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Strengths And Talents Of Potential Administrators In Orange County Public Schools, Florida

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STRENGTHS AND TALENTS OF POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATORS IN ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FLORIDA

by

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ABSTRACT

With the increased demands on principals and a shortage of qualified, acceptable candidates, school districts that have to replace principals are in a difficult position. These factors, combined with the importance that the principal role has in relation to student achievement, make the identification of potential administrators and the hiring process for new administrators a top priority for all school districts.

This study answered the following two major questions; a) what characteristics or talents, as identified by the StrengthsFinder profile, did Orange County Public School principals in 2007 look for in identifying potential school administrators and b) what differences, if any, exist within the existing variables (school level, certification, gender, and prior experiences).

The Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile was utilized to identify the strengths or talents of a group of 61 teachers within Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) who were identified by their principals as potential school based administrators. Of those 61 participants in the Aspiring Leader Academy, the following five strengths were most commonly identified: a) Relator (45.9%), b) Achiever (37.8%), c) Responsibility (37.7%), d) Learner (36.1%) and e) Maximizer (25.9%).

In comparing talents across demographic data, the talents identified for participants at all levels (elementary, middle, and high) were not statistically different, supporting the notion that talents principals looked for in identifying potential administrators were relatively the same at all three levels.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are few accomplishments in my life that have been more challenging than completing this study. The dedication, patience and sacrifice required to complete this dissertation was a worthy test. Thank you first to my chair, Dr. Rosemarye Taylor, for your support and guidance over the past five years. Your leadership helped tremendously as I navigated my way through this journey. A special thank you also goes to the rest of my committee, Dr. George Pawlas, Dr. Lee Baldwin, and Dr. Walter Doherty, for your wisdom and encouragement for the past two years.

Throughout this study, I was fortunate to have great support from the Professional Development Services department in Orange County Public Schools. Thank you to Phyllis Eaton, who helped me acquire the data to study, and to Chris Bernier for his assistance and support of my research.

I would not have been able to complete this work if it were not for the incredible support from my amazing family, my wife Jessica and my two children, Kayla and Benjamin. Thank you for the sacrifices that you have made to help make this dream a reality. I love you very much and look forward to spending lots of time together now that this study is completed.

To my Orange County Public School colleagues still on their dissertation journey, I wish you the best of luck. May your work give you the challenges and satisfaction that this study provided me.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

With The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), public schools in America were put under immense pressure to perform academically (Electronic Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act, 2001). Under NCLB, each state must measure every public school student's progress in reading and math in each of grades 3 through 8 and at least once during grades 10 through 12 (Electronic Summary of NCLB). School based administrators, in particular, took on these challenges to make sure that all students were learning.

In the state of Florida, when Governor Jeb Bush and former Lieutenant Governor Frank Brogan took office in December of 1998, according to their campaign, their top priority was "improving student achievement and ensuring that children receive a quality education" (Florida Department of Education, 2001, p. 1). Shortly after they took office, bleak statistics regarding the educational status of the state of Florida were released. It was announced that Florida's high school graduation rate was at 52%. An additional 50% of Florida's fourth graders were unable to read at grade level and one-third of Florida's ninth graders, approximately 60,000 students, had a D or F average (Florida Department of Education, 2001). This evidence helped fuel the major educational reform within the state of Florida known as the A+ Plan.

A major component of Governor Bush's A+ Plan was school grades based on student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT). Starting in 1999, all public schools in Florida were assigned school grades by the Florida

Department of Education. Within this plan, every school was given a grade based on student performance on the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

There were mixed results in responding to the challenges of this new found accountability. From 1999 to 2006, increasing student achievement led to improved school grades. Since 1999, the number of A school grades increased from 202 in 1999 to 1467 in 2006 and the number of B school grades increased from 313 in 1999 to 610 in 2006. There was also a decrease in the number of C school grades from 1230 in 1999 to 570 in 2006 and a decrease in D schools from 601 in 1999 to 121 in 2006. However, over that same time period, there was an increase in F school grades from 76 in 1999 to 78 in 2005 (Florida Department of Education, 2006b, p. 3).

As schools strived to meet the standards set by the A+ Plan and NCLB, the bar continued to rise. According to a meeting summary released by the Florida Department of Education (2006a), the school grading scale became more stringent, with science being added as a seventh category and performance of the lowest 25% of students in math being added as the eighth.

To respond to the increased accountability, schools needed effective school leadership. Research suggested that leadership is vital to the successful functioning of a K-12 school (Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005). According to the report, *The principal, keynote of a high-achieving school: Attracting and keeping the leaders we need*, published by the Educational Research Service (2000), "the principalship is a position that is absolutely critical to educational change and improvement" (p. 1).

With the importance of effective school leadership, the identification and selection of quality principal candidates played an important role in the success of school districts. In 2008, there were many assessments and instruments that could be used to predict school leadership potential (Lashway, 1999). Duke, Grogan, Tucker and Heinecke (2003) questioned the validity of many of these traditional measures of effective school leadership. Their stance was that school leaders who will be successful in the age of accountability looked different than successful leaders from past decades. They stated, "Many would argue that we do - that conditions of schooling have changed so much in recent years that old prescriptions are not helpful anymore" (p. 1).

Review of Literature

According to Bracey (2002), concerns with public education stemmed back to the early 1950s when politicians and the military viewed schools for the first time as "integral to the national defense and as important weapons in the Cold War" (p. 38). The general belief was that the public schools of America were producing insufficient quantities of scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and foreign language speakers. Bracey further stated that these beliefs were somewhat validated when in October 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite to orbit the earth. This event sent Americans into a panic with the educational system to blame.

In 1983, "A Nation at Risk" was released by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (Bracey, 2002). This report, which Bracey referred to as "The

Paper Sputnik," again questioned the American public school system and its ability to properly educate the youth of America (p. 41).

The movement questioning the quality of public education gained momentum with the 1989 educational summit in Charlottesville, Virginia, at which President George H. W. Bush and the nation's governors set broad performance goals for America's schools (Rudalevige, 2003). This eventually led to "Goals 2000," a law proposed by President Bill Clinton which provided grants to help states develop academic standards and most importantly the 1994 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which "signaled a nationwide commitment to standards-based reform" (Rudalevige, p. 2). Within the reauthorization, Congress adopted the notion of "adequate yearly progress", which later "became the linchpin of accountability in No Child Left Behind" (Rudalevige, p. 2).

According to Rudalevige (2003), when George W. Bush entered the White House as our 43rd president, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) emerged as a 30 page legislative blueprint. The proposal, released just three days after the president's inauguration, included "a broad block-grant program providing new spending flexibility to "charter states", and it consolidated categorical grants into five areas of focus" (Rudalevige, p. 5). The United States Department of Education (2008) further clarified the new spending flexibility and the term "charter state", stating "a charter option for states and districts committed to accountability and reform will be created. Under this program, charter states and districts would be freed from categorical program requirements in return for submitting a five-year performance agreement to the Secretary

of Education and being subject to especially rigorous standards of accountability (p. 1). Eventually, on January 8, 2002, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was signed into law as part of a bipartisan education package that greatly expanded the federal role in public education (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2004).

No Child Left Behind

When President George W. Bush signed into law The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, he increased educational federal funding to states by more than 24 percent from the previous year (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2004). However, with the funding came an unprecedented increase of federal mandates and standards. According to a report published by the Public Education Network (2003), the main focus of NCLB was to improve the academic achievement of low-performing schools around the country. It strives to "have every student achieving at a proficient level, as defined by each state, by the 2013-2014 school year" (p. 1).

According to an executive summary developed by the U.S. Department of Education, the NCLB Act included "increased accountability for States, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for states and local educational agencies (LEAs) in the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children" (Electronic Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act, p.1, 2001).

Florida's A+ Plan for Education

Prior to Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Brogan, the state of Florida had already put into place several items that would become the backbone of the A+ Plan. Former Governor Lawton Chiles had successfully fostered the development of the Sunshine State Standards. These were a rigorous set of standards developed by Florida educators that indicated what each student should know and be able to do from kindergarten through high school (Florida Department of Education, 2001). Florida educators had also created a criterion referenced test, named the Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT) designed to specifically measure mastery of the Sunshine State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2001). In 1998, the state board of education had also approved the designation of five achievement levels for FCAT score results. This would eventually be used as an integral piece to the school grading puzzle (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

According to a report from the Florida Department of Education (2001), the A+ Plan for education, was "built upon two principles: (a) each student should gain a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time in a Florida public school, and (b) "no student will be left behind" (p. 2). To properly measure and determine if students in Florida were making progress and achieving the learning benchmarks set forth in the Sunshine State Standards, the FCAT was expanded in 1999 from the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades to all grades three through ten. Additionally, a "value-added system that tracks individual students' progress was added in the 2001-2002 school year to measure individual learning gains" (Florida Department of Education, 2001, p. 2). Through these measures

Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Brogan hoped to shift the Florida education system to a child-centered approach, rather than a system or school centered approach (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

Starting in 1999, all public schools in Florida were assigned school grades from the Department of Education based on student performance on the FCAT. School performance grades, according to Horne (2004), were "determined by the accumulation of percentage points for six measures of achievement" (p. 3). These measures included a) the percentage of students meeting high standards in reading, writing and math; b) the percentage of students making learning gains in reading and math, and c) adequate progress of the lowest 25% of students in reading (Florida Department of Education, 2006b). In addition, two other conditions had to be met: testing percentage and performance of struggling readers. All schools had to test at least 90 percent of their eligible students. For a school to receive a grade of A, the school must have tested 95 percent of their eligible students. If a school tested fewer than 90 percent of their students, the school would receive an incomplete "I". After investigation, if the percent tested remained less than 90 percent, the final grade would be one letter grade lower than indicated by the total points accumulated (Horne).

Schools that earned enough points to receive a C grade or higher also had to demonstrate that at least 50 percent of the lowest students made annual learning gains in reading. For a school to earn an A, it had to meet this criterion in the current year. For a school to earn a B or C, adequate progress of the lowest students, defined as 50 percent or more making learning gains, had to be met in the current or previous year. According to

Horne (2004), the final grade would be reduced one letter grade for schools failing to meet this criterion.

The A+ Plan also contained an aggressive School Recognition program. The philosophy behind the School Recognition program was articulated in a report by the Florida Department of Education (2001); "The private sector has long used incentives to improve performance. The private sector however confuses uniformity with fairness. The true measure of fairness is when compensation matches the quality of work" (p. 3).

