky-Tennessee border in Clarksville, Tennessee and has a satellite campus on Fort Campbell, Kentucky offering in-state tuition to active duty military and residents of seven bordering Kentucky counties (Austin Peay University, 2014). As to whether Kentucky had a reciprocal recognition program with Austin Peay concerning their principal preparation program in 1993, or if such an agreement even mattered at the time, could not be determined.

Ninety-eight percent of the respondents (58) attended their principal preparation program while serving as a fulltime teacher. Three principals were not working fulltime when they pursued their licensure. Part-time and fulltime student status mirrored the fulltime/not fulltime employment status at the time of pursuing licensure.

The survey question concerning how many graduate hours their principal certification program included seemed to be unclear to some respondents. Of the 60 responses to this question, five responded 60 or more hours. I could only surmise that these individuals attended at a time when a master's degree was required prior to entering the program and they included the hours for that prerequisite master's degree in their response to this question. There may be other reasons as well, but the 60 hour responses

seemed invalid for the intent of the question and were removed from the analysis.   Of the

remainder, responses ranged from 18 to 45 hours, to "don't recall". The greatest number

of respondents recalled a 30 credit hour program (21 of 55, or 38%), followed by 33

hours (11 of 55, or 20%) and 36 hours (10 of 55, or 18%). Seven recalled programs of

less than 30 hours (13%) and three recalled programs of more than 36 hours (5%).

The distance traveled to attend their principal preparation program varied widely

among the 62 respondents to this question. Answers ranged from 3 to 125 miles, with 3

principals declaring zero miles, as their program was completely online. The answers

were grouped to put the responses into some meaningful perspective. Of the fifty-nine

principals who did travel, 38 principals (64%) traveled 50 miles or less to their program,

13 (22%) traveled more than 50 but 75 or less miles, 6 (10%) traveled more than 75 but

less than 100 miles, and 2 (3%) traveled more than 100 miles.   One respondent that

claimed 70 miles also claimed 10 miles, likely reflecting a program that offered local, off

main campus classes for part of his/her program.

No principal recalled attending a program that included any residency

requirement or required them to be a fulltime student during any part of their studies.

Forty percent of respondents (25) recalled having an internship requirement in their

program, sixty percent (37) did not.

The survey asked respondents to pick the top three of nine listed reasons for

selecting their principal preparation program. By far the greatest consideration was

proximity to home (69%), followed by program flexibility (53%), having a part-time

program compatible with their work schedule (48%), recommendations from other

(45%), cost (37%), and rigorous curriculum (24%). The remaining possible considerations, national reputation, entrance requirements, availability of a fulltime program, all came in at less than 10%.

Responses to the question involving identifying principal preparation program curriculum course topics and the relative importance that practicing principals placed on those topics were not as clear and informative as I had hoped. Nonetheless, there were some facts to draw from the responses. There were 61 respondents to the question. Of those respondents, everyone had at least one course in each of the following subjects: school leadership, school administration, school law, and school finance. Assuming three program credits for each of these courses, and remembering the timespan of graduation years for this group of principals, somewhere between one third and one half of everyone's principal preparation program, regardless of year completed, was taken up with these four subjects. Other significant curricular areas identified by more than 90% of the respondents included: strategic planning, curriculum development, human resources, community relationships, decision making and action research, and a leadership practicum.

The other very interesting information to draw from the answers to this question on program curriculum topics and their importance to principal practice is the relative dismissal by many of the principals as to the importance of continuous improvement tools. To wit: over one third of the respondents found the topic of planning and running effective meetings as having little or no importance (20 of 55), while only one third found it very important; more than half of the respondents found the Pareto Analysis, a simple and common analytical tool for identifying key problems, as having little or no value (26

of 47), just 10% thought the tool very important; 60% of respondents found the concept of flow charting as having little or no importance (30 of 50), with only 6% finding this familiar problem solving tool for describing and understanding the process as very important, and; over 40% of the respondents found developing and using metrics for school improvement as having little or no value (21 of 49) , only just over a quarter of the respondents thought the subject was very important.

The next question in the survey asked respondents to reflect on their principal preparation program and provide some insight as to courses or course content which they found least useful as a practicing principal. The purpose of this question was to identify possible curriculum areas where instructional hours dedicated to certain topics might be reduced, or even eliminated, to make room for other topics within a fixed credit hour program. Only 38 people responded to this question, and of those 12 responses reflected that they either could not remember or they felt all of the courses were beneficial. One said that none of the classes prepared him/her for the realities of being a principal. Of the remaining 25 responses there is no particular topic or subject that stands out, but there are a few that might suggest some further investigation. Two respondents said Human Resources. Two said Curriculum Development.   Three said Community Relations, with one adding the qualifier that the subject is important but that it is situational, individual to the district. School law was listed twice, with one respondent saying it was a must have course and another saying that it was unnecessary because the school district had a retained attorney with additional legal support available through the Kentucky Association of School Administrators and the Kentucky Education Association.   Two suggested their course on classroom management. Other courses mentioned once

included: Educational Platform, Psychology, School Programming, Technology, Finance, Buildings and Grounds, and Leadership Practicum and associated research. There were two other comments of note. One respondent recalled a course focused on philosophical theories of running organizations and they had spent way too much time discussing how organizations function. A final respondent recalled a long study on organizations and bureaucracies that was "a major waste of time for people that understand school culture and climate."

The final question here asked these practicing principals to suggest topics they felt needed to be included in future principal preparation programs to better prepare aspiring principals for success. Forty-three individuals responded to this question. Responses were unconstrained, in that principals could suggest as many ideas as they wanted. Some suggested one topic, others submitted four of five ideas. In so far as reasonable, responses were group together under main ideas and are presented in a priority fashion from most concurrence to least.

The most responses centered around Kentucky's recently rolled out assessment, evaluation, and growth initiatives for teachers and principals: the Teacher Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (TPGES) and the Principal Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PPGES). The Kentucky Department of Education has a Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES) web site that addresses the overall program, its details, and mechanics, including significant information concerning implementation of these two specific systems at the school level (Kentucky Department of Education, *Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES)*, 2014). Even so,

nearly 25 percent of the respondents (10) felt that more training in the topic would be important to include in principal preparation programs.

The next most important topic current principals felt needed more emphasis was team building skills. A number of responses were grouped under this general heading, to include: building positive relations with staff, developing relations with stakeholders, human relations in general, working with adults, community relations, and changing culture. Nine principals raised this topic for greater consideration.

The third priority that seven principals raised is closely integrated with the first two priorities: professional development. Specifically, the principals felt that more or added credit hours should be included concerning how to effectively conduct classroom assessments, how to provide effective feedback after observations, and effective coaching methods. Again, this priority would support the implementation of TPGES and PPGES as well as teambuilding.

Three subjects received equal emphasis from the principals with six votes each. Curriculum development, coupled with curriculum leadership, and teaching strategies received six votes. Time management received strong narrative support in six responses. Behavior management, to include individual behavior modification, classroom management, and working with difficult parents had strong support for additional emphasis from six principals.

Managing resources received five votes. Of these, one vote was for managing resources in general, but the specific concern was not identified (i.e., people, facilities, supplies, finances, etc.). Two principals specifically mentioned facilities management

and two focused on finance and budgeting for additional emphasis in principal preparation.

Three topics received four votes each and all were associated with continuous improvement. The first focused on continuous improvement as a stand-alone topic, to include strategies for continuous improvement, planning for continuous improvement, strategic planning, and state mandated documentation for school improvement. The second focused on communication skills, including communication skills in general, communicating and gaining support for the school's vision statement, and conducting "difficult" conversations. The last topic with four votes was assessments, including two votes for assessments in general and two for data analysis (i.e., what are the results of the assessments telling you).

Two topics received three votes each for additional emphasis: technology and human resources. Three topics received two votes for added emphasis: Site Base Decision Management (SBDM) council laws and regulations, leadership, and Special Education. In addition, six topics received one suggestion each: politics of schools, strategies to get families involved in their child's education (this could be linked back to teambuilding), more shadowing programs (internship), running effective meetings (perhaps integral to continuous improvement and communication skills), a return to principal preparation specialization by grade level (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school), and more time spent on school law.

Personal Interviews

Using the same updated middle school list used to email the online survey to principals across the state, random numbers were used to select ten middle schools and one alternate school to contact practicing principals for interviews. Schools and principals were contacted by phone and interviews were scheduled during the month of September 2014. Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to 75 minutes. The online survey was used as a note taker while conducting the interview. Interviews were not recorded, but notes were taken and fleshed out immediately following each interview. Interview results are presented in aggregate and follow the same pattern as the results from the online survey. Selected brief quotations from the interviews are included to add emphasis to key findings. Considering that there are ten principals in this interview population, many results are presented as percentages in steps of ten percentage points representing one to ten principals.

The ten principals interviewed, representing ten widely distributed school districts, ranged in age from 33 to 49 years, and averaged 40.9 years old. Unlike the online survey respondents which reflected a roughly two to one men to women survey population, all of the ten randomly selected principals were male. The schools of these principals ranged in size from 442 to 973, with two in the mid- 400s, five in the 600-700 range, one at near 800 students, and two at nearly 1000 students.

Forty percent of the principals were employed in the same district they attended as a child. Another 20% were employed within 50 miles of where they attended school as a child. Twenty percent of the principals came from outside the state of Kentucky.