In 2006, Governor Jeb Bush signed House Bill 7087, commonly referred to as A++ (Florida Department of Education, 2006c), that expanded on the educational reform effort from the A+ Plan. Within this bill, numerous areas were addressed, including "secondary reform, differentiated pay for teachers, school leadership development, school improvement, paperwork reduction and school start date" (C. Yecke, personal communication, June 8, 2006).

School Leadership

As stated by Gentilucci and Muto (2007), "No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) placed accountability for student academic achievement at the top of the national school reform agenda. It is no longer enough for school leaders to implement promising reform efforts; they must now demonstrate improved academic performance for all students in their schools." (p. 219).

Given the increased focus on accountability, how would principals meet the challenges? As stated by Lashway (2000)

> Clearly, accountability is not just another task added to the already formidable list of the principal's responsibilities. It requires new roles and new forms of leadership carried out under careful public scrutiny while simultaneously trying to keep day-to-day management on an even keel. A challenge akin to changing the tires on a moving vehicle (p. 4).

According to Marzano et al. (2005) the school principal was an imperative part of the solution to raise student achievement to meet accountability standards. They stated "the principal is…a necessary precondition for an effective school" (p. 5).

Richard Riley, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education further explained the importance of the principal in the age of accountability:

> [The principalship] is a position that is absolutely critical to educational change and improvement. A good principal can create a climate that can foster excellence in teaching and learning, while an in effective one can quickly thwart the progress of the most dedicated reformers (as cited by Duke et al, 2003, p. 97).

Through the Mid-Continent Research for Educating and Learning (McRel) institute, a non-traditional study was conducted to measure the effect of school leadership on student achievement. Through this meta-analysis, including 69 studies involving 2,802 schools, it was determined that "the correlation between the leadership behavior of the principal in the school and the average academic achievement of students in the school to be .25" (Marzano et al., 2005, p.10).

Further emphasizing the importance of the school principal, Gentilucci and Muto (2007) stated that principals had both a "direct" and "indirect" impact on student achievement. While the direct impact of a principal had been defined by researchers (Marzano et al, 2005), the indirect impact was defined as the influence that principals had

on factors such as allocation of resources, school climate, instructional guidance and expectations, communication, and relationships with teachers and staff.

School Administrator Shortage

To complicate matters, our nation was facing a principal shortage. According to Potter (2001), 40 percent of the nation's 93,200 principals were nearing retirement age, with 54% of U.S. principals over age 50 (Lovely, 2004). Kerrins, Johnston and Cushing (2001) cited "high stress, time demands of the job, broadening requirements of the job that far exceeded salaries and new state accountability legislation" as major factors resulting in principal retirement (p. 20).

According to Grosso De Leon (2006) 730 of New York City's more than 1,400 principals left their jobs since 2001. There has also been a major shift in the age of principals, highlighting this turnover. In 2005, there were four times as many principals under the age of 41 as over 60.

Roza (2003) provided a different perspective on the shortage of principal candidates. She stated, "Where there have been reductions in the number of certified candidates, these conditions are district and even school-specific and are more pronounced at the secondary than the elementary level" (p. 7). She continued "perceptions of the shortage are driven by demands for a new and different kind of school principal. In many ways, the purported shortage is a matter of definition. There are plenty of certified applicants, but there seems to be a dearth of candidates with high-level leadership skills" (Roza, p. 7).

Identifying Talent

Buckingham and Coffman (1999) defined a talent as "a recurring pattern of thought, feeling or behavior that can be productively applied" (p. 71). They further stated that, "Every role, performed at excellence, requires talent, because every role, performed at excellence, requires certain recurring patterns of thought, feeling or behavior" (p. 71).

In an effort to fully understand how to identify one's talents or strengths, The Gallup Organization conducted over two million interviews over the last thirty years. They interviewed all types of people, with the common thread being that they were at the top of their field or profession. Each interview consisted of open-ended questions looking for what it was that allowed each person to excel at what they did (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Through this research, thirty-four talent "themes" were identified. Based on these themes, the StrengthsFinder Profile was created. The StrengthsFinder Profile, "presents you with pairs of statements, captures your choices, sorts them, and reflects back on your most dominant patterns of behavior, thereby highlighting where you have the greatest potential for real strength" (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001, p. 76). The StrengthsFinder Profile identifies each individual's five dominant themes of talent. These are also referred to as "signature themes" (Buckingham & Clifton).

Axelrod, Hanfield-Jones and Michaels (2001) defined the importance of recruiting talented employees. With the birth of the Information Age in the 1980s, the importance of hard assets – machines, facilities and capital – declined relative to the

importance of intangible assets such as proprietary networks, intellectual capital, and talent in regards to organizational success. They further stated, "talent is now a critical driver of corporate performance and that a company's ability to attract, develop, and retain talent will be a major competitive advantage far into the future" (p. 2).

Succession Planning

As schools and school districts looked to replace those principals that were scheduled to retire within the next three to five years, the importance of succession planning would become evident. According to Quinn (2002), the purpose of succession planning "is not so much to select candidates for specific vacancies but to create a cadre of management candidates with strong knowledge, skills, and attitudes who can be trained for future leadership vacancies" (p. 26).

Quinn further stated that succession planning:

> " (a) Provides a coordinated strategy for the identification and development of the organizations key resource – the teachers in the school, (b) retains the services of upwardly mobile employees within the school district, (c} makes the district more attractive to prospective employees who see opportunity for professional growth, (d) ensures a readily available and inexpensive source of in-house replacements for key leadership positions in individual schools and on the district level, (e) promotes challenging and rewarding career possibilities through meaningful professional development for potential administrators, (f) reduces lost productivity while a replacement from the outside reeds a time-consuming learning curve, (g) helps to affirm commitment to diversity goals in hiring and promoting and (h) enhances a positive work culture through ongoing support for employees (p. 27).

With the importance of providing quality leadership at schools, it was surprising the lack of districts that had no formal plan to effectively replace principals. According

to Lovely (2004), "73% of school districts across the country have no plan in place to prepare or support aspiring principals" (p. 17).

Purpose of the Study

With the increased demands on principals and a shortage of qualified, acceptable candidates, school districts that had to replace principals were in a difficult position. These factors, combined with the importance that the principal role has in relation to student achievement, made the identification of potential administrators and the hiring process for new administrators a top priority for all school districts.

The purpose of this study was to identify what characteristics or talents, as identified by the StrengthsFinder profile, do principals in 2008 look for in identifying potential school administrators? Also, what differences, if any, exist within the strengths of elementary school, middle school and high school candidates as identified by their principals?

The StrengthsFinder profile, developed by the Gallup Organization, was the assessment used to identify participating potential administrators' talents or characteristics. Additional demographic information related to the potential administrators was collected with a survey of the participants of the study.

Research Questions

In 2007, the Orange County Public School district developed the Aspiring Leaders Academy to identify and develop potential school administrators. School principals nominated employees who they believed had the potential to become excellent school administrators. In an effort to identify what talents existed among the group of potential administrators identified, the following research questions were selected to guide this study:

1. What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?
2. How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, or high) degree or certification, current position, gender or race?
3. To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?
4. To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?

Definition of Terms

A+ Plan: An educational accountability plan, developed by Governor Jeb Bush, which was intended to raise standards for schools in the state of Florida while shifting the

education system to a child-centered approach, rather than a system or school centered approach (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

Aspiring Leaders Academy: An initiative spearheaded by the Orange County Public School's department of Professional Development Services (PDS) to identify potential school administrators and foster their professional growth.

Clifton StrengthsFinder: This web-based instrument contains 180 items, each listing a pair of self-descriptors. These self-descriptors are then grouped into thirty four themes, of which the top five are identified for each participant to highlight their strengths (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test (FCAT): A criterion referenced test developed by the Florida Department of Education designed to specifically measure mastery of the Sunshine State Standards in grades three through ten (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Federal legislation developed by President George W. Bush in 2002. The overall goal of NCLB is to have every student achieving at a proficient level, as defined by each state, by the 2013-2014 school year.

Signature Themes: The five dominant themes identified by the StrengthFinder Profile that highlights an individual's dominant pattern of thought, feeling or behavior (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Succession Planning: A personnel strategy that identifies and develops employees within an organization in an effort to develop them into managers or leaders.

Study Design

Population and Sample

Sixty-one teachers or teacher leaders from the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) were targeted for this study. All participants were members of the Aspiring Leaders Academy program, an initiative developed by the district to cultivate the next generation of school based administrators for the Orange County Public Schools.

Instrumentation

The Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile developed by the Gallup Organization in 1999 was utilized to identify the strengths or talents of a group of teachers within Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) who were identified by their principals as potential school based administrators. Each individual chosen was given a copy of *Now, Discover Your Strengths* and was instructed by the Senior Director of Professional Development Services for OCPS to complete the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile online before June 30, 2007. This information was then submitted to district personnel and obtained by the researcher through the district for the purposes of data analysis.

Reliability

According to Buckingham and Clifton (1999), two reliability studies related to the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument had been conducted, one measuring internal consistency and the other measuring the extent to which scores are stable over time. In a

study involving over 50,000 respondents, the average internal consistency for each theme was 0.785 (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999, p. 252). Given the fact that the maximum possible internal consistency is 1, the StrengthFinder themes demonstrate internal consistency. In a separate study to measure reliability over time, technically known as "test-retest", the majority of the 34 StrengthsFinder themes demonstrated test-retest reliability between .60 and .80 over a six-month interval (p. 252).

Validity

According to Lopez, Hodges and Harter (2004), many items were pilot tested in the development of the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument to assess their ability to accurately identify and measure themes. A balance was developed, utilizing the items with the strongest psychometric properties along with a proper assessment length. This resulted in 180 item pairs, measured in 20 second intervals to develop an assessment that could be administered in 30-45 minutes (Schreiner, 2005).

In a study of over 600,000 respondents to analyze construct validity, Lopez et al. (2005) found "the average item-to-proposed-theme correlation (corrected for part-whole overlap) was 6.6 times as large as the average item correlation to other themes".

Data Collection

In November 2007, all participant information was collected in two major areas; applicant information in the form of each participant's application (Appendix A) and

signature theme information from the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile (Appendix B). Additional individual demographic data, with assistance from the OCPS Professional Development Department, was collected at this time. Once collected, this information was organized within an SPSS worksheet. These data were then analyzed through several statistical procedures to answer the research questions using the appropriate data sources as stated in Table 1.

Table 1: Research Questions and Identifiable Data Source

Research Question	Data Source
1. What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?	1. List of employees nominated, results from the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile
2. How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, or high) degree or certification, current position, gender, or race?	2. Grade level of employees nominated, results from the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile
3. To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?	3. Results from application for admission to the Aspiring Leaders Academy, results from the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile
4. To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?	4. Current position as identified by the application for admission to the Aspiring Leaders Academy, results from the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile

Data Analysis

For each participant in this study, the following demographic data were collected within an SPSS spreadsheet: a) level of current work assignment, b) gender, c) race, d) current position and e) certification or Educational Leadership degree status. In addition to these demographic data, each participant's five signature themes, as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument, was also recorded and entered in the SPSS spreadsheet.

Assumptions

The first assumption was that all participants completed the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile accurately and to the best of their ability. The second assumption was that all participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy were chosen in good faith by their principal.

Limitations

The first limitation of this study was that the validity of the study was subject to the ability of participants to properly complete the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile within the allotted time frame without interruption on line. The second limitation was that statistical significance was difficult to achieve based on the number of participants in the

study (n=61). The third limitation was that the study may not be generalized outside of the Orange County Public School District in that participants were specific to employees of the Orange County Public School system.

Significance of the Study

This researcher planned to shed light on the talent management practices of Orange County Public Schools' principals. With the data collected from the research conducted, current practices could be analyzed and efforts made to either share effective practices or provide training for principals specifically designed to identify talent and support the growth of potential administrators within Orange County Public Schools and throughout the United States.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

No Child Left Behind

According to Bracey (2002), concerns with public education stem back to the early 1950s when politicians and the military viewed schools for the first time as "integral to the national defense and as important weapons in the Cold War" (p. 38). The general belief was that the public schools of America were producing insufficient quantities of scientists, engineers, mathematicians, and foreign language speakers. Bracey further stated that these beliefs were somewhat validated when in October 1957, the Russians launched Sputnik, the first man-made satellite to orbit the earth. This event sent Americans into a panic with the educational system to blame.

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which "signaled a nationwide commitment to standards-based reform" (Rudalevige, p. 2). Within the reauthorization, Congress adopted the notion of "adequate yearly progress", which later "became the linchpin of accountability in No Child Left Behind" (Rudalevige, p. 2).

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Table 2: NCLB Categorical Programs

Name	Focus
Title I	Achieving Equality Through High Standards and Accountability
Title II	Improving Teacher Quality
Title III	Moving Limited English Proficient Students to English Fluency
Title IV	Promoting Parental Options and Innovative Programs
Title V	Safe Schools for the 21st Century

Source: Executive Summary of No Child Left Behind, p. 1

When President George W. Bush signed into law The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, he increased educational federal funding to states by more than 24 percent from the previous year (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2004). However, with the funding came an unprecedented increase of federal mandates and standards. According to a report published by the Public Education Network (2003), the main focus of NCLB was to improve the academic achievement of low-performing schools around the country. It strives to "have every student achieving at a proficient level, as defined by each state, by the 2013-2014 school year" (p. 1).

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the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children" (Electronic Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act, p.1, 2001).

The implementation of NCLB was a huge undertaking with mixed viewpoints. According to Lewis (2005), not only was NCLB underfunded, but the federal funding that was authorized was not equally distributed. She stated, "most of the funding will go to districts in which the highest number of poor children reside" and "districts which are less impacted by poverty will lose funding" (p. 67). Lewis further stated that because of the federal deficit, if funding for NCLB was cut there was the risk that "states may decline to participate in NCLB programs if federal funding is not sufficient for the purpose" (p. 68).

Azzam (2004) believed that there was increasingly less support for NCLB from the common public, stating that "the more the NCLB legislation hits home, the greater the public's skepticism" (p. 87). According to Lau (2004), a study conducted by Education Week and the Public Education Network revealed that the percentage of voters opposing NCLB increased from 8 percent in 2003 to 28 percent in 2004. Additionally, 57 percent of respondents indicated that they felt that NCLB was underfunded at both the local and national levels (p. 5).

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) also weighed in on their opinion of NCLB. In their report *NCLB: Let's Get it Right* (American Federation of Teachers, 2006) ,18 recommendations were made to improve NCLB's focus in four areas: a)

assessment and accountability, b) school improvement interventions, c) staffing schools and d) funding system wide accountability.

Among their concerns, the AFT stated that because each state had a different accountability system, there were 50 different sets of standards and assessments. This caused inconsistency among state accountability plans and brings validity and reliability of each plan into question.

The AFT also listed funding as a major concern, stating "as of January 2006, the difference between the amount Congress promised for NCLB programs and what it actually provided for these programs is 40 billion" (p. 11). This lack of appropriate funding affects districts with the greatest concentrations of poverty the most, who without additional money are unable to "reduce class size, offer proven interventions, develop mentoring and induction programs, and provide additional resources for turning around low-performing schools" (p. 11).

A+ Plan for Education

Prior to Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Brogan, the state of Florida had already put into place several items that would become the backbone of the A+ Plan. Former Governor Lawton Chiles had successfully fostered the development of the Sunshine State Standards. These were a rigorous set of standards developed by Florida educators that indicate what each student should know and be able to do from Kindergarten through high school (Florida Department of Education, 2001). Florida educators had also created a criterion referenced test, named the Florida Comprehensive

Achievement Test (FCAT) designed to specifically measure mastery of the Sunshine State Standards (Florida Department of Education, 2001). In 1998, the state board of education had also approved the designation of five achievement levels for FCAT score results. This would eventually be used as an integral piece to the school grading puzzle (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

In the state of Florida, when Governor Jeb Bush and former Lieutenant Governor Frank Brogan took office in December of 1998, their top priority according to their campaign was "improving student achievement and ensuring that children receive a quality education" (Florida Department of Education, 2001, p. 1). Shortly after they took office, bleak statistics regarding the educational status of the state of Florida were released. It was announced that Florida's high school graduation rate was at 52%. An additional 50% of Florida's fourth graders were unable to read at grade level and one-third of Florida's ninth graders, approximately 60,000 students, had a D or F average (Florida Department of Education, 2001). This evidence helped fuel the major educational reform within the state of Florida known as the A+ Plan.

According to a report from the Florida Department of Education (2001), the A+ Plan for education, was "built upon two principles: (a) each student should gain a year's worth of knowledge in a year's time in a Florida public school, and (b) no student will be left behind" (p. 2). To properly measure and determine if students in Florida were making progress and achieving the learning benchmarks set forth in the Sunshine State Standards, the FCAT was expanded from the fourth, eighth, and tenth grades to all grades three through ten. Additionally, a "value-added system that tracks individual students'

progress was added in the 2001-2002 school year to measure individual learning gains" (Florida Department of Education, 2001, p. 2). Through these measures Governor Jeb Bush and Lt. Governor Brogan hoped to shift the Florida education system to a child-centered approach, rather than a system or school centered approach (Florida Department of Education, 2001).

Starting in 1999, all public schools in Florida were assigned school grades based on student performance on the FCAT. School performance grades, according to Horne (2004), were "determined by the accumulation of percentage points for six measures of achievement" (p. 3). In addition, two other conditions must be met: testing percentage and performance of struggling readers. All schools must test at least 90 percent of the eligible students. For a school to receive a grade of A, the school must test 95 percent of the eligible students. If a school tested fewer than 90 percent of the students, the school would receive an incomplete "I". After investigation, if the percent tested remained less than 90 percent, the final grade would be one letter grade lower than indicated by the total points accumulated (Horne, 2004).

Schools that earned enough points to receive a C grade or higher also had to demonstrate that at least 50 percent of the lowest students made annual learning gains in reading. For a school to earn an A, it must have met this criterion in the current year. For a school to earn a B or C, adequate progress of the lowest students, defined as 50 percent or more making learning gains, must have been met in the current or previous year. According to Horne (2004), the final grade would be reduced one letter grade for schools failing to meet this criterion.

The A+ Plan also contained an aggressive School Recognition Program. The philosophy behind the School Recognition program was articulated in a report by the Florida Department of Education (2001); "The private sector has long used incentives to improve performance. The private sector however confuses uniformity with fairness. The true measure of fairness is when compensation matches the quality of work" (p. 3).

As schools strived to meet the standards set by the A+ Plan, the bar continued to rise. According to a meeting summary released by the Florida Department of Education (2006a), the school grading scale became more stringent, with science being added as a seventh category and performance of the lowest 25% of students in math being added as the eighth.

In 2006, Governor Jeb Bush signed House Bill 7087, commonly referred to as A++ (Florida Department of Education, 2006c), that expanded on the educational reform effort from the A+ Plan. Within this bill, numerous areas were addressed, including "secondary reform, differentiated pay for teachers, school leadership development, school improvement, paperwork reduction and school start date" (C. Yecke, personal communication, June 8, 2006).

According to the Florida Department of Education (2007), the A+ Plan and school grades led to increased performance in schools across the state. In analyzing the school grade results from 2007, the following conclusions were made:

> As expectations for school performance increase, Florida schools are rising to the occasion. The number of low performing schools has decreased to 83 (after standards were raised) in 2007, from 158 in 1995, increased from 71 in 1996, 30 in 1997, 4 in 1998, (then the standards were raised) 76 in 1999, 4 in 2000, 0 in 2001 (then the standards were raised again), 64 in 2002, 35 in 2003, 49 in 2004, (then the standards were raised again) 78 in 2005, and

> 21 in 2006. In 2007, the bar was raised again when science, learning gains of the lowest 25% in mathematics, and bonus points for Grade 11 and 12 FCAT retakes were included in the school grade calculation (p. 1).

According to Goldhaber and Hannaway (2004), educators had a different perspective on the effects of the A+ Plan for education. Based on a case study conducted in 2004, four general themes emerged: a) both A and F schools felt tremendous pressure as a consequence of the A+ Plan, which led them to narrow their instructional focus; b) districts responded to the A+ Plan by providing significant resources to F schools; c) the accountability results triggered new dynamics in the allocation of personnel and d) the social stigma of earning an F, not the threat of vouchers, appeared to be the most important issue (p. 600).

School Leadership

According to Gentilucci and Muto (2007), "No Child Left Behind (NCLB) placed accountability for student academic achievement at the top of the national school reform agenda. It is no longer enough for school leaders to implement promising reform efforts; they must now demonstrate improved academic performance for all students in their schools." (p. 219).