Kentucky changed their annual Kentucky School Report Card (Kentucky Department of Education, 2014) in the midst of the research effort for this study, the direct result of a hurried shift in metrics to meet the alternate measurement requirements of Kentucky's 2012 waiver of NCLB requirements mentioned in Chapter II. The online survey went out with a question asking the principals how many of their school specific Annual Yearly Performance (AYP) goals did their school meet for the most recent year for which they had data. However, by the time the survey was administered this near universally used AYP metric called for in the NCLB law had been superseded by events: Kentucky had replaced the multiple annual goals for each school with a single Annual Measurable Objective (AMO) for each school. This resulted in the answers from the online survey for this question providing confusing and unreliable insight into school performance; the responses to this online survey question were therefore not reported. The personal interviews, on the other hand, provided another opportunity to gather school performance data and perhaps link that to principal preparation programs. That said, the AMO system itself is rather confusing. Of these ten schools five met their 2012-2013 AMO (the latest year for which data was available) and five did not. One school was ranked Distinguished, three Proficient, and six were labeled as Needs Improvement. Herein lays the confusion in the rankings and qualifiers. Of the five schools that met their AMO, four were scored as Needs Improvement. The one school ranked Distinguished had not met their AMO. One of the Proficient schools had not met their AMO. As a result of these seemingly conflicting overall rankings and measurements it was necessary to dig deeper into the Report Cards for each school to identify some measure that might shed some light on where these schools stood as relates to student

performance. There is a new score under the AMO program that ranks schools against their peers (i.e., other middle schools) by percentile. These ten schools ranked from the 9th percentile to the 90th percentile, with four below the 50th percentile and six above. Also, 60% were above the state average in their Combined Reading and Mathematics Growth metric. Perhaps the most telling number from these schools' Report Cards, though, is their Combined Reading and Math – Percent Proficient/Distinguished number. Each Report card posts the school's performance against the statewide goal for the year. The statewide goal was 45.9 % proficient or distinguished. Half of these schools fell below that number and half above, with the highest school achieving 62.6 % and the lowest 28.7 %. (As a side note, recall that under the original construct of the NCLB Law all students were to be proficient in math and reading by 2014.)

Two of the ten principals had worked fulltime outside of the education field prior to entering teaching. One had ten years active duty military service and the other worked as a technician in private industry for four years while his wife completed her graduate education. None of these principals were currently serving in the National Guard or one of the Reserve components.

These principals had served from 3 to 18 years as a classroom teacher prior to becoming a principal, averaging 8.25 years in the classroom. Eight of these principals had served between one and eight years as a middle school assistant principal prior to becoming a principal. One had served as an elementary school principal for four years. The final principal had been hired as his middle school's assistant principal. Then, two weeks after beginning his assistant principal position his principal quit, no notice, just

left. It was two weeks prior to the start of the school year and he was offered the job of

principal. He accepted, and acknowledged having experienced:

> … a very steep learning curve. I had no experience as an assistant principal and
> found myself leading a large school with significant performance issues. It was a
> very challenging couple of years while I learned the ropes.

He was one of the two principals who had worked outside the education field prior to

entering teaching and that extra-educational experience seemed to serve him in good

stead as he assumed the leadership of this school. His experience also highlighted the

wisdom of the more normal path to the middle school principalship born out in the data

from the survey results and other interviews, that being passing through several years in a

working internship as an assistant principal before rising to a principalship.

Collectively, these principals had been serving as principal in their current school

for between one and nine years, averaging 4.3 years in their current position. Four had

been principals at another school prior to assuming their current position. Only one

principal was in his first year as a principal. None of these principals were employed in

the same school where they had served as a classroom teacher, but 60% were employed

in the same school district where they served as a classroom teacher. Forty percent were

serving in the same school were they had served as an assistant principal. An additional

40% of these principals were employed in the same school district where they had

previously served either as an assistant principal or an elementary school principal. Only

20% had been employed as an assistant principal outside of their current school district.

Eight of these principals earned their bachelor's degree from one of seven

Kentucky institutions; two went to Western Kentucky University. One individual

attended college in Ohio and one in Pennsylvania. For their principal preparation

programs, on the other hand, they all attended Kentucky institutions, at least for all practical purposes. One attended the Indiana University Southeast program, just across the river from Louisville, Kentucky, was treated as a resident student, in a program accepted by Kentucky as meeting Kentucky certification requirements, and graduated in 2004. The nine remaining principals attended five institutions with graduation dates as noted: Eastern Kentucky University (1996) (2005), Morehead State University (2003) (2006), Murray State University (2008) (2009), University of Kentucky (2000), and Western Kentucky University (2005) (2008). Principal preparation program credit hours ranged from 30 to 36 credit hours, with four remembering 30 credit programs, four remembering 36 credit programs, one remembered 32 credits, and one remembered 33 credits.

All of these principals attended their preparation programs as "part-time students" and all attended while "working fulltime as a teacher." Travel distance to attend classes ranged from 10 miles to 90 miles. However, most students at greater distances from their universities actually attended the majority of their classes off the main campus, with classes conducted at a local community college or similar public facility. Students attending these off site programs included students participating in programs hosted by Morehead State University, Murray State University, and Western Kentucky University. As a result, 90% of the principals traveled 25 miles or less to attend most of their classes. One principal traveled 60 miles each way to attend his program. Nonetheless, the program attended by this one principal traveling the greatest distance was the program closest to his home.

Asked to pick the top three reasons for selecting their particular principal preparation program, 90% picked "proximity to home" as their number one reason. The last principal said he choose his school to get a different perspective. He wanted to go to a school other than where he earned his bachelor's degree. It should be noted, however, that his alternate school was not significantly further away from home than his bachelor's degree alma mater. Five cited familiarity with the school and its programs and faculty. Four recalled recommendations from others. Two acknowledged the need for the program to be part-time and compatible with their work schedule. One said cost was an influence and one said having no Graduate Record Examinations (GRE) requirement was a must.

Turning now to preparation program course work remembered by these practicing principals, no one remembered any residency requirement in their program, though they all took two courses during summer terms, which would technically have made them a fulltime graduate student for that term. Asked if their programs required them to complete an internship, 70% said they had to complete many hours of observations of practicing school administrators and write reflections on those observations. Three recalled being required to participate in the year-long Kentucky Principal Internship Program (KPIP), which actually takes place after program completion and when they are serving in their first principal (or assistant principal) position. The KPIP was not part of their preparation program.

There was significant consensus concerning core courses across everyone's programs, regardless of institution attended or year of graduation. Everyone had a semester long course in school leadership, school administration, school finance, and

110

school law. Ninety percent recalled a course in human relations. Eighty percent, the

eight most recent graduates, recalled a course in community relations. Seventy percent

attended courses in curriculum development, classroom management, and supervision.

Sixty percent had significant coursework dedicated to strategic planning and technology

use for program improvement. Forty percent had a course in classroom assessment.

Thirty percent had a course in decision making and action research. A course in

psychology, school organization, auxiliary programs, school program collaboration, and

buildings and grounds were attended by one principal each. Other topics covered as

segments in courses and their relative frequency included: developing mission and vision

statements (30%), developing goals and objectives (20%), team building (40%), effective

meetings (30%), problem solving methods (30%), flow charting (10%), continuous

improvement methods (10%), and developing and using metrics for school improvement

(10%).

Asked to comment on which part or parts of their principal preparation program

they found least useful as a practicing principal, or topics they thought they spent too

much time on, 40% of the principals had no suggestions. One principal felt too much

time was spent on school law. He was of the opinion that:

> … everything of importance to a practicing principal concerning school law could
> be covered in one or two class periods; the lawyers are at the District level, with
> more support available through KEA.

Two principals suggested that too much time was spent on leadership. Courses

nominated for elimination were: school program collaboration, curriculum development,

and auxiliary programs. Of particular note, one principal found:

> … to be honest, a lot of my coursework was not very useful at all, just busy work; the online portion of my program was all busy work.

When asked to suggest topics for inclusion in future principal preparation programs these practicing principals had a broad range of suggestions. Many topics were raised by individual principals, but a number of ideas had broad support. The greatest support was for more instruction in continuous improvement methodologies and tools. Eighty percent of the principals voiced support for additional emphasis here, to include the topics of problem solving and problem solving tools, process improvement methodologies, setting achievable goals and objectives, and developing meaningful metrics. Sixty percent felt a course, or at least significant instructional time, should be dedicated to the topic of establishing and managing effective Profession Learning Community (PLC) teams. Fifty percent felt aspiring principals needed training in team building, including how to develop and nurture a positive school culture and school climate. Thirty percent felt a course could be dedicated to how to coach and mentor teachers and staff, to include building capacity in teachers. As almost a sidenote here in discussing principal preparation programs, completely unprompted, thirty percent of these principals felt an entire course could be dedicated to instructing future principals on the mechanics and use of Kentucky's current assessment and accountability programs, to include the TPGES and PPGES programs, the Kentucky Performance Rating for Educational Progress (K-PREP) student accountability program, and the Kentucky School Report Card. Their consensus could fairly be summed up as;

> … confusing, complicated, uncertain in how the numbers are derived, and how to use them. Parents and community members don't understand them.

Other ideas for topics to cover in principal preparation programs suggested by 20% these principals included course work and training on the topics of: time management, to include how to handle daily job pressures, conducting effective meetings, public relations, to include public speaking and effective communications, and conducting assessments

Individual principals suggested including the following topics in future principal preparation programs: strategies for disciplining students to facilitate positive behavior improvement; how to deal with bad, tenured teachers; dealing with irate parents; disciplining teachers; Leadership 101 (the whole program should be focused on leadership and developing leadership skills); special education; Response to Intervention (RTI); psychology; deconflicting guidance from the district and state; school safety; hiring and keeping good people; strategic planning, and; self-reflection.