Given the increased focus on accountability, how will principals meet the challenges? As stated by Lashway (2000)

> Clearly, accountability is not just another task added to the already formidable list of the principal's responsibilities. It requires new roles and new forms of leadership carried out under careful public scrutiny while simultaneously trying to

> keep day-to-day management on an even keel. A challenge akin to changing the tires on a moving vehicle (p. 4).

Richard Riley, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, further emphasized the importance of the principal in the age of accountability:

> [The principalship] is a position that is absolutely critical to educational change and improvement. A good principal can create a climate that can foster excellence in teaching and learning, while an in effective one can quickly thwart the progress of the most dedicated reformers (as cited by Duke et al, 2003, p. 97).

There had been numerous studies conducted throughout the past three decades in an attempt to measure the impact that a principal has or can have on student achievement. Two major reviews, the first conducted by Hallenger and Heck (1998) and the second by Marzano, Walters and McNulty (2005) analyzed a majority of these studies and combined their findings in an effort to reveal a broader picture on the impact that principal leadership might have on student achievement.

In 1998, Hallenger and Heck research sought to explore the relationship between principal leadership and student achievement. To accomplish this, they reviewed the empirical literature related to principal leadership and its impact on student achievement from 1980 to 1995. This review consisted of 40 published journal articles, dissertation studies and papers presented at peer-reviewed conferences. Of the studies reviewed, eleven were conducted outside of the United States.

While there were numerous studies conducted during this time period, the framework used by each researcher to demonstrate the impact that the principal had on student achievement differed within each study. Hallenger and Heck (1998) utilized three general frameworks to classify each study; "a) direct effects (i.e. where the

principal's actions influence school outcomes), b) mediated effects (i.e., where principal actions affect outcomes indirectly through other variables) and c) reciprocal effects (e.g. where the principal affects teachers and the teachers affect the principal, and through those processes outcomes are affected)" (p. 163).

Of the studies analyzed, Hallenger and Heck (1998) revealed two major findings. The most frequent framework used to analyze the impact of principal leadership on student achievement were variations of the direct-effects and mediated-effect models. Furthermore, it was determined that there was a defined chronological pattern in the results. "Over time researchers moved from employing relatively simple direct-effect frameworks to the use of more complex models" (p. 163).

The results of those studies employing the direct-effect model of leadership effects were very apparent. According to Hallenger and Heck (1998), "researchers adopting this model have been unable to produce sound or consistent evidence of leadership effects on student outcomes. A finding of no significant relationship was the most common, with occasional findings of mixed or weak effects" (p. 166).

In contrast, the results of those studies based on a mediated-effects model were as defined yet completely opposite (p. 167). "Studies employing a mediated-effects model produced either mixed or consistently evidence of positive effects of principal leadership on school outcomes. When combined with antecedent variables, the more complex model shows an even more consistent pattern of positive indirect effects of principal leadership on school effectiveness" (p. 167).

Hallenger and Heck (1998) found it much more difficult to analyze the effect of principal leadership on student outcomes using the reciprocal-effects model. This was due to the lack of longitudinal data found within the studies that were analyzed.

In conclusion, Hallenger and Heck (1998) found

> The general pattern of results drawn from this review supports the belief that principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement. While this indirect effect is relatively small, it is statistically significant, and we assert, meaningful. Moreover, the review suggests that it is possible that previously described discrepancies among research results may be explained by the conceptual and methodological tools employed be researchers (p. 186).

Gentilucci and Muto (2007) agreed with these findings, stating that principals had both a "direct" and "indirect" impact on student achievement. While the direct impact of a principal and their actions had been defined by researchers (Marzano et al, 2005), the indirect impact was defined as the influence that principals had on factors such as allocation of resources, school climate, instructional guidance and expectations, communication, and relationships with teachers and staff.

Kruger, Witziers and Sleegers (2007) elaborated on the notion that the principal had more of an indirect effect on student outcomes within a school. They stated that direct-effect research models used in an attempt to establish a direct causal link between leader practices and student outcomes are flawed. These researchers claimed, "leadership is no longer proposed as having a direct influence on learning outcomes, but as having an indirect influence through the way it has had an impact on instructional organization and culture" (p. 3).

Through the Mid-Continent Research for Educating and Learning (McRel) institute, a non-traditional study was conducted in 2005 to measure the effect of school leadership on student achievement. Their study included, "69 studies involving 2,802 schools, approximately 1.4 million students and 14,000 teachers" (Marzano et al., 2005). In determining the best methodology to synthesize the vast amount of quantitative information collected, (Marzano et al.) conducted a meta-analysis. They settled on this methodology as opposed to a more traditional narrative approach "because it provided the most objective means to answer the question, what does the research tell us about school leadership?" (p. 9).

Within this study, (Marzano et al., 2005) research covering 35 years was used, including those relevant studies that had been conducted from 1978 to 2001. Of the studies included, 39 were conducted at the elementary level (1,319 schools) , six were conducted at the middle school/ junior high level (323 schools), 10 were conducted at the high school level (371 schools), eight included schools K-8 (290 schools) and 6 included K -12 (499 schools) (p.29).

For each study within the meta-analysis, "a correlation between general leadership and student achievement was either computed or extracted directly from the study" (p. 30). Given this information, it was determined that "the overall correlation between the leadership behavior of the principal in the school and the average academic achievement of students in the school to be .25" (Marzano et al., 2005, p.10).

To help interpret this information, Marzano et al. (2005) shared the following example:

> Assume that a principal is hired into a district and assigned to a school that is in the 50th percentile in the average achievement of its students. Also assume that the principal is at the 50th percentile in leadership ability.
>
> Now assure that the principal stays in the school for a few years. Our .25 correlation tells us that over time we would predict the average achievement of the school to remain in the 50th percentile. But now let's increase the principal's leadership ability by one standard deviation _ from the 50th percentile to the 84th percentile. This increase might have occurred as a result of the principal's attendance at an extended set of courses or seminars on leadership offered in the district. Our correlation of .25 indicates that over time we would predict the average achievement of the school to rise to the 60th percentile (p. 10).

While the meta-analysis conducted yielded an overall .25 average correlation, Marzano et al. (2005) identified 21 categories of behaviors that they refer to as "responsibilities" (p.41). Within the study, each responsibility is individually correlated to student achievement. These correlations are explained in detail in Table 3.

Table 3: The 21 Responsibilities and Their Correlations (r) with Student Academic Achievement

Responsibility	The Extent to Which the Principal…	Average r	95% CI	No. of Studies	No. of Schools
1. Affirmation	Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures.	.19	.08 to .29	6	332
2. Change Agent	Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the statue quo	.25	.16 to .34	6	466
3. Contingent Rewards	Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments	.24	.15 to .32	9	465
4. Communication	Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students	.23	.12 to .33	11	299
5. Culture	Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation	.25	.18 to .31	15	819
6. Discipline	Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus	.27	.18 to .35	12	437
7. Flexibility	Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent	.28	.16 to .39	6	277
8. Focus	Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention	.24	.19 to .29	44	1,619

Responsibility	The Extent to Which the Principal…	Average r	95% CI	No. of Studies	No. of Schools
9. Ideals/Beliefs	Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling	.22	.14 to .30	7	513
10. Input	Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies	.25	.18 to .32	16	669
11. Intellectual Stimulation	Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture	.24	.13 to .34	4	302
12. Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices	.20	.14 to .27	23	826
13. Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices	.25	.15 to .34	10	368
14. Monitoring/ Evaluating	Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning	.27	.22 to .32	31	1,129
15. Optimizer	Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations	.20	.13 to .27	17	724
16. Order	Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines	.25	.16 to .33	17	456
17. Outreach	Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders	.27	.18 to .35	14	478

Responsibility	The Extent to Which the Principal…	Average r	95% CI	No. of Studies	No. of Schools
18. Relationships	Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff	.18	.09 to .26	11	505
19. Resources	Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs	.25	.17 to .32	17	571
20. Situational Awareness	Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems	.33	.11 to .51	5	91
21. Visibility	Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students	.20	.11 to .28	13	477

Source: School leadership that works: From research to results, p. 42-43

Marzano et al. (2005) believed that all 21 responsibilities played an important role in effective school leadership. While the correlation of each responsibility differed slightly, no one responsibility was significantly more important than any other and all 21 responsibilities were statistically significant.

School Administrator Shortage

To complicate matters, the United States was facing a potential principal shortage. According to Potter (2001), 40 percent of the nation's 93,200 principals were nearing retirement age, with 54% of U.S. principals over age 50 (Lovely et al., 2004). Kerrins et

al. (2001) cited "high stress, time demands of the job, broadening requirements of the job that far exceed salaries and new state accountability legislation" as major factors resulting in principal retirement (p. 20).

Roza (2003) provided a different perspective on the shortage of principal candidates. She conducted a thorough analysis on the issue by "surveying 83 public school districts in 10 regions around the country thought to be struggling to fill principal vacancies" (p. 12). These areas were specifically chosen based on either high population growth or reports of education labor shortages. These areas are represented in Table 4.

Table 4: Targeted districts in 10 regions

Regions	Number of Districts Responding
Atlanta and surrounding counties	11
Chicago and surrounding counties	9
Dallas metropolitan area	8
Los Angeles metropolitan area	9
New Mexico	2
Orlando and surrounding counties	8
Philadelphia and surrounding counties	9
Phoenix area	7
San Diego metropolitan area	8
Santa Clara metropolitan area	12
Total Districts	83

Source: A matter of definition: Is there truly a shortage of school principals?, p. 19

As a result of this study, Roza (2003) concluded that despite the widespread notion that there is a shortage of principals, this was not the norm. She stated, "Where there have been reductions in the number of certified candidates, these conditions are district and even school-specific and are more pronounced at the secondary than the elementary level" (p. 7). What was revealed, however, was a lack of candidates able to meet the demands within the era of school accountability. "Perceptions of the shortage are driven by demands for a new and different kind of school principal. In many ways, the purported shortage is a matter of definition. There are plenty of certified applicants, but there seem to be a dearth of candidates with high-level leadership skills" (p. 8). While the quality of candidates may not have changed, what was expected from principals had. "Now principals must be instructional leaders in their schools. Previously, principals were perceived as administrators and disciplinary individuals. It takes a different kind of principal to do this job" (p. 30).

Another finding from this study was the surprising disconnect between superintendents and their respective human resource departments. Based on the districts within this study, Roza (2003) concluded that; a) there was a gap between "what superintendents say they want in new principals and the experiences human resource departments rely on to screen candidates" (p. 8); b) human resource departments relied heavily on years of teaching as a qualification as opposed to the leadership experience and talent superintendents prioritize as the most important qualification and c) "while human resource directors are quite satisfied with their new hires, superintendents

continue to express dissatisfaction about inadequate leadership capabilities of new principals" (p. 8).