Synthesis of Findings

This study highlights a number of seminal events in public education over the last 50 years that have brought national attention and great debate to the issue of quality and efficacy of public education in the United States. That notwithstanding, I expected to find only marginal shifts in principal preparation programs over the period of this contemporary history. As with any bureaucracy, and large ones even more so, inertia and resistance to change can stifle reform. I was pleased to find, however, that as I dug deeper into the subject I discovered there has been much change, some subtle and some more profound. I will approach my discourse on the findings from three directions, integrating the results at each step of the process. The first direction will be a multi-step

compilation of the data gathered concerning just Kentucky principal preparation

programs, beginning with the findings of the documentation research of Kentucky's

programs over the last 20 years, highlighting the changes at 10 year waypoints. The

inferences from this documentation review will be followed by insights gained from the

online survey of practicing middle school principals, then cross referenced with the

remembrances from the personal interviews conducted with practicing principals. The

second direction I will pursue is a brief comparison between Kentucky's school

administrator preparation programs today with those of peer institutions from other states,

highlighting similarities and differences that may suggest areas for further study. I will

complete my summation of the findings with a comparison of today's Kentucky

preparation programs against the results of the 1978 Silver and Spuck study report, from

both program content and characteristics perspectives, to see how far programs have

progressed and, yet, how many of those findings and concerns from the 1978 report still

hold true.

Putting the 1994 starting point of this history of Kentucky principal preparation

programs into some historical reference, remember that 1994 was after the publication of

the Coleman Report (1966), after issuance of the Nation at Risk Report (1983), and after

the Leaders for America's Schools Report (1987). As an additional point of reference,

the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) was founded in

1988.

In 1994 Kentucky state guidance for structuring principal preparation programs,

found in 704 KAR 20:100, was rather brief. Individual programs just had to be approved

by the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB). For the aspiring

principal, prerequisites for applying for entry into a program were simple: three years of fulltime teaching experience and the applicant had to hold a master's degree.

Of the five 1994 principal preparation programs evaluated, programs were very homogeneous. Four programs required 30 credit hours to complete and one included 31 credit hours, thus averaging 30.2 credit hours. Level I portions of the programs were 18-19 credit hours with the Level II segment uniform across all institutions at 12 credits. All programs included courses on Introduction to Educational Administration, School Law, and grade level specific courses on school administration and/or curriculum. Human Resources and Finance were common stand-alone courses. A course in supervision of instruction was found in three of five programs, as was a course in community relations. A hands-on internship was included in only one of the five programs. Leadership, as a stand-alone course, was not included in any program.

Moving forward toward our first 10-year waypoint, 2004, two of what should have been the most influential events of this 20 year history of Kentucky educational administrator preparation programs had come to fruition. First, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards were promulgated in 1996. Kentucky embraced the Standards, through administrative regulation, as the guiding principles for accreditation of the various college/university principal preparation programs in 1998. The second tectonic event, widely heralded at the time as the bipartisan, comprehensive, national plan for improving the quality and level of education for all children, was the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001. Taken together, these two events should have triggered at least one, if not two, significant and comprehensive reviews of Kentucky

principal preparation program accreditation guidance at the state level and course content and emphasis at the institutional program level.

Kentucky EPSB's principal preparation program guidance for colleges and universities as well as accreditation standards for programs were, in fact, greatly expanded. What had been little more than a couple of paragraphs of guidance in Kentucky Administrative Regulations in 1994 became two pages of guidance by 2004. The new guidance specifically called for preparing aspiring principals using the ISSLC Standards for School Leaders and the Technology Standards for School Administrators, going so far as to explicitly list each of the six ISSLC Standards and the six Technology Standards. The guidance also directed that preparation programs had to address recommendations from a list professional education/educator organizations, though the "how" of what constituted compliance with this requirement was left unspecified.

From an aspiring principal's standpoint, there were some significant program differences at this 2004 juncture in history. In 1994 a principal aspirant had to hold a master's degree and have three years of fulltime teaching experience as prerequisite conditions of application to a program. In 2004 there was no requirement to hold a master's degree prior to application to enter a preparation program, nor did the applicant have to have three years of fulltime teaching experience behind them at the time of application. According to the EPSB guidance and program accreditation standards in effect in 2004 the principal preparation program itself had to yield a master's degree and the applicant had to complete three years of fulltime teaching experience prior to being issued a statement of eligibility to apply for a principalship. (16 KAR 3:050, 2004) In practical terms, a principal aspirant could begin their principal preparation academic

program the day they started work as a classroom teacher. Once they had three years of fulltime classroom experience and had successfully accrued, depending on the preparation program, between 18 and 30 hours of graduate program credits, the aspirant could receive their statement of eligibility for internship and a provisional certificate for instructional leadership – i.e., they could begin applying for principal positions and, if accepted, enter the Kentucky Principal Internship Program (KPIP) during their first year on the job as a principal. The upshot of this was that, under the rules in place in 2004, in less than four years an individual could go from entry level classroom teacher to principal. This subtle difference in prerequisite requirements between 1994 and 2004 could, potentially, significantly reduce the time and cost of rising from classroom teacher to principal, particularly noting not having to hold a completed master's degree prior to applying to a principal preparation program. By extension, an individual could earn their Level II principal certificate with a single master's degree, not two.

One other subtle difference in EPSB program guidance between the years of 1994 and 2004 was the elimination of the requirement to tailor each student's program to include grade level specific courses based on which grade level specific principal certificate the student was pursuing (elementary grades, middle grades, or high school grades). Principal certificates were no longer issued by grade level, they were all inclusive: K-12. This change allowed preparation programs to eliminate these grade level focused courses from their curriculum.

The broad uniformity of school principal programs seen in 1994 had significantly broken down by 2004. Program credit hours now ranged from 30 to 42 hours and averaged 31.3 hours. Level I initial principal certification curriculum ranged from 18

117

hours to 30 hours; Level II programs ranged from 9 to 12 hours. While with the now wide variation in required program credit hours one might expect broad differences in programs, there remained significant uniformity in core content, though some course titles had changed. A course in School Administration remained in all programs, as did courses in Finance, Law, and Human Resources. Some programs now included more than one course on school administration or school leadership. Finance courses at some institutions were now broadened to include support services or even retitled as Resource Management or School Business Management. School law courses were now coupled with an emphasis on ethics. Courses in Community Relations were receiving broader interest, with six of seven programs now including such a course. Greater emphasis was also placed on curriculum and assessment courses and there was a rising interest in courses on collaboration. Three programs now included a course in Problem Solving and, in a nod toward the new requirement for incorporating technology standards into the curriculum, three of the seven programs investigated included a course in technology. Also of note in the changing direction and emphasis of principal preparation programs at this juncture, in 1994 only one of five programs included a hands-on internship, in 2004 six of seven programs included a 3-credit hour leadership practicum or internship.

Stepping forward ten years to 2014, the end point of this contemporary history, only one significant, new outside influence occurs in this ten year span: ISLLC 2008 Standards are issued. As discussed in Chapter II, the 2008 revisions to the ISLLC Standards were more form than substance, little more than some wordsmithing and consolidation of explanations of the standards for clarity and brevity. Not that the revisions were not needed, but the standards themselves emerged little changed. While

the ISLLC Standards carried forward as guidelines for preparation program content, the real, mounting, performance pressures on the education system in Kentucky, and all states' systems across the country, were the annually increasing accountability expectations under the 2001 NCLB law. All students were supposed to be proficient in math and reading by 2014, which meant the accountability expectation of success rose each year toward that 100% goal for 2014. Every year the measure of success moved higher. Early progress under the law was relatively easy, but as the bar of success was raised each year the likelihood of annual goal achievement became ever more difficult. Kentucky responded to these ever increasing measures of success on a number of fronts, including multiple revisions to principal preparation program guidance.

By 2014 the Kentucky EPSB principal preparation program guidance embodied in Kentucky Administrative Regulations grew from paragraphs to pages, and it no longer included just admission requirements to the programs and guidance for scholarly program content. The ISLLC Standards and the Technology Standards for School Administrators remained the guiding direction for academic program content, but personal prerequisites for application to preparation programs reverted back to what was expected in 1994: applicants again were required to hold a master's degree and have three years of documented teaching experience prior to application. In addition, and a very significant change, candidates now had to obtain a signed agreement with a school district to support the student's learning experience, to include "… opportunities for the candidate to participate in a high quality practicum experience." (16 KAR 3:050, Sec 2, Conditions and Prerequisites (d), 2014) Details on what is to be included in these agreements and the

level at which it must be endorsed in the supporting school district are explicitly spelled out in the regulation. (16 KAR 3:050, Sec 2, Conditions and Prerequisites (d), 2014)

Complimenting these increased expectations of aspiring principal candidates, the EPSB also placed significantly increased responsibilities and obligations on host preparation program institutions to qualify for and/or retain accreditation. Section 4 of 16 KAR 3:050 (2014) now directs detailed, documented, signed agreements for intimate collaboration between host institutions and the school districts they support. These collaboration agreements are to extend from joint screening of principal preparation program candidates to joint selection and approval of mentors within the school district, from codesign and codelivery of courses to documenting how the principal preparation program will meet the identified leadership needs of each district. Further, the plans must outline how the host institutions will collaborate with the supported school districts in ensuring high quality field experiences for the students throughout their preparation program. Significantly, the EPSB, through 16 KAR 3:050, for the first time dictates one component of program content that must be included: each host institution's program content must require all candidates to complete a capstone project and successfully defend it before a panel of school faculty and practicing school administrators as a condition of completing Level I program requirements. (16 KAR 3:050, Sec 4, para (2)(h)) (2014)

This requirement for comprehensive, formal, collaborative agreements between principal preparation program host institutions and the school districts they serve gives implicit recognition to the historical fact that principal aspirants attend programs close to home. It also recognizes that the most reasonable and accessible place for these students

to perform field experience activities and to conduct a capstone project is in their home school and/or home school district.

Turning to program content and methods of instruction in 2014, 11 programs were included in the research. Program credit hours now range from 30 to 39 hours, averaging 34.9 hours, a significant increase from the 30.2 hour average in 1994. The addition of the capstone project and varying institutional award of credit hours for fieldwork obviously has some impact on the increased average credit hours across programs. Another new player on the academic field of host institution for 2014 versus 2004 is the introduction of online programs at both the University of the Cumberlands and Asbury University. While the Asbury University program does appear to be completely online, the University of the Cumberlands requires a minimal number of all-day face-to-face Saturday sessions each term.

A number of common curricular topics transcend the contemporary history of this study. A course or variation of a course on school finance, school law, and school administration carries forward from beginning to end. There are, though, several nearly universal course topics in 2014 that were of little or no interest in 2004, much less in 1994. A course focused on leadership in teaching or instructional leadership is now included in 10 of 11 programs. A course on building or developing a school culture for learning is present in all programs. Closely coupled with the topic of building a culture of learning is a course on collaboration with parents and community, present in 9 of 11 programs. A course in classroom assessment and/or needs assessment in now present in 8 of 11 programs. Interestingly, from the perspective of learning about school leadership from an organizational standpoint and distributed leadership for continuous improvement

initiatives, only four programs in 2014 include a course focused on school leadership and only three include a course on creating and effectively implementing the use of Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams.

Turning to the findings from the online survey, demographics from the survey results would suggest that approximately two thirds of Kentucky middle school principals are male. This gender percentage mirrors that found in the mailing list of middle school principals obtained from the Kentucky Department of Education. Tellingly, approximately two thirds of the responding principals were employed within 50 miles of where they attended school as a child. This tells us that most principals returned home, or gravitated back home, following college. Some principals had worked and gained some degree of experience outside of education, but few had management or supervisory experience outside of education. The respondents were all experienced classroom teachers first, before pursuing the principalship, averaging 10.5 years as a classroom teacher. All of the principals had served what might be termed a practicing internship as an assistant principal before being selected to become a principal. Tenure among this group of 62 respondents seemed rather short, averaging just 4 years as principal. Almost two thirds of these principals were serving in the same school district where they served as a classroom teacher and 70% were serving in the same school district where they served as an assistant principal. Almost 85% of principals earned their bachelor's degree from Kentucky colleges and universities and over 93% earned their principal certification from Kentucky institutions or institutions with cooperative agreements with Kentucky. 98% of respondents were working fulltime as classroom teachers while they pursued their certification. All of the respondents attended the principal preparation program closest to

home, or in one instance nearly closest to home. These findings that principals attended certification programs part-time and picked the program closest to home for their studies are further strengthened by answers to the survey questions addressing the top reasons for picking preparation program institutions: the number one reason by far was proximity to home (70%), followed by program flexibility (53%), and having a part-time program compatible with their work schedule (48%). Clearly, aspiring principals overwhelmingly picked preparation programs that were part-time and close to home.

The survey respondents remembered preparation programs that totaled 30 to 36 credit hours in length. Between one third and one half of their program studies, regardless of year completed, were consumed with courses in school leadership, school administration, school law, and school finance.   The majority of respondents also remembered studies in strategic planning, curriculum development, human resources, community relations, decision making and action research, and a leadership practicum. Recalling that these survey principals averaged just 4 years tenure as a principal and 5 years prior service as an assistant principal, their background indicates that most of these principals attended preparation programs after 2004. This timeline supports their remembrances of these additional courses, particularly strategic planning, community relations, decision making and action research, and leadership practicum, as these subjects became more common in the latter half of this short history.

Another broad conclusion that can be drawn from the survey responses, most respondents remembered little or no training in continuous improvement methods or tools in their formal principal preparation program. Having little or no exposure to these

concepts, most respondents were dismissive as to the importance or utility of those methods and tools to managing their school or contributing to improved performance.

In responding to the question concerning curricular topics that might be eliminated or receive less classroom time in preparation programs, there was really no consensus among these principals.   Less than half responded to the question at all and there was little overlap among the suggestions.

When asked to suggest new topics for inclusion in preparation programs, or current topics for more emphasis, there were more reflective responses with greater consensus. Twenty-five percent of the respondents suggested a course in Kentucky's Professional Growth and Effectiveness System (PGES). Including significant preparation program time and emphasis on continuous improvement methods and tools received broad support through suggested training in specific topics, to include: team building skills, establishing and effectively using PLCs, assessments, feedback methods, coaching, time management, strategic planning, running effective meetings, and effective use of metrics.

In integrating the findings from the final component of the investigation into the history of Kentucky principal preparation programs, the personal interviews, other than the fact that the principals from this randomly selected group of 10 schools were all male, the demographics of this group closely mirrored that of the general population of principals that responded to the online survey. Average age was 41 and approximately two thirds were employed within 50 miles of where they attended school as a child. Two had worked outside the education field prior to entering teaching: one spent 10 years in

the military and one worked in private industry as a technician while his wife finished her graduate studies. All were experienced classroom teachers prior to pursuing the principalship. Eight of 10 had served as assistant principals before being hired as a principal. One had served as an elementary school principal before being hired as a middle school principal. (I was advised that this was not a terribly unusual path to a middle school principalship, as many principals are hired directly into the principalship at the elementary school level.) The tenth principal was hired as an assistant principal and, due to circumstance, found himself in the principal's position two weeks later. The group averaged just over 4 years in their current principal position. Most were employed in the same school district where they had been employed as a classroom teacher and most had been an assistant principal in the same school district where they were now employed as a principal.

Taken collectively, the academic performance range of the 10 schools led by these principals presents a near match of overall Kentucky schools performance distribution. Individual schools ranked from the 9th to the 90th percentile. Half were above and half below the state's goal for Percent Proficient/Distinguished in Combined Reading and Math score.

All of these principals attended Kentucky institutions, or Kentucky accredited institutions, for their principal preparation program. Three principals completed their principal preparation studies prior to 2004. The remainder completed their certification between the years of 2004 and 2009. They remembered total program credit hours falling between 30 and 36 hours. Everyone attended their preparation program as part-time students while working fulltime as a teacher.

Ninety percent of these principals picked their preparation program because it was closest to home. The tenth picked a still close institution to get a different perspective from where he earned his bachelor's degree. Other reasons for picking their graduate studies institution were noted, but being closest to home was the number one reason.

Asked about the content of their principal preparation programs, everyone remembered taking semester long courses in school leadership, school administration, school finance, and school law. Ninety percent recalled a course in human relations and all of the most recent graduates recalled a course in community relations. Most had courses or significant class time devoted to curriculum development, classroom management, and supervision. Just over half spent some amount of time on strategic planning. An internship, per say, was not part of anyone's formal program, though most said that conducting many hours of field observations and writing reflections on those observations was a part of their program.

In responding to the question about courses that could be eliminated or have emphasis reduced in principal preparation programs these principals suggested less time could be spent on school law and the stand alone topic of leadership. Courses nominated for elimination were school program collaboration, curriculum development, and auxiliary programs. One principal felt much of his coursework was busy work; all of the online portion of his coursework was busy work, from which he gained little.

Interview responses to the question about suggestions for topics to include or receive greater emphasis in future principal preparation programs were very closely aligned with the responses from the online survey. The greatest support was for new or

increased instruction in continuous improvement methodologies and tools, to include:

teambuilding, problem solving and problem solving tools, process improvement

methodologies, setting goals and objectives, establishing and managing PLCs, and using

meaningful metrics. Their second most common suggestion was for including significant

instruction in Kentucky's current assessment and accountability programs, to include the

TPGES and PPGES programs, the K-PREP program, and the Kentucky School Report

Card.

There was one question raised in the personal interviews that was not addressed in

the online survey. These principals were asked for their thoughts concerning the new

online principal preparation programs offered by two Kentucky institutions. In general,

these principals thought much would be lost in the depth of understanding gained from

group discussions. For instance, in the dramatically slowed and truncated

communications process of a keyboard and screen how do you discuss ethics and gain

insight through sharing experiences. In addition, these principals felt the personal

relationships built in, and the synergies of, the small group setting would be largely lost

in an online program. Even recognizing these possible shortcomings of online programs,

one principal acknowledged:

> … if an online program had been available when I was pursuing my certification, that is the program I would have chosen. It would have been a lot easier: no classes to attend, work at my studies on my schedule, no missed kid's birthdays and ballgames, and no missed anniversaries. Significantly easier and fewer conflicts with other demands.

These comments taken together, and the shortcomings notwithstanding, the advantages

for students in pursuing online programs may change how students select their

preparation program institution in the future.

Tying in the findings from reviewing the extra-Kentucky principal preparation

programs, 15 programs from across the United States were included in this review. Of

these one was a fulltime resident program: Harvard University. A fulltime resident

program is likely not a viable program construct for Kentucky. Harvard is located in one

of the most densely populated areas in the United States; Kentucky is predominantly

rural. By extension, most Kentucky teachers are from relatively small school systems

and are not in a position to take a year's sabbatical from teaching to attend a fulltime

program. Even if enough principal aspirants were available to form an initial cohort class

in, for instance, the Louisville metropolitan area, it is unlikely a sustaining population of

students would be within commuting distance to the institution, or be willing to move to

the institution area, for the duration of their studies.   Again, a fulltime resident principal

preparation program does not seem a plausible program design for Kentucky.

An additional school in this group, the University of Washington, includes a

halftime internship for the duration of the supported public school year. This requires the

student to obtain a halftime released from their employing school to serve in a halftime

internship under a selected administrator/mentor chosen by the university. Like Harvard

University, the University of Washington is located in a densely populated region with an

enabling relatively dense population of public and private primary and secondary schools

and school districts. With Kentucky's predominately rural population, low population

density, few, and relatively small, population centers, and widely scattered public schools

- - a halftime internship requirement under an administrator/mentor of the university's

choosing is also likely not a viable program design for Kentucky institutions hosting

principal preparation programs. By design and by statute, internships required by

128

Kentucky programs have an expectation that the internship will be in the aspiring principal's employing home school district and/or home school. This Kentucky method may have its own potential problems and shortcomings, but from the logistical perspective of reasonable student travel to complete internship activities it is probably the most feasible.