Pounder, Galvin and Shepherd (2003) agreed with Roza (2003) that "there are multiple independent and interactive factors that may contribute to perceptions or misperceptions concerning an administrator shortage in the United States" (p. 133). More specifically, Pounder et al believed that the misperception that there was a shortage of principal candidates was fueled politically

> The interests and ideologies of key organizations or constituent groups in the educational policy environment may be aided by the identification of an administrator or educator shortage crisis. These organizations or groups may be motivated to use selective data to define or perpetuate perceptions of a shortage crisis. By defining a shortage crisis, the policy environment is more likely to perceive a sense of urgency in adopting proposed reforms to increase the availability of potential administrators in the profession. Further, how and by whom the crisis is defined influences the type of reform(s) proposed and allows for an organization or group to promote its ideological agenda through reform proposal (p. 141).

While the research on both sides is in conflict on whether or not there was a shortage of candidates, there was certainly a new standard for principals that had been set and not an overabundance of individuals that were currently up for this new challenge (Potter, 2001; Pounder et al, 2003; Roza, 2003). Given this, identification of those prospective administrators with the talents necessary to be successful became a critical component.

Talent Management

Buckingham and Coffman (1999) defined a talent as "a recurring pattern of thought, feeling or behavior that can be productively applied" (p. 71). They further stated that, "Every role, performed at excellence, requires talent, because every role, performed at excellence, requires certain recurring patterns of thought, feeling or behavior" (p. 71).

In an effort to fully understand how to identify one's talents or strengths, The Gallup Organization conducted over two million interviews over the last thirty years. All types of people were interviewed, with the common thread being that they were at the top of their field or profession. Each interview consisted of open-ended questions focused for what it was that allowed each person to excel at what they did (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Through this research, thirty-four talent "themes" were identified. Based on these themes, the StrengthsFinder Profile was created. The StrengthsFinder Profile, "presents you with pairs of statements, captures your choices, sorts them, and reflects back on your most dominant patterns of behavior, thereby highlighting where you have the greatest potential for real strength" (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001, p. 76). The StrengthsFinder Profile identifies each individual's five dominant themes of talent. These are also referred to as "signature themes" (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Axelrod, Hanfield-Jones and Michaels (2001) defined the importance of recruiting talented employees. With the birth of the Information Age in the 1980s, the importance of hard assets – machines, facilities and capital – declined relative to the importance of intangible assets such as proprietary networks, intellectual capital, and

talent in regards to organizational success. Axelrod et al. further stated "talent is now a critical driver of corporate performance and that a company's ability to attract, develop, and retain talent will be a major competitive advantage far into the future" (p. 2).

Outside of education, talent management had become an important topic amongst human resource professionals. Rowan (2007) described in detail the major factors that made this a priority in the corporate world. These included the demographics of an aging workforce, a decline in employee loyalty, the knowledge loss and its effect on an organizations capability, and the expense of turnover.

Rowan (2007) defined talent management as "a range of elements in a value cycle of employee issues" (p. 14). There were three major facets; (a) the attraction phase – recruiting and contingent staffing, (b) employee development – competency management, leadership development and assessment and (c) reward and retention – work force performance management, compensation and succession planning.

Further investigation revealed that there was a shortage of qualified leadership candidates available in the business sector, paralleling the dilemma that many school districts were facing as discussed previously. According to Zhang and Rajagopalan (2006), "the average term for a CEO who left office in 2003 in the United States was only about five years" (p. 96). They further stated that "60 percent of the most senior executives at Fortune 1,000 companies had no desire to be promoted to the CEO position" (p. 96).

Succession Planning

Quinn (2002) stated that schools had three options in dealing with the surge of retiring administrators that was predicted over the next decade. Schools could, a) "cast a wide net outside the district to recruit hard to find replacements" (p.26), b) "do nothing and hope that quality candidates appear" or c) "tap into the quality staff members who may be sitting on the district's bench waiting for advancement" (p. 26). The last option defines what succession planning is about.

Succession planning became even better an option when you consider that "principals, on average, leave after five years because they are ill prepared for the job" and "workload and insurmountable expectations are discouraging teachers from pursuing careers in education" (Lovely, 2004 p. 17). This emphasizes the importance of identifying and encouraging the right candidates to apply.

According to Quinn (2002), the purpose of succession planning "is not so much to select candidates for specific vacancies but to create a cadre of management candidates with strong knowledge, skills, and attitudes who can be trained for future leadership vacancies" (p. 26).

Quinn further stated that succession planning:

> " (a) Provides a coordinated strategy for the identification and development of the organizations key resource – the teachers in the school, (b) retains the services of upwardly mobile employees within the school district, (c} makes the district more attractive to prospective employees who see opportunity for professional growth, (d) ensures a readily available and inexpensive source of in-house replacements for key leadership positions in individual schools and on the district level, (e) promotes challenging and rewarding career possibilities through meaningful professional development for potential administrators, (f) reduces lost productivity while a replacement from the outside reeds a time-consuming learning curve, (g)

> helps to affirm commitment to diversity goals in hiring and promoting and (h) enhances a positive work culture through ongoing support for employees" (p. 27).

With the importance of providing quality leadership at schools, it was surprising the lack of districts that had no formal plan to effectively replace principals. According to Lovely (2004), "73% of school districts across the country have no plan in place to prepare or support aspiring principals" (p. 17). Quinn (2002) found similar information, citing a poll conducted by the Harvard Graduate School of Education that sought to determine the most common strategies school districts were utilizing to fill the pending leadership void. Of those that responded, the most common response (30%) was "nothing" (p. 25).

For a district to develop a succession plan, Lovely (2004) suggested to start with "the end in mind by considering future vacancies, both known and unknown" (p. 18). To do this, she proposed that each district must have a mechanism for which to identify teacher leaders with the potential to be successful school administrators. This is in contrast to the "traditional approach of replacement planning, where districts react to openings by filling them with outsiders and/or insiders who aren't necessarily prepared or ready for a promotion (p. 18).

The second step in this process was to adopt a screening process to assess each person's "promotability" to fill the succession pool (p. 18). According to Quinn (2002), one way to accomplish this was through assessment and development centers. "These operations represent a major advance in determining who has potential for future positions in school administration (p. 27). There are several large corporations that

offered this service. The Gallup Organization, through its PrincipalInsight program, had established itself as one of the of the industry's leaders. According to the Gallup Education Division, the Principal Insight "combines Gallup's in-depth study of the talents of outstanding principals with Web technology to deliver fast, accurate applicant assessment results to districts. This research-based selection tool goes far beyond a surface inquiry into knowledge and skills; it assesses the talents needed for success in the principal's role" (p. 1).

Ventures for Excellence, a company based in Nebraska, also provided selection and development interview services to help school districts identify leadership potential in prospective administrators. The focus of their instrument was on four major themes: a) purpose, b) relationships, c) human development and d) special principal expertise (Ventures for Excellence, 2004, p. 2).

While there were currently many assessments and instruments that could be used to predict school leadership potential Duke, Grogan, Tucker and Heinecke (2003) questioned the validity of many of these traditional measures of effective school leadership. Their stance was that school leaders who will be successful in today's age of accountability will look different than successful leaders from past decades. They stated, "Many would argue that we do - that conditions of schooling have changed so much in recent years that old prescriptions are not helpful anymore" (p. 1).

Lovely (2004) also stated that internally designed protocols could often meet the needs of a district if outsourcing was not feasible. The key to success in making this work was "to start the screening process before the openings actually occur by inviting

qualified applicants to participate in preliminary interviews or related exercises" (p. 18). Quinn (2002) agreed, suggesting that candidates "complete and extensive interview process designed to examine past achievements, determine their understanding of best practices in the teaching-learning process, and evaluate the candidates' views concerning those leadership ingredients that enhance student performance" (p.27).

Lovely (2004) suggested that once talent was identified, then it must be further developed. This could be accomplished by developing a mechanism to identify selected teacher leaders for entry-level administrative assignments. To be successful, "prospects should demonstrate competency in areas such as instructional knowledge, organization, communication, problem solving and work ethic" (p. 18). These assignments could be on a temporary basis, such as a "Teacher on Special Assignment", an arrangement that allows teachers to leave the classroom for a period time without losing tenure, to ensure that the right employees have been chosen.

When done properly, leadership succession could have very positive effects on school leadership and ultimately student achievement. Hargreaves (2005) argued that the opposite was also true and more often the case. He stated, "One of the most significant events in the life of a school is a change in its leadership. Yet few things in education succeed less than leadership succession" (p. 163).

According to Hargreaves (2005), the transition in leadership at a school was critical to its success. Each transition or succession either established continuity or provoked discontinuity. Planned continuity "occurs when the assignment of a new principal reflects a well thought-out succession plan meant to sustain and build on the

goals of a predecessor" (p. 164). Successful school improvement over long periods is dependent on planned continuity. The most successful efforts of planned continuity occured when "insiders were groomed to follow in their leaders' footsteps" (p. 165).

On the other hand, planned discontinuity represented efforts "to move a school in a different direction than under its predecessors" (p. 165). Examples given of planned discontinuity were to replace the principal of a failing school in hopes he or she will be able to turn it around, to give a "jolt" to a school that has remained average of a long period of time or to implement a top-down reform agenda.

Hargreaves (2005) believed that a majority of leadership successions

> end up being a paradoxical mix or unplanned discontinuity and continuity; discontinuity with the achievements of a leaders immediate predecessor, and continuity with (or regression to) the mediocre state of affairs preceding that predecessor. Successful leaders are often removed prematurely from schools they are improving to mount a rescue in another school facing a crisis. Much less thought is given to the appointment of their successors (p. 167).

Summary

No Child Left Behind without question drastically altered public education over the past ten years (Electronic Summary of the No Child Left Behind Act, 2001; Gentilucci & Muto, 2007). With the stakes as high as they became, the importance of school leadership and the impact that it had on student achievement had never been more evident or important (Hallenger & Heck, 1998; Marzano et al., 2005). Given the fact that a generation of school leaders was set to retire between 2000 and 2015, succession planning became an important function of all school districts who hoped to successfully staff their schools with quality school leaders (Lovely, 2004; Quinn, 2002). Identifying

and nurturing talent will become a necessity for schools to have leadership ready to meet the challenges and pressures of accountability

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The intent of this study was to provide insight on the strengths and talents of potential school administrators in Orange County Public Schools, Florida. As highlighted in the review of literature, talent management plays an instrumental role in developing a succession plan within an organization that will maintain high levels of leadership, especially during the next decade, where turnover and transition for instructional leadership across the country will be a reality (Lovely, 2004; Potter, 2001).

In 2008, Orange County Public Schools was named the 13th largest school district in the nation, with over 23,400 employees serving 176,000 students (Orange County Public Schools, 2008a). Given the size of the district and the number of schools administrators needed to lead these schools, a need for a strong talent management and succession plan is evident.

Statement of the Problem

With the increased demands on principals and a shortage of qualified, acceptable candidates, school districts that have to replace principals are in a difficult position. These factors, combined with the importance that the principal role has in relation to

student achievement, make the identification of potential administrators and the hiring process for new administrators a top priority for all school districts.

This study built a strong foundation for future work in succession planning and talent identification by answering the following two major questions; a) what characteristics or talents, as identified by the StrengthsFinder profile, do current Orange County Public School principals look for in identifying potential school administrators and b) what differences, if any, exist within the existing variables (school level, certification, gender, and prior experiences).

The StrengthsFinder profile, developed by the Gallup Organization, was the assessment used to identify participating potential administrators' talents or characteristics. Additional demographic information related to the potential administrators was collected with a survey of the participants of the study to fully provide the necessary information for proper analysis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?
2. How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, or high) degree or certification, current position, gender or race?

3. To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?
4. To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?

Population and Sample

Sixty-one teachers or teacher leaders from the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) participated in this study. All participants were members of the Aspiring Leaders Academy, an initiative developed by the district to cultivate the next generation of school based administrators for the Orange County Public Schools. Each participant had to be nominated by his/her current principal and then approved by district leadership for acceptance into the program.

Instrumentation

The Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile, originally developed by the Gallup Organization in 1999, was utilized to identify the strengths or talents of a group of teachers within Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) who were identified by their

principals as potential school based administrators. Each individual chosen to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy was given a copy of *Now, Discover Your Strengths* and was instructed by the Senior Director of Professional Development Services for OCPS to complete the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile online before June 30, 2007. This information was then submitted to district personnel and obtained by the researcher through the district for the purposes of data analysis.

Instrument Reliability and Validity

Background

The Gallup Organization's Clifton StrengthsFinder "is based on the theory and research foundation associated with semi-structured personal interviews that had been used by Selection Research Incorporated and Gallup (Lopez, Hodges & Harter, 2005, p.1). Donald Clifton, through his 50-year career at the University of Nebraska, Selection Research Incorporated, and Gallup, developed the Clifton StrengthsFinder and much of his work "related to success on one simple question, "What would happen if we studied what is right with people?" (p. 4).

According to Lopez et al. (2005), Clifton had two major beliefs, a) that "talents could be operationalized, studied, and capitalized upon in work and academic settings" (p. 3), and b) that an individual's success was "closely associated with personal talents and strengths in addition to the traditional constructs linked with analytical intelligence" (p. 4). Through more than two million interviews conducted over his career, Clifton and

his colleagues reviewed the data generated and in the mid-1990s began to develop the Clifton StrengthsFinder.

Reliability

According to Buckingham and Clifton (1999), two reliability studies related to the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument have been conducted, one measuring internal consistency and the other measuring the extent to which scores are stable over time. In a study involving over 50,000 respondents, the average internal consistency for each theme was 0.785 (Buckingham & Clifton, p. 252). Given the fact that the maximum possible internal consistency is 1, the StrengthFinder themes demonstrate internal consistency. In a separate study to measure reliability over time, technically known as "test-retest", the majority of the 34 StrengthsFinder themes demonstrated test-retest reliability between .60 and .80 over a six-month interval (p. 252).

Validity

According to Lopez et al. (2005), many items were pilot tested in the development of the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument to assess their ability to accurately identify and measure themes. A balance was developed, utilizing the items with the strongest psychometric properties along with a proper assessment length. This resulted in 180 item pairs, measured in 20 second intervals to develop an assessment that could be administered in 30-45 minutes (Schreiner, 2005).

In a study of over 600,000 respondents to analyze construct validity, Lopez et al. (2005) found "the average item-to-proposed-theme correlation (corrected for part-whole overlap) was 6.6 times as large as the average item correlation to other themes" (p. 5).

Data Collection

In November 2007, all participant information was collected in two major areas; applicant information in the form of each participant's application (Appendix A) and signature theme information from the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile (Appendix B). Additional individual demographic data, with assistance from the OCPS Professional Development Department, was also collected at this time. Once collected, this information was organized within an SPSS worksheet. These data were then analyzed through several statistical procedures to answer the research questions using the appropriate data sources were presented in Table 1.

Data Analysis

For each participant in this study, the following demographic data were collected within an SPSS spreadsheet: a) level of current work assignment, b) gender, c) race, d) current position and e) certification or Educational Leadership degree status. In addition to these demographic data, each participant's five signature themes, as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument, was also recorded and entered in the SPSS spreadsheet.

Summary

Through the analysis of the data collected, a clear picture of the characteristics of those employees nominated for the Aspiring Leaders Program was developed. Through the answering of the research questions posed, the foundation for future work in succession planning and talent management in education was established within Orange County Public Schools.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

Chapter 4 provides a demographic profile of the participants and data analysis relevant to the four research questions addressed in this study. The results are represented by accompanying tables. The conclusions, as well as recommendations for further research, are discussed in Chapter 5.

Purpose of the Study

With the increased demands on principals and a shortage of qualified, acceptable candidates, school districts that had to replace principals were in a difficult position. These factors, combined with the importance that the principal role has in relation to student achievement, made the identification of potential administrators and the hiring process for new administrators a top priority for all school districts.

The purpose of this study was to identify what characteristics or talents, as identified by the StrengthsFinder profile, do principals in 2008 look for in identifying potential school administrators? Also, what differences, if any, exist within the strengths of elementary school, middle school and high school candidates as identified by their principals?

The StrengthsFinder profile, developed by the Gallup Organization, was the assessment used to identify participating potential administrators' talents or

characteristics. Additional demographic information related to the potential administrators was collected with a survey of the participants of the study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?
2. How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, or high) degree or certification, current position, gender or race?
3. To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?
4. To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?

Demographics

The following demographic information was collected from 61 teachers or teacher leaders from the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) that participated in this study: a)

level of current work assignment, b) gender, c) race, d) current position and e) degree/certification.

Participants were placed into one of five categories based on their 2007-2008 work assignment level: a) elementary school (grades Pre-Kindergarten-5), b) middle school (grades 6-8), c) high school (grades 9-12), d) technical center, or e) special education center. A majority of participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy (52.5%, n=32) were working at the elementary level. Another 24.6% of participants (n=15) were working at the middle school level and 16.4% (n=10) were working at the high school level. Only one participant worked at a Technical Center (1.6%) and another three worked at special education centers (4.9%). These results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Assignment Level

School Level	n	%
Elementary School (K-5)	32	52.5
Middle School (6-8)	15	24.6
High School (9-12)	10	16.4
Technical Center	1	1.6
Special Education Center	3	4.9
Total	61	100.0

The membership of the Aspiring Leaders Academy was representative of the schools within the Orange County Public School district. In the 2007-2008 school year, there were 182 schools within the district. Of those, 122 were elementary schools

(67.1%), 33 were middle schools (18.1%), 18 were high schools (9.9%), 5 were technical centers (2.7%), and 4 were special education centers (2.2%).

Tables 6 and 7 provide data on the gender and race of those who participated in this study. While racially the group was very diverse, most participants in this study and the Aspiring Leader Academy were female (78.7%, n=48). This gender distribution was similar to that of the gender distribution of principals during the 2007-2008 school year, where 69.2% of the 182 principals were female and 30.8% were male (Orange County Public Schools, 2007).

Table 6: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Gender

Gender	n	%
Male	13	21.3
Female	48	78.7
Total	61	100.0

Table 7: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Race

Race	n	%
Black	25	40.9
White	30	49.2
Hispanic	4	6.6
Other	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0

The distribution of participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy by race was similar to that of the student population within OCPS, with the exception of the comparison of Hispanic Aspiring Leaders Academy participants and Hispanic students. Of the 173,656 students enrolled in OCPS in 2007-2008, 34% were White, 27.46% were Black, 31.1% were Hispanic and 7.42% were other (Orange County Public Schools, 2008b). There was a difference of 24.5% between Hispanic participants and Hispanic students.

There was a balanced mix of participants by position in the Aspiring Leaders Academy. While employees who were teachers made up the majority of participants (49.2%), there was almost an equal representation from those employees who served in support roles outside the classroom (50.8%).

Table 8: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Position

Position	n	%
Administrative Dean	13	21.3
Instructional Support	18	29.5
Teacher	30	49.2
Total	61	100.0

Most participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy had either already received their graduate degree in Educational Leadership (47.5%, n=29) or were enrolled in a program working towards their degree (34.4%, n=21) at the time of this study. These results are shown in Table 9.

Table 9: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Certification

Certification	n	%
Hold Educational Leadership Certification	29	47.6
Enrolled in an Educational Leadership Program	21	34.4
Applied for admission into an Educational Leadership Program	5	8.2
No work completed towards a degree in Educational Leadership	6	9.8
Total	61	100.0

Analysis of data

This section was arranged according to the four research questions that guided this study. The research questions are stated, followed by a discussion of the data. For some questions, Orange County Public School (OCPS) district data were included along with data collected within this study for comparison purposes.

Research Question 1

> What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?

As a requirement of the Aspiring Leaders Academy, each participant completed the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile. This instrument consisted of 180 item pairs, measured in 20 second intervals through an on-line assessment. Once completed, the Clifton StrengthsFinder identified each participant's five dominant strengths based on the responses to the questions asked. These strengths were then collected from participants, compiled into an SPSS spreadsheet, and then organized into Table 10.

A cumulative percent was created for each of the 34 strength categories included within the Clifton StrengthsFinder. This percent represents the total percent of Aspiring Leaders Academy participants who demonstrated each strength category as one of their top five.

The five strengths identified most often by all participants in this study were: a) Relator (45.9%), b) Achiever (37.8%), c) Responsibility (37.7%), d) Learner (36.1%) and e) Maximizer (25.9%). These results are displayed in Table 11.