Eleven of these 15 non-Kentucky programs are cohort based. This means there is an annual beginning term for a new group of principal aspirants to begin their principal preparation studies. Course offerings each term reinforce the expectation that students will proceed through the program with their cohort peers. Nominally, the cohort members will graduate together at the end of their program. Missing a course or a term could force a student to lose a year in his/her graduation schedule in that that course or term's courses are not offered again until the follow-on cohort advances to them. The cohort program construct specifically encourages the development of professional relationships between and among cohort members and hopes to build on the synergies and networked support among the members throughout the preparation program and beyond. Interestingly, only two of the Kentucky principal preparation programs in this study are advertised as being cohort based: Bellarmine University's and Murray State University's. Some of the other programs may be cohort based, but that program design is not stated in their graduate catalog program description. One Kentucky program, Asbury University's with its online program, is distinctly a non-cohort structure in that a student can start at the beginning of any term.

As with Kentucky, the ISLLC Standards dominate program content guidance for these schools in states other than Kentucky. Of the 12 states represented by these schools

11 have adopted or adapted the standards into their school leader licensure program standards. Only New Mexico has chosen to develop standards independent of the ISLLC Standards. As a result of the common influence of the Standards on principal preparation programs one would expect the program content of these extra-Kentucky schools to have far more similarities in content with Kentucky school programs than not. The findings bear out these expectations.

Every program has a course in school law. All programs cover the topic of school finance, most have it is an independent course. As might be anticipated, every program has one or more courses focused on school administration and every program spends time on human resources, either as a stand-alone course or major course topic. Each program has one or more general leadership courses and each contains a course in instructional leadership. The importance of building and sustaining strong community relations is recognized and explicitly included in most programs. Collecting and using data is a common topic of instruction. The overarching themes of ethical behavior, ethical schools, and equity for all students are common across programs.

The master's degree awarding programs in these extra-Kentucky schools average 34.2 credit hours in length. One or more internships was a common program feature across all schools but, unlike Kentucky, a capstone like project was include in only one of these other than Kentucky programs.

Several generalities can be drawn from comparing Kentucky principal preparation programs with programs from outside of Kentucky. First, on the surface, Kentucky program entry requirements, as codified in 16 KAR 3:050 (2014), are decidedly more

rigorous than requirements in most states. Kentucky program applicants must hold a master's degree and have three years of documented teaching experience prior to preparation program application. Prerequisite requirements for having a master's degree and this much teaching experience are not at all common outside of Kentucky. Nor is it a common prerequisite for prospective students to secure a signed agreement from a school district to support his/her practicum activities as part of the application process. Further, no programs from outside of Kentucky alluded to joint screening of perspective students by serviced school districts and the university.

Considering the scope of the research for this study it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions in comparing state accreditation standards for university principal preparation programs. However, from reading the various institution program descriptions it appears that the state directed extensive cooperation and collaboration between universities and serviced school districts in Kentucky is not a common accreditation requirement in other states. To reiterate and restate a few of the cooperation and collaboration requirements for accreditation of Kentucky principal preparations programs, as specified in 16 KAR 3:050 (2014), programs must provide:

- Signed collaborative agreements with each supported school district, to include:
  - Joint screening of principal candidates
  - Joint selection of leaders and mentors
  - Codesign and codelivery of courses
  - Tailoring the program to meet the leadership needs of each supported district

- The protocol for the joint screening of candidates to ensure that high quality candidates are identified and admitted into the program

- Their plan to collaborate with each supported school district in providing high quality field experiences

Other states do not appear to require such extensive partnering between the universities and supported school districts as a condition for program accreditation.

Finally, in comparing the content of preparation programs in Kentucky and those in other states, average master's degree awarding program length is comparable, with the non-Kentucky programs evaluated averaging 34.2 credit hours and Kentucky programs averaging 34.9 hours. Academic content and topics are similar across all programs, inside and outside of Kentucky, with the emphasis on specific topics ebbing and flowing somewhat between institutions. As to real program uniqueness, Harvard University's fulltime program and the University of Washington's Danforth Educational Leadership Program with a half-time internship were unique. Kentucky' prerequisite requirements of a Master's degree and three years teaching experience, as well as the requirement to complete and defend a capstone project prior to Level I certification, are all but unique when taken individually and decidedly unique when taken collectively.

Taking the historical findings on Kentucky principal preparation programs and then using the findings from the Silver and Spuck report of 1978 as the comparative starting point for this assessment of the contemporary history of Kentucky preparation programs is both convenient and instructive. First, noting that the first real look at Kentucky's programs is as they existed in 1994, the 1994 Kentucky programs are hardly

distinguishable from the more national program generalizations drawn by Silver and Spuck in 1978. To wit, Silver and Spuck noted master's degree awarding programs averaged 32 credit hours; Kentucky programs averaged just over 30 hours in 1994. Programs were oriented toward conceptual, human relations, and technical skills in about equal proportions; Kentucky programs were closely aligned with that breakdown in 1994. This similarity in program content and duration between the 1978 report and Kentucky's 1994 documented programs buttresses the Silver and Spuck finding that program changes had not been radical or dramatic, but more gradual and cumulative. (p. 193)

There are also a number of structural program elements identified in the Silver and Spuck report that carry forward virtually unchanged from 1978 through the period of this contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation programs. Specifically, the great majority of students enrolled in these programs, then and now, both inside and outside of Kentucky, are fulltime teachers pursuing their principal certification on a part-time basis. As a general statement, students pick programs not based on their reputations but because they are conveniently located, close to home. Also, there were no program residency requirements, which would preclude pursuing a program on a part-time basis. Granted, in 2014 Western Kentucky University does require its candidates to attend two terms as a resident (i.e., fulltime student). But as noted before, from a practical standpoint this requirement simply forces students to stay on track with their program by taking two courses each term, including summer sessions, where they are considered fulltime by taking two courses (6 credit hours).

The real changes in Kentucky principal preparation programs relative to the findings of the Silver and Spuck report have taken place since 1994, and seem to have

accelerated somewhat in more recent years. As foreshadowed by the findings of the

Silver and Spuck report, changing state guidelines and/or certification requirements have

driven programs to modify their curriculum and structure to align with state certification

requirements. (p. 192)

Addressing curricular content, approximately one third to one half of program

content has carried forward from 1994 to 2014 in the form of stand-alone courses or

major topics. These courses or major topics concern the business of managing or

administering the school, including such subjects as school law, school finance, human

resources, and school administration in general. Beyond these core courses, the major

change in Kentucky preparation program emphasis between 1994 and 2014 is the now

more prominent inclusion of courses encouraging principals to get out of their offices and

into the classrooms. Also, there is a much greater emphasis in requiring candidates to

participate in hands-on activities as part of their preparation programs.   Courses

encouraging and preparing principals to engage in what goes on in their school's

classrooms include courses in instructional leadership, curricular leadership, and

classroom assessment. These relatively new courses over the period of this study are a

tacit recognition of the fact that it is in the classrooms where schools succeed or fail, and

principals need to be engaged in what is happening and what is being taught, or not

taught, in their classrooms.   After all, they, the principals, will be held accountable for

their school's achievements, good or bad. Reviewing the now included hands-on

activities, an internship was part of only one Kentucky principal preparation program in

1994, in 2014 an internship or embedded field work resulting in a capstone project is

required of all programs by state regulation as part of Level I principal certification studies. (16 KAR 3:050, 2014)

Other topical areas of evolution between the 1978 Silver and Spuck study results, the content of Kentucky programs in 1994, and the content of Kentucky programs in 2014 must include the new or increased emphasis on ethics and equity in education. Also, while community relations was not an unknown topic in Kentucky preparation programs in 1994 (it was included in 3 of the 5 programs studied), in 2014 the importance and benefits of collaboration and building multilateral relations with all stakeholders, from parents, to community leaders, to local businesses, receives far more emphasis across all Kentucky programs.

In support of the Silver and Spuck report finding suggesting that principal preparation program changes were driven, in large part, by changing state certification requirements, the structural changes to Kentucky preparation programs directed by changing Kentucky regulations between 1994 and 2014 have been dramatic. The real involvement of the Kentucky EPSB in preparation program content began with the state's embrace of the ISLLC standards in 1998 and with the EPSB subsequently directing that state preparation programs be constructed around those standards as a condition of accreditation. The second and even deeper involvement of the state in how academic institutions designed and administered their principal preparation programs came when Kentucky embraced the revised 2008 ISLLC Standards and responded to the growing pressure from the NCLB law's increasing academic achievement expectations, subsequently directing the inclusion of the capstone project in all Level I principal preparation programs, and, perhaps of even greater impact on institutions hosting

principal preparation programs, made it a condition of accreditation that each such institution enter into documented, comprehensive, collaborative agreements with supported school districts to involve those districts in the selection of program candidates as well as in involving them in the co-development and co-delivery of program content.