Based on the definitions of these strengths, as stated by Buckingham and Clifton (2001), this profile describes: a) someone who enjoys close relationships with others (Relator), b) someone with a great deal of stamina and work ethic who enjoys being productive (Achiever), c) someone who takes ownership of what they do and are honest and loyal (Responsibility), d) someone who has a great desire to learn and wants to continuously improve (Learner), and e) someone who focuses on personal and group excellence, striving to make something good even better (Maximizer). For further analysis, these strengths are defined in Appendix A.

Table 10: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Strengths as Identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile

Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)*
Achiever	37.8
Activator	11.4
Adaptability	3.2
Analytical	11.5
Arranger	13.1
Belief	22.9
Command	3.2
Communication	18.0
Competition	9.8
Connectedness	13.0
Consistency	14.7
Context	6.5
Deliberative	4.9
Developer	9.7
Discipline	8.2
Empathy	6.5
Focus	16.3
Futuristic	9.8
Harmony	16.3
Ideation	3.3
Includer	9.8
Individualization	1.6
Input	21.4
Intellection	4.9
Learner	36.1
Maximizer	29.5
Positivity	6.5
Relator	45.9
Responsibility	37.7
Restorative	11.5
Self-Assurance	4.8
Significance	8.2
Strategic	24.7
Woo	18.0

Note. * Percent total does not equal 100% because each participant reported five strengths.

Table 11: Strengths Identified Most Frequently for Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants as Identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile

Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Relator	45.9
Achiever	37.8
Responsibility	37.7
Learner	36.1
Maximizer	29.5

Conversely, the five strengths identified least often were also identified; a) Individualization, b) Command, c) Adaptability, d) Ideation and e) Self-Assurance. According to Buckingham and Clifton (2001), this profile describes someone who: a) can bring together individuals with different talents to develop a productive team (Individualization), b) has presence and can take control (Command), c) has the ability to go with the flow (Adaptability), d) is fascinated by ideas (Ideation), and e) someone who is self confident (Self-Assurance).

Table 12: Strengths Identified Least Frequently for Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants as Identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile

Strength	Participants Displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Individualization	1.6
Command	3.2
Adaptability	3.2
Ideation	3.3
Self-Assurance	4.8

Research Question 2

How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, high) degree or certification, current position, gender or race?

To identify the differences or similarities in strengths identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile that might exist within each group, a cross-tabulation comparison was conducted for each of the following variables: a) current work assignment level, b) certification status, c) gender, d) race, and e) current position.

A cross-tabulation comparison was conducted (Table 13) to analyze strengths based between participants employed at elementary, middle and high schools. Each column identified how many participants from each school level displayed each strength as one of their top five strengths (as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder) and what percentage of participants at that level displayed each strength. Those participants working at either Technical Centers or Special Education Centers were excluded from

this cross-tabulation comparison because the researcher was unable to determine the level of students.

Table 13: Summary and Comparison of 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Strengths by Assignment Level

Strength	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=32)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=15)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=10)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Achiever	13	40.6	6	40.0	3	30.0
Activator	4	12.5	2	13.3	0	0.0
Adaptability	2	6.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Analytical	3	9.4	4	26.7	0	0.0
Arranger	4	12.5	4	26.7	0	0.0
Belief	4	12.5	7	46.7	3	30.0
Command	1	3.1	0	0.0	1	10.0
Communication	8	25.0	0	0.0	1	10.0
Competition	1	3.1	2	13.3	3	30.0
Connectedness	4	12.5	2	13.3	1	10.0
Consistency	5	15.6	2	13.3	2	20.0
Context	2	6.3	1	6.7	1	10.0
Deliberative	2	6.3	1	6.7	0	0.0
Developer	4	12.5	1	6.7	1	10.0
Discipline	3	9.4	1	6.7	1	10.0
Empathy	2	6.3	0	0.0	1	10.0
Focus	4	12.5	4	26.7	1	10.0
Futuristic	1	3.1	1	6.7	1	10.0
Harmony	7	21.9	2	13.3	2	20.0
Ideation	1	3.1	0	0.0	1	10.0

Strength	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=32)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=15)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=10)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Includer	3	9.4	1	6.7	2	20.0
Individualization	1	3.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
Input	8	25.0	1	6.7	3	30.0
Intellection	2	6.3	1	6.7	0	0.0
Learner	12	37.5	5	33.3	4	40.0
Maximizer	12	37.5	4	26.7	1	10.0
Positivity	3	9.4	0	0.0	0	0.0
Relator	12	37.5	8	53.3	5	50.0
Responsibility	13	40.6	7	46.7	2	20.0
Restorative	4	12.5	0	0.0	2	20.0
Self-Assurance	0	0.0	1	6.7	1	10.0
Significance	1	3.1	2	13.3	2	20.0
Strategic	9	28.1	3	20.0	2	20.0
Woo	5	15.6	2	13.3	3	30.0
Total**	160	500.0	75	500.0	50	500.0

Note: Participants working at Special Education Centers or Technical Centers (n=4) were excluded from this table based on the inability to determine the appropriate level of student served.

** Each of the 57 participants included (32 Elementary school participants, 15 Middle School participants and 10 High School participants) reported five Strengths*

***Total percent does not equal 100% since each participant reported five strengths*

A Pearson chi-square test was computed to determine if there was a statistically significant association between the variables *school level* and *strength*. The resultant chi-square, $\chi 2$ (132, n=305) = 100.7, p=.980 was non-significant at the .05 level, indicating that the two variables were independent of each other and there was no statistically significant relationship between *school level* and *strength*.

To compare the differences between groups, Table 14 shows the top five strengths displayed by participants ranked in order for each grade level served. At the high school level, five strengths (Achiever, Belief, Competition, Input and Woo) were of the same frequency and percentage (30.0%, n=3), bringing the total of strengths reported to seven.

Table 14: Top five strengths displayed by 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' by Assignment Level

Elementary School			Middle School			High School		
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Achiever	13	40.6	Relator	8	53.3	Relator	5	50.0
Responsibility	13	40.6	Responsibility	7	46.7	Learner	4	40.0
Learner	12	37.5	Belief	7	46.7	Belief	3	30.0
Maximizer	12	37.5	Achiever	6	40.0	Achiever	3	30.0
Relator	12	37.5	Learner	5	33.3	Woo	3	30.0
						Competition	3	30.0
						Input	3	30.0

Note. At the High School level, there were 5 strengths (Achiever, Belief, Competition, Input and Woo) that were of the same frequency and percentage.

Participants were organized into four degree/certification categories for the purpose of analysis: a) participants who already held a graduate degree in Educational Leadership, b) participants who were enrolled in an Educational Leadership program, c) participants who had applied for enrollment in an Educational Leadership program and d) participants who were not enrolled or in the process of enrolling in an Educational Leadership program. To analyze strengths based between participants, a cross-tabulation comparison was conducted and the results are presented in Table 15. Each column identified how many participants from degree/certification category displayed each strength as one of their top five strengths (as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder) and what percentage of participants at that level displayed each strength.

A Pearson chi-square test was computed to determine if there was a statistically significant association between the variables *degree/certification* and *strength*. The resultant chi-square, χ 2 (99, n=305) = 92.38, p=.668 was non-significant at the .05 level, indicating that the two variables were independent of each other and there was no statistically significant relationship between *degree/certification* and *strength*.

Tables 16 and 17 showed the top five strengths displayed by participants ranked in order for each grade level served for comparison purposes. For those participants who were not working towards a degree in Educational Leadership, six strengths had the same frequency and percentage (33.3%, n=2) bringing the total strengths for this category to nine.

Table 15: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Strength Comparison by Certification

Strength	Hold Ed Leadership Degree		Enrolled in Ed Leadership program		Applied for admission to Ed Leadership program		Not Started working on Ed Leadership program	
	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=29)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=21)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=5)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=6)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Achiever	12	41.4	6	28.6	1	20.0	4	66.7
Activator	4	13.8	2	9.5	0	0.0	1	16.7
Adaptability	1	3.4	1	4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Analytical	2	6.9	4	19.0	0	0.0	1	16.7
Arranger	5	17.2	2	9.5	0	0.0	1	16.7
Belief	8	27.6	3	14.3	1	20.0	2	33.3
Command	2	6.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Communication	5	17.2	5	23.8	1	20.0	0	0.0
Competition	4	13.8	1	4.8	1	20.0	0	0.0
Connectedness	6	20.7	1	4.8	1	20.0	0	0.0
Consistency	4	13.8	2	9.5	2	40.0	1	16.7
Context	0	0.0	1	4.8	2	40.0	1	16.7
Deliberative	1	3.4	1	4.8	1	20.0	0	0.0
Developer	3	10.3	3	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Discipline	2	6.9	3	14.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Empathy	1	3.4	1	4.8	2	40.0	0	0.0
Focus	6	20.7	2	9.5	0	0.0	2	33.3
Futuristic	2	6.9	1	4.8	1	20.0	0	0.0
Harmony	4	13.8	5	23.8	2	40.0	0	0.0

Strength	Hold Ed Leadership Degree		Enrolled in Ed Leadership program		Applied for admission to Ed Leadership program		Not Started working on Ed Leadership program	
	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=29)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=21)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=5)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=6)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Ideation	1	3.4	0	0.0	1	20.0	0	0.0
Includer	2	6.9	2	9.5	0	0.0	2	33.3
Individualization	1	3.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Input	7	24.1	6	28.6	0	0.0	0	0.0
Intellection	2	6.9	1	4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learner	10	34.5	9	42.9	1	20.0	2	33.3
Maximizer	11	37.9	6	28.6	0	0.0	1	16.7
Positivity	0	0.0	4	19.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Relator	14	48.3	10	47.6	1	20.0	3	50.0
Responsibility	10	34.5	7	33.3	3	60.0	3	50.0
Restorative	3	10.3	2	9.5	1	20.0	1	16.7
Self-Assurance	2	6.9	1	4.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Significance	1	3.4	2	9.5	0	0.0	2	33.3
Strategic	5	17.2	7	33.3	1	20.0	2	33.3
Woo	4	13.8	4	19.0	2	40.0	1	16.7
Total**	145	500.0	105	500.0	25	500.0	30	500.0

*Note. * Each of the 61 participants included reported five strengths*
***Total percent does not equal 100% since each participant reported five strengths*

Table 16: Top Five Strengths Displayed by Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants by Certification – Hold Degree or Enrolled in an Educational Leadership Program

Hold Educational Leadership Degree/Certification			Enrolled in Educational Leadership program		
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Relator	14	48.3	Relator	10	47.6
Achiever	12	41.4	Learner	9	42.9
Maximizer	11	37.9	Responsibility	7	33.3
Learner	10	34.5	Strategic	7	33.3
Responsibility	10	34.5	Achiever	6	28.6
			Maximizer	6	28.6
			Input	6	28.6

Table 17: Top Five Strengths Displayed by Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants by Certification – No Degree or Not Enrolled in an Educational Leadership Program

Applied for admission to Educational Leadership program			Not working towards Educational Leadership certification		
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Responsibility	3	60.0	Achiever	4	66.7%
Harmony	2	40.0	Responsibility	3	50.0%
Woo	2	40.0	Relator	3	50.0%
Consistency	2	40.0	Learner	2	33.3%
Empathy	2	40.0	Strategic	2	33.3%
Context	2	40.0	Belief	2	33.3%
			Focus	2	33.3%
			Includer	2	33.3%
			Significance	2	33.3%

A cross-tabulation comparison was conducted (Table 18) to analyze strengths based on gender. Each column identified how many participants displayed each strength as one of their top five strengths (as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder) and what percentage of participants displayed each strength.