Before leaving the comparison with the Silver and Spuck report findings it is important to revisit some of its identified areas of concern, to reflect on whether those concerns might still be issues for Kentucky programs in 2014. In Chapter 9 of the report Paula Silver raised concerns over parochialism and homogeneity of programs. Her main concern was that students attended programs close to home, often at the same school where they had earned their bachelor's degree. She worried that in such a seemingly closed circuit environment new ideas might have a hard time penetrating the local orientation shell (p. 204). In addressing these concerns from a contemporary Kentucky perspective, the results of the online survey and the personal interviews for this contemporary history do not support a carry-over of this Silver and Spuck finding that many principals attended their principal preparation program at the same school where they earned their bachelor's degree. Some did, but not many. From the survey, nearly one in five principals earned their bachelor's degree outside of Kentucky altogether. For principals earning their bachelor's degree in Kentucky, they attended 20 different schools. For those earning their principal certification in Kentucky, they attended 10 different institutions, one of which no longer hosts a principal preparation program (Union College). From the interviews with practicing principals, only 4 in 10 attended principal preparation programs at the same institution where they earned their bachelor's degree. While this first concern of Paula Silver's seems to be somewhat mitigated in

Kentucky today, reflecting on her concern about students attending programs close to home, that remains a fact in Kentucky in 2014. Ms. Silver felt the predominance of local students suggested the programs were not distinctive enough to draw students from greater distance (p. 204). I would suggest that distinctiveness has little impact on the decision. Recall that most principal aspirants are fulltime teachers and part-time students. During the course of their pursuit of a principal certification, once or twice a week, and sometimes on weekends, they leave their employing school after a full day and immediately, or nearly immediately, commute to their graduate study class. After 3 to 4 hours, and perhaps 6 to 7 hours for a weekend class, they commute home. Selecting a more "distinctive" program that might add a half hour, or an hour, or more each way to the commute, once or twice a week, for two years just is not a very likely scenario. For prospective candidates living in or near a large metropolitan area such as Lexington or Louisville where there are choices between institutions with comparable commutes, factors other than the commute may receive more consideration. However, for a predominantly rural state such as Kentucky, with a limited number of institutions offering principal preparation programs, the distance to the institution, or in some cases to the remote, non-home campus location where the program is offered, will remain the primary selection criteria for prospective students. That said, the advent of online or nearly online programs has the potential to change this selection criteria dynamic.

Timeline and Summary of Events

A perhaps confusing number of dates and events have been covered in this contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation programs, as well as snapshots of the general state of national and Kentucky principal preparation programs at points

137

along this history. A timeline of significant dates and their import might help the reader

to better frame the flow of the story and follow the flow of the findings to the

conclusions. To fill this need, the following sequence of events is offered:

- 1966: *Equality of education report* (The Coleman Report) is published – highlights issues of social justice within and between schools

- 1978: Silver and Spuck Report: *Preparatory programs for educational administrators in the United States* is published – provides baseline data for this contemporary history study

- 1983: *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform* report is published – highlights "rising tide of mediocrity" in U. S. education

- 1987: *Leaders for America's schools* report
  - Calls for overhaul of the educational administration field, which led to …
  - 1988: Establishment of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), which established …
  - 1994: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), charge with drafting new guidelines to ground the profession

- 1994: Beginning of this contemporary history of Kentucky principal preparation programs
  - Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) program guidance for principal preparation program certification is paragraphs long
  - Student prerequisite requirements: master's degree and 3 years' teaching experience

- 1996: ISLLC Standards issued, licensure standards for school administrators
  - 6 Standards
  - 184 Knowledge, Disposition, and Performance indicators

- 1998: Kentucky is one of the first states to embrace the ISLLC Standards as the basis for accreditation of principal preparation programs

- 2001: *No child left behind act* (NCLB)
  - PL 107-110, effective 8 Jan 2002
  - Annual student performance scores published, by school
  - Central goal of all students proficient in math and reading by 2014
  - Increasing sanctions and penalties against schools and administrators for failure to progress

- 2004: Second waypoint in this contemporary history
  - EPSB preparation program guidance for program certification is now two pages long, programs to be designed around
    - 1996 ISLLC Standards
    - Technology Standards for School Administrators
  - Major changes to student prerequisite requirements
    - No longer require a master's degree or 3 year's teaching experience
    - Experience level reduced to completion of teacher internship

- 2008: ISLLC Standards revised and reissued
  - Retained 6 standards, slightly reworded
  - Knowledge, Disposition, and Performance indicators replaced with 31 functions

- 2012: Kentucky receives one of the first waivers to the provisions of NCLB Act

- 2014: End point of this history
  - EPSB program guidance is now 4+ pages, programs to be designed around
    - 2008 ISLLC Standards
    - Technology Standards for School Administrators
  - Host institutions must secure detailed, signed, cooperative agreements with supported school districts
  - Student prerequisite requirements strengthened
    - Return to the standards in place in 1994 – master's degree and 3 year's teaching experience
    - And, must secure signed pledge from a school district to support his/her graduate studies

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Conclusions

This recent history of Kentucky principal preparation programs yielded both some unsurprising and some surprising conclusions in the end. Also, while the on-line survey and personal interviews included in this research were confined to middle school principals, the results transcend preparation programs at all grade levels; Kentucky preparation programs, as well as the preparation programs from the schools in the 12 other states included in the study, do not differentiate preparation programs by grade level.

Course subjects and topics included in principal preparation programs in 2014 were reasonably homogeneous across institutions in Kentucky, and across the nation. But digging deeper, Kentucky, as a state, has some of the most stringent principal preparation program entry requirements in the country. In addition, the engagement of the Kentucky state accreditation agency in directing how preparation programs will be structured (capstone project, internship experiences, and collaborative agreements with supported school districts) may be singularly unique, or at least unusual, at the state level. Even so, answering the original question of are the means, the methods, and tools for conducting continuous improvement initiatives included in Kentucky principal preparation programs, the answer is "No". Neither do they appear to be included in any depth in the principal preparation programs in other states. Thus, the research raised some suggestions to relook at program content with an eye toward better preparing

aspiring principals for success in an era of expectation of continuous improvement in school performance. Further, the findings revealed a few additional, perhaps troubling, questions about how Kentucky's current institutional programs are being administered and accredited.

The impetus for pursuing this contemporary history of Kentucky's principal preparation programs came from my discovery early in my graduate studies in education that most of the principals I visited during a field study were almost completely untrained in the methods and tools to lead continuous improvement initiatives. Beginning with the findings of that small field study and digging into the publicly available information on the Kentucky Department of Education's web site, I further learned that as of September 2011 over half of the school districts in Kentucky were performing at less than 70% on their Combined (Math+Reading) Performance rating (Source: Kentucky Department of Education, 2011). Now, three years later, with a waiver to the original NCLB performance standards and alternate metrics in place to illustrated student learning gains, Kentucky's statistics are not much better (Source: Kentucky Department of Education, 2014). As a compounding issue, from the results of this study's online survey and personal interviews there seems to be some confusion among practicing principals about what information the new performance statistics convey. This brings me back to my original assertion that including training in continuous improvement methods and tools in principal preparation programs might better prepare new principals for leading continuous improvement initiatives. After all, if we expect and hold principals accountable for leading continuous improvement initiatives in their schools, should not training in the methods and tools to implement such a program be a major focus of their

principal preparation and certification program. While this might seem intuitively obvious, there is precious little focused program coverage of this subject in any of the principal preparation programs reviewed in this history.

Recall that Dr. Joseph Murphy, chair of the original ISLLC, tells us the Consortium intentionally turned away from the then traditional principal preparation program emphasis on business management and social sciences to develop new standards focused on student teaching and learning (Murphy & Shipman 1998). Yet Brimley in his classic school finance text, *Financing Education in a Climate of Change,* tells us that education is the country's largest public function and its biggest business (Brimley, Garfield, & Verstegen,, 2012., p. 4). As a point of fact, education is arguably a service industry, and the service it provides is educating young people. Brimley and his co-authors also tell us that people want proof that schools are meeting their intended objective as well as proof that they are spending tax dollars efficiently (p.4). These two objectives of educational institutions, 1) student teaching and learning and 2) managing the business of schools, are not mutually exclusive. The effective principal must lead both initiatives to give all stakeholders the best return for their investment.

The pursuing thought here is that the wholesale abandonment of business management methods and processes by the ISLLC may have been somewhat overzealous. Murphy tells us that specific ideas from the corporate world have been held up before with recommendations for adoption by school administrators. He specifically mentions: management by objectives, total quality management, and benchmarking, among others (Murphy, 2005, p. 156). While Murphy mentions these methodologies as presumably failed initiatives in education, the research for this contemporary history

yielded little indication that any of these concepts were ever a formal part of any principal preparation program in Kentucky, much less concepts of in-depth preparation study. This finding of lack of instruction on these concepts in administrator preparation study may indicate a classic cause of initiative failure across all change endeavors: poor planning (including instruction), with a resultant poor execution, followed by prompt abandonment and declaration of failure. If this is the case, the ISLLC, in their drive to redirect and reground the profession away from an emphasis on management (Murphy, 2002, p.187; Murphy, 2005, p. 166), may well have left some relevant, proven, powerful tools for continuous improvement initiatives on the cutting room floor. Instruction and training in continuous improvement methods and tools may impart powerful means to help principals in focusing their schools efforts towards achieving excellence.

Continuous improvement is a mantra in educational achievement literature. In practice it is a management process that can be learned with tools that can be taught. The processes and tools have been around for a long time and they have been adapted to service industries almost from the beginning. For example, even Wikipedia hosts a page called "Seven Management and Planning Tools" (retrieved 3/30/2015), listing:

- Affinity Diagram
- Interrelationship Diagraph
- Tree Diagram
- Prioritization Diagram
- Process Decision Program Chart (PDPC)
- Activity Network Diagram

And there are myriad other tools for process analysis, problem identification, strategic planning, and action planning, such as:

- Brainstorming (various forms)
- List reduction (and other prioritization tools)
- Cause-and effect analysis
- Force field analysis
- Cost-benefit analysis
- Flow charts
- Gantt charts

And the list goes on. These are all skills, tools, and activities that should be found in a leader's management tool box for initiating, executing, and sustaining continuous improvement in processes and system outputs. But the research for this study did not reveal that any of these tools or processes for organizing and leading continuous improvement initiatives are included in a meaningful way in any principal preparation program either in Kentucky or outside of Kentucky. Without some academic grounding in these management tools and methods aspiring principals will be at a decided disadvantage for success when held accountable for leading their schools on a quest for school and student performance improvement.

As a further point of reference and an example of the possible in the timeline of this contemporary history, in the early 1990s the United States Air Force Reserve, with permission, borrowed Xerox Corporation's Total Quality Management (TQM) program and tailored it for their own use. I was there. I was part of that initiative in both tailoring the program and delivering it. In application it was a train the trainer program. People at the top of the organization were trained first. They, in turn, trained people at the next tier down, and so on down to the squadron and flight level. Everyone in the command,

military and civilian, from the then 2-star Chief Air Force Reserve to the newest Airman, pilots and maintenance personnel to office clerks and civilian technicians, over 100,000 men and women, received several dedicated days of TQM training. This huge investment in time and resources was testament to the command's commitment to making continuous improvement a frame of mind within the command, and to empower the people charged with bringing that mindset to fruition with the tools to make improvements happen. This process could work the same in education. As a top down training effort, people at the top are trained first and they in turn train those at the next tier down, and so on down to where the business of education takes place – with the training of teachers and support personnel. Training in the continuous improvement process is itself an ongoing, recurring effort, both as a refresher and in recognition that people enter and leave the profession. Also, training, in and of itself, is not the end of implementing a continuous improvement initiative. The real push to take the training and make it the norm for how things are done must come from the top: from the state, to the district, to the principals, to the school staff. This top down approach also presupposes integrating training in, and implementation of, a continuous improvement culture at the state and school district level to establish and sustain a long-term continuous improvement culture across the state. In any event, training comes first.

Topics to include in continuous improvement instruction, in a reasonably laddered sequence, might include: managing effective meetings; teambuilding and group dynamics; developing effective mission and vision statements; defining current processes; problem identification tools; problem solving tools; establishing and using effective Professional Learning Community (PLC) teams; strategic planning; establishing

effective goals and objectives, and; developing and using simple and meaningful metrics to measure progress. Some of these topics, such as setting goals and objectives and developing and using metrics, might be recurring themes to reinforce when presenting instruction on such topics as managing effective meetings, problem identification, using PLCs, and strategic planning.

Preparing principals in the use of these continuous improvement methodologies and tools, and they in turn using that knowledge to instruct their school staffs and direct the implementation of school level continuous improvement initiatives, may hold the promise of real, sustainable, continuing gains in student achievement. By extension, integrating this management training in principal preparation programs, before these principal aspirants become principals, may well better prepare them for success as they move into school administration.

Recommendations for Future Research

There were a number of other topics suggested by this history that might merit further investigation and possible in depth research. They include:

1. The Professional Growth and Effectiveness System, to include TPGES and PPGES --- 25% of the principals surveyed for this history voiced confusion with this system and its components. If 25% acknowledged confusion, the real scope of frustration with the system is probably twice that. Considering this level of consternation among users of the system, the likelihood that the program will be implemented as intended and in a timely manner is poor. Investigating the

source(s) of the confusion and addressing training and implementation issues may lead to a more timely and successful result.

2. There is confusion among some principals with the statistics in the new School Report Card. From the report it is not clear how some of these statistics are derived, what they mean, and how to use them. It might be helpful to revisit the design and content of this report as it has evolved over the years to simplify, clarify, and better explain the included data and metrics to make the report more useful and user friendly at the school and especially the community level.

3. Recognizing that most, if not all, principal preparation program students will perform their field studies and internship requirements (practicum) in their home school and/or home school district poses some concerns. As a state, the academic performance of Kentucky students compared to students in other states is average. The new format of the School Report Card on the Kentucky Department of Education web site prominently displays on the first page of data each school's relative performance percentile relative to its peers. Presumably half of the schools in the state rank above the 50th percentile and half are below. Therein lies the concern: if aspiring principals serve an internship under a less than successful principal are they learning the kinds attitudes and practices we want them to learn to be successful principals of the future? Who judges acceptable mentors, and if a proposed mentor is deemed lacking what are the reasonable alternatives for the student? The ramifications of this conundrum and possible solutions might be worthy of serious study.

4. The accreditation requirement for Kentucky educational institutions hosting

   principal preparation programs to execute collaborative agreements with

   supported school districts appears both unique and laudable. But as one thinks on

   the depth of cooperative integration of candidate selection, program content

   development, and program delivery called for by statute between the institutions

   and serviced school districts, it calls into question, "How do you make this

   work?" Consider that as of 31 December 2014 there are 173 school districts in

   the state of Kentucky (Kentucky Department of Education, 12/31/14) and there

   are 11 accredited principal preparation programs. On average, then, each program

   serves 15.7 school districts. Now take into consideration geographic overlap of

   some programs. Add in the greatly broadened geographic reach of online or near

   online programs. The permutations of how many collaborative agreements a

   given institution is required to have and maintain is pretty staggering. Does an

   institution just need agreements to cover the districts of current students? If so,

   that would preclude joint selection of future candidates from additional districts,

   either that or executing the agreement after the fact. The language of the

   regulation would seem to dictate that host institutions would have to execute

   collaborative agreements with all school districts which might hold potential

   candidates for their program. Then there are the requirements to jointly develop

   and deliver courses, as well as tailoring the program to meet the identified

   leadership needs of each district (16 KAR 3:050, 2014, Section 4). Just as a "for

   instance" to bound the scope of the potential problem, assume the principal

   preparation program is a near two year program (30-36 hours, 6 hours per term, 5-

6 terms to complete, including summers). Also, for simplicity, assume a cohort

program design. At any given time there are two cohorts in the pipeline, each

containing 20 students representing 10-15 school districts, separated by one year

in the course offering cycle. Now, how do you engage 15-20 school districts,

much less potentially 30-40 school districts in an online program, in the design

and delivery of courses and tailor the studies to the identified leadership needs of

each school district represented by the students. Meeting the letter of the

Kentucky Administrative Regulation in such a scenario would seem unachievably

complex. This begs the question, is the goal here to meet the letter of the

regulation, or the intent of the regulation? Just maintaining the signed

collaborative agreements would take some significant administrative effort on the

part of both the host institution and the supported school districts to make sure the

agreements were current and covered all potentially supported school districts.

Would an annual meeting with representatives from supported school districts to

review courses and course content, as well as getting commitments for course

instructors and/or guest speakers, satisfy the intent of the regulation? Who are the

points of contact for candidate recommendation and selection? The goal of

engaging supported school districts in principal preparation program design and

delivery, as well as in the candidate selection process, is praiseworthy. Even so,

meeting the letter of the regulation as currently published seems, again,

unachievable. Studying how Kentucky institutions meet, or justify meeting, these

16 KAR 3:050 requirements, and suggesting how the regulation might be

rewritten to embrace the possible, might bring some added clarity to the state's intent.

5. The recent advent of accredited online principal preparation programs in Kentucky is not without some anecdotal concern on the part of educators and raised eyebrows on the part of practicing principals. There is the perception that much is gained in both knowledge and breadth of understanding, as well as from developing personal relationships and networking, from the small group, roundtable discussions found in the more traditional setting of night and sometimes weekend classes. Those benefits are lost, or nearly lost, in online programs. Nonetheless, as one of the principals interviewed in my research said, if the online venue had been available when he was pursuing his principal credential, that is the path he would have pursued – it just would have been easier. This raises two questions. First, is so much lost in cultivating leadership knowledge and depth of understanding of school administration through a wholly or nearly wholly online program so as to discredit this instructional method? If so, are there actions that can be taken to minimize that loss and yet retain a partly or mostly online program to the benefit of students? The second question here relates to my interviewed principal's perception that pursuing and online program would be easier. If that perception holds in the wider educational community, will certificates or degrees earned through these programs be viewed as second class? If so, will graduates of those programs be less sought after to become future principals?

6. Coming from both a military and private industry background I have found that there is tremendous benefit to common training. In common training, by definition, everyone receives the same training; everyone is exposed to the same information concerning their job or future job; everyone learns the same tools and gains a common understanding of professional terminology; everyone knows the expectations, and; the standards for doing a good job are universal. Both the military and private industry have brought in the best minds in academia for long before my time to help develop their training programs, and academia's recommendation for consistent outstanding individual training and subsequent performance in a defined job has always been starting with common training. This is not in any way to say that either the military or private industry were looking to ingrain institutional conformity in how to respond to challenges. Individual initiative and a can do attitude are prized and rewarded in both arenas. However, and in particular, leadership and management training is tailored and common, quite successfully, to and within institutions. To be sure, there is cross pollination of ideas. Military officers, both commissioned and non-commissioned, attend rank level professional military education with other services and at the National Defense University, or even attend rank level professional military education in allied nations, and their service members in our programs. The Department of Defense also has programs to send both military and civilian personnel to leadership and management programs developed and hosted at well-known colleges and universities. Private industry, in kind, sends promising leaders off to seminars and off-site education and training programs to

learn and bring back new ideas. These efforts to ensure the influx of new ideas

aside, the point here is that both the military and private industry have found

much to be gained from common leadership training. Reflecting on this idea of

common leadership training in these other venues, what might be the benefits of

universal principal preparation programs in Kentucky? Before this idea is cast

aside as criminal collusion rather than collaboration, perhaps even branded as

heresy in its attempted to subvert creative thought and uniqueness of programs in

academia, consider the following: First, in view of the fact that, in accordance

with 16 KAR 3:050, the content of each Kentucky principal preparation program

is structured around the ISLLC Standards and accompanying Technology

Standards for School Administrators, and that program structure and delivery is

already both directed and constrained by myriad statutory guidance, there is little

room for real uniqueness of program. In addition, there is no evidence that

uniqueness of program will gain an institution more students: the last 40 years'

worth of school administrator preparation program information reviewed for this

study says the vast majority of principal aspirants are fulltime teachers going back

to school part-time and they attend the program closest to home. Period.

Emphasis added. Granted the advent of completely or nearly completely online

programs may bring some change to this decision process. However, these

programs are themselves new and the long term efficacy and viability of this

instructional delivery method for Kentucky principal preparation programs is far

from proven or certain.   Moving beyond the concern for losing uniqueness of

programs, what if the EPSB were to host a working group of representatives from

each accredited principal preparation program in Kentucky to discuss the idea of common curriculum? Selected school principals and perhaps school district superintendents could be invited to participate, bringing in the perspective of the field where the actual job of educational administration is being performed. One might consider it a gathering of the best minds in Kentucky from host institutions and from the field of practicing principals with the goal of designing the best principal preparation program for Kentucky. The method of curriculum delivery would remain with the individual institutions, subject to being within accreditation standards. There would be no constraints on education administration research. Of course, there would need to be periodic curriculum review to maintain currency and relevance, surveys of practitioners for their input, and so on. All aspiring principals attending Kentucky preparation programs would thus receive a common curriculum designed through a collaborative effort between Kentucky educational institutions and Kentucky principal practitioners, an effort lead by the Kentucky EPSB to best prepare future Kentucky principals for success in Kentucky schools. A serious, dispassionate study of this idea of common principal preparation programs for Kentucky may well reveal the possibility of substantial benefits for both host institutions and students, at little cost to academic freedom for either.

CHAPTER VI

REFERENCES

The Reference Chapter is broken into two sections for ease of navigation. The first section contains citations for all of the books, articles, papers, and quotes referred to in this dissertation. The second section collects in one place all of the college catalogs and bulletins referenced in the research.

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CHAPTER VII

APPENDIX

<u>Online Survey</u>

<u>Introduction:</u> My name is Thomas Hart. I am a doctoral candidate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Eastern Kentucky University.   In pursuit of that degree I am soliciting your help in researching and understanding the contemporary history of principal preparation programs in Kentucky. Specifically, I want to hear from you concerning your preparations for becoming a principal. I am most interested in your academic preparation, but I am also interested in your other experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. Benefiting from both your remembrances of your formal preparation program and now your experiences as a practicing principal, I hope to paint a picture of past and present principal preparation programs in the state. From this picture I may be able to suggest areas for deeper research into the structure and content of current preparation programs and perhaps suggest changes to better prepare future principals for success in our schools.

This survey is limited to Kentucky middle school principals. Information gathered in this study will be used in aggregate. In my analysis and dissertation, none of your responses will be traceable to individual schools or individuals. That said, I really want your frank remembrances of your preparation program, your now learned insight as a practicing principal, and your suggestions. Thank you in advance for taking a few moments of your time to answer this survey.

PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM SURVEY

1. **General demographic and employment history information**.

    1.1 Gender: Male ___ Female ___

    1.2 Age: ___

    1.3 Are you employed in the same school district you attended as a child? Yes __ No __

    1.4 If you answered "No" to question 1.4, are you employed within 50 miles of the school district you attended as a child? Yes __ No __

    1.5 If you answered "No" to questions 1.4 and 1.5, are you employed in the same state where you attended school as a child? Yes __ No __

    1.6 For the most recent school year for which you have data, and setting aside any special dispensations (such as "Sanctuary"), how many of your Adequate Yearly Performance (AYP) goals did your school meet?
        1.6.1 Year: _____
        1.6.2 Total number of goals: ___
        1.6.3 Goals met: ____

2. **Other employment history**.

    2.1 Other than part-time, temporary, or summer jobs you held as a youth or while you were in college, have you held long-term (1 year or more), fulltime employment outside of education? Yes __ No __

    2.2 If you answered yes to 2.1, how many years? ___

        Of these years, how many were spent in:
        2.2.1 Private industry __
        2.2.2 Private business other than industry __
        2.2.3 Self employed __
        2.2.4 Active Duty Military __
        2.2.5 Government __

    2.3 Are you currently serving or have you served as a member of the National Guard or one of the Reserve components? Yes __ No __

        2.3.1 Officer __ Enlisted __
        2.3.2 Years of service ___

3. **Your educational employment history**.

    3.1 How many years did you serve as a classroom teacher? ___

    3.2 How many years did you serve as an assistant principal? ___

    3.3 How many years have you served as a principal? ___

        3.3.1 In your current school? ___

        3.3.2 In other schools? ___

    3.4 Are you employed as a principal in the same school where you served as a classroom teacher? Yes __ No __

    3.5 If you answered "No" to question 3.4, are you employed in the same school district where you served as a classroom teacher? Yes __ No __

    3.6 Are you employed as a principal in the same school where you served as an assistant principal? Yes __ No __

    3.7 If you answered "No" to question 3.6, are you employed in the same school district where you served as an assistant principal? Yes __ No __

4. **Your principal preparation journey.**

    4.1 Where and when did you earn your bachelor's degree?
        4.1.1 Institution: _____
        4.1.2 Year: _____

    4.2 Where and when did you complete your principal preparation program?
        4.2.1 Institution: _____
        4.2.2 Year: _____

    4.3 How many graduate hours did your principal preparation program include?
      ___

    4.4 As a graduate student in your principal preparation program, did you attend:
                Fulltime ___
                Part-time ____

    4.5 Did you attend your principal preparation program while also serving as a fulltime teacher? Yes __ No __

    4.6 What was the distance between your home and the institution where you attended your principal preparation program? ____ miles

4.7 Did your preparation program include a residency requirement, i.e., did any part of your program require you to be a fulltime student? Yes __ No __

4.8 Did your preparation program require you to complete an internship program? Yes __ No __

4.9 Of the following factors please select the top three reasons for selecting your principal preparation program institution.

    4.9.1 Proximity to home ____
    4.9.2 Recommendations from others ___
    4.9.3 Rigorous curriculum ___
    4.9.4 National reputation ___
    4.9.5 Program flexibility ___
    4.9.6 Entrance requirements ___
    4.9.7 Part-time program, compatible with work schedule ___
    4.9.8 Cost ___
    4.9.9 Availability of fulltime program ___

4. **Your principal preparation program content.** The following is a list of subjects, topics, and taskings. Many you will recognize as core course titles, major topics, or taskings from you principal preparation program. Others are topics common to strategic planning, process analysis, and continuous improvement initiatives, which may or may not have been part of your formal academic training to become a principal. I am interested in two data points here for each subject/topic. First, as best you remember, did your principal preparation program courses include significant time and study, or tasking, on each topic/subject? Check all that you remember in the first blank. Second, whether you studied the topic or completed the tasking in your principal preparation program or not, how important is the skill or experience, or how important could the skill or experience be, in your personal, daily challenge of leading your school in continuous improvement. Using a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is "Not Very Important" and 5 is "Extremely Important", rank each subject or tasking on your perception of its importance to principal preparation for success in today's schools:

Ranking Scale

1	2	3	4	5
Not Very Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

5.1 School leadership ____   Rank ____
5.2 Strategic Planning ____   Rank ____
5.3 School administration ____   Rank ____
5.4 Planning and running effective meetings ____   Rank ____
5.5 Leadership practicum ____   Rank ____
5.6 Developing goals and objectives ____   Rank ____
5.7 Internship ____   Rank ____
5.8 Teambuilding ____   Rank ____
5.9 Crafting mission/vision statements ____   Rank ____
5.10 Technology and leadership practices for program improvement ____
Rank ____
5.11 Problem identification methods ____   Rank ____
5.12 Problem solving methods   ____   Rank ____
5.13 School finance ____   Rank ____
5.14 School law ____   Rank ____
5.15 School program collaboration ____   Rank ____
5.16 Curriculum development ____   Rank ____
5.17 Pareto analysis ____   Rank ____
5.18 Classroom assessment ____   Rank ____
5.19 Classroom management ____   Rank ____
5.20 Supervision ____   Rank ____
5.21 Continuous improvement methods ____   Rank ____
5.22 Flow charting ____   Rank ____
5.23 Developing and using metrics for school improvement ____   Rank ____
5.24 Human resources ____   Rank ____
5.25 Community relations ____   Rank ____
5.26 Decision making and action research ____   Rank ____
5.27 Other _____

6. Reflecting on the academic content of your principal preparation program, what course content or which courses have you found least useful in application to your being a successful principal? (Max 200 words)

_____
_____
_____
_____

7. Based on your experience as a principal, what topics would you suggest need to be included in future principal preparation programs to better prepare aspiring principals for success? (Max 200 words)

_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Other comments. (Max 200 words)

_____
_____
_____
_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME -- and the benefit of your experience, your expertise, and your thoughts.

VITA

Thomas Henry Hart was born at Great Lakes Naval Training Station, Illinois on January 22, 1952. He attended elementary schools in Annapolis, Maryland and Arlington, Virginia and graduated from Union County High School in Morganfield, Kentucky in 1970. He attended the University of Kentucky and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Animal Science, graduating in December of 1974. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force through the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC), he entered active duty in March 1975. He served tours of duty as a munitions officer, weapons safety/nuclear surety officer, AFROTC instructor, and explosives safety officer in both the maintenance and acquisition career fields. Along the way he earned a Master of Science in Management Science from Troy State University (1979) and a Master of Engineering in Industrial Engineering from Iowa State University (1984). He left active duty in 1987, joined the Air Force Reserves, and went to work in private industry in the Atlanta, Georgia area. He held positions in manufacturing management and in quality assurance management. Returning to active duty with the Air Force in 1996, then Colonel Hart served in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs at the Pentagon, Washington, DC through 2004, retiring on 1 January 2005 with over 30 years of commissioned service.

In retirement he and his wife settled on a small farm in rural Estill County, Kentucky where he enjoys raising a few cattle and working with young people. He holds a Kentucky teaching certificate in a number of disciplines at both the middle school and high school levels and taught middle school social studies.