A Pearson chi-square test was computed to determine if there was a statistically significant association between the variables *gender* and *strength*. The resultant chi-square, $\chi 2$ (33, n=305) = 31.386, p=.548 was non-significant at the .05 level, indicating that the two variables were independent of each other and there was no statistically significant relationship between *gender* and *strength*.

Table 19 shows the top five strengths displayed by participants ranked in order for each both males and females. Relator was the most dominant strength for both males (46.2%) and females (45.8%).

Table 18: Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Strength Comparison by Gender

	Male		Female	
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=13)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=48)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)*
Achiever	5	38.5	18	37.5
Activator	0	0.0	7	14.6
Adaptability	0	0.0	2	4.2
Analytical	0	0.0	7	14.6
Arranger	1	7.7	7	14.6
Belief	5	38.5	9	18.8
Command	1	7.7	1	2.1
Communication	2	15.4	9	18.8
Competition	1	7.7	5	10.4
Connectedness	1	7.7	7	14.6
Consistency	3	23.1	6	12.5
Context	2	15.4	2	4.2
Deliberative	1	7.7	2	4.2
Developer	1	7.7	5	10.4
Discipline	0	0.0	5	10.4
Empathy	1	7.7	3	6.3
Focus	4	30.8	6	12.5
Futuristic	3	23.1	1	2.1
Harmony	3	23.1	8	16.7
Ideation	0	0.0	2	4.2
Includer	1	7.7	5	10.4
Individualization	0	0.0	1	2.1
Input	4	30.8	9	18.8
Intellection	0	0.0	3	6.3
Learner	3	23.1	19	39.6
Maximizer	3	23.1	15	31.3
Positivity	0	0.0	4	8.3
Relator	6	46.2	22	45.8
Responsibility	3	23.1	20	41.7
Restorative	1	7.7	6	12.5
Self-Assurance	2	15.4	1	2.1
Significance	1	7.7	4	8.3
Strategic	4	30.8	11	22.9
Woo	3	23.1	8	16.7
Total*	65	500.0	240	500.0

Note. * Percent total does not equal 100% because each participant reported five strengths

Table 19: Top Five Strengths Displayed by 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants by Gender

Male			Female		
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Relator	6	46.2%	Relator	22	45.8%
Achiever	5	38.5%	Responsibility	20	41.7%
Belief	5	38.5%	Learner	19	39.6%
Strategic	4	30.8%	Achiever	18	37.5%
Input	4	30.8%	Maximizer	15	31.3%
Focus	4	30.8%			

A cross-tabulation comparison was conducted (Table 20) to analyze participant strengths based on race. Each column identified how many participants displayed each strength as one of their top five strengths (as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder) and what percentage of participants displayed each strength.

A Pearson chi-square test was computed to determine if there was a statistically significant association between the variables *race* and *strength*. The resultant chi-square, $\chi 2$ (99, n=305) = 77.84, p=.943 was non-significant at the .05 level, indicating that the two variables were independent of each other and there was no statistically significant relationship between *race* and *strength*.

Table 21 showed the top five strengths displayed by participants ranked in order for three categories: a) Black, b) White and c) Hispanic/Other. The final category was a

combination of two categories (Hispanic and Other) because of the limited number of participants in both categories (n=6).

There were two strengths that appeared in the top five strengths for each group (Relator and Responsibility). There were even more similarities amongst Blacks and Whites, with four of their five top strengths in common (Achiever, Learner, Relator and Responsibility).

Table 20: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Strength Comparison by Race

	Black		White		Hispanic		Other	
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=25)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=30)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=4)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=2)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Achiever	10	40.0	12	40.0	0	0.0	1	50.0
Activator	3	12.0	4	13.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Adaptability	1	4.0	1	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Analytical	2	8.0	5	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Arranger	3	12.0	3	10.0	1	25.0	1	50.0
Belief	5	20.0	6	20.0	2	50.0	1	50.0
Command	0	0.0	2	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Communication	4	16.0	7	23.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Competition	3	12.0	2	6.7	1	25.0	0	0.0
Connectedness	4	16.0	2	6.7	1	25.0	1	50.0
Consistency	3	12.0	6	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Context	2	8.0	2	6.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Deliberative	3	12.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Developer	3	12.0	2	6.7	1	25.0	0	0.0
Discipline	1	4.0	4	13.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Empathy	1	4.0	3	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Focus	7	28.0	1	3.3	1	25.0	1	50.0
Futuristic	1	4.0	1	3.3	1	25.0	1	50.0
Harmony	4	16.0	7	23.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Ideation	1	4.0	1	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0

Strength	Black		White		Hispanic		Other	
	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=25)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=30)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=4)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=2)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Includer	3	12.0	2	6.7	1	25.0	0	0.0
Individualization	1	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Input	5	20.0	6	20.0	2	50.0	0	0.0
Intellection	2	8.0	1	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Learner	10	40.0	11	36.7	1	25.0	0	0.0
Maximizer	5	20.0	11	36.7	2	50.0	0	0.0
Positivity	3	12.0	1	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Relator	15	60.0	10	33.3	1	25.0	2	100.0
Responsibility	9	36.0	12	40.0	2	50.0	1	50.0
Restorative	2	8.0	3	10.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
Self-Assurance	0	0.0	2	6.7	1	25.0	0	0.0
Significance	1	4.0	3	10.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
Strategic	5	20.0	9	30.0	0	0.0	1	50.0
Woo	3	12.0	8	26.7	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	125	500.0	150	500.0	20	500.0	10	500.0

*Note. * Each of the 61 participants reported five strengths.*

** Percent total does not equal 100% because each participant reported five strengths.

Table 21: Top Five Strengths Displayed by Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants by Race

Black			White			Hispanic/Other		
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Relator	15	60.0	Achiever	12	40.0	Responsibility	3	50.0
Achiever	10	40.0	Responsibility	12	40.0	Relator	3	50.0
Learner	10	40.0	Learner	11	36.7	Belief	3	50.0
Responsibility	9	36.0	Maximizer	11	36.7	Maximizer	2	33.3
Focus	7	28.0	Relator	10	33.3	Input	2	33.3
						Arranger	2	33.3
						Connectedness	2	33.3
						Focus	2	33.3
						Futuristic	2	33.3

Note. For the purposes of this Table the categories Hispanic and Other were combined due to the lack of respondents (6) in these categories.

A cross-tabulation comparison was conducted (Table 22) to analyze participant's strengths based on their position or job title at the time of this study. Each column identified how many participants displayed each strength as one of their top five strengths (as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder) and what percentage of participants displayed each strength.

A Pearson chi-square test was computed to determine if there was a statistically significant association between the variables *position* and *strength*. The resultant chi-square, $\chi 2$ (66, n=305) = 56.09, p=0.803 was non-significant at the .05 level, indicating that the two variables were independent of each other and there was no statistically significant relationship between *position* and *strength*.

Table 23 shows the top five strengths displayed by participants ranked in order for three categories: a) Administrative Dean, b) Instructional Support and c) Teacher.

There were three strengths that that appeared in the top five strengths for each group (Achiever, Learner and Relator). Two groups (Instructional Support and Teacher) had five common strengths among their top five (Achiever, Learner, Maximizer, Relator, and Responsibility).

Table 22: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants' Strength Comparison by Position

	Administrative Dean (Position to support school administrative functions; no assigned students or classes)		Instructional Support (Position to support teachers and instruction; no assigned students or classes)		Teacher (Full time classroom teacher)	
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=13)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=18)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=30)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Achiever	6	46.2	7	38.9	10	33.3
Activator	1	7.7	2	11.1	4	13.3
Adaptability	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	6.7
Analytical	1	7.7	5	27.8	1	3.3
Arranger	2	15.4	2	11.1	4	13.3
Belief	3	23.1	3	16.7	8	26.7
Command	1	7.7	1	5.6	0	0.0
Communication	3	23.1	2	11.1	6	20.0
Competition	4	30.8	2	11.1	0	0.0
Connectedness	1	7.7	1	5.6	6	20.0
Consistency	2	15.4	3	16.7	4	13.3
Context	0	0.0	1	5.6	3	10.0
Deliberative	1	7.7	1	5.6	1	3.3
Developer	2	15.4	2	11.1	2	6.7
Discipline	1	7.7	3	16.7	1	3.3
Empathy	0	0.0	2	11.1	2	6.7
Focus	5	38.5	1	5.6	4	13.3
Futuristic	1	7.7	0	0.0	3	10.0
Harmony	3	23.1	4	22.2	4	13.3

	Administrative Dean (Position to support school administrative functions; no assigned students or classes)		Instructional Support (Position to support teachers and instruction; no assigned students or classes)		Teacher (Full time classroom teacher)	
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=13)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=18)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n=30)*	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)**
Ideation	1	7.7	0	0.0	1	3.3
Includer	0	0.0	1	5.6	5	16.7
Individualization	0	0.0	1	5.6	0	0.0
Input	2	15.4	4	22.2	7	23.3
Intellection	0	0.0	1	5.6	2	6.7
Learner	4	30.8	6	33.3	12	40.0
Maximizer	2	15.4	7	38.9	9	30.0
Positivity	0	0.0	2	11.1	2	6.7
Relator	9	69.2	8	44.4	11	36.7
Responsibility	3	23.1	8	44.4	12	40.0
Restorative	2	15.4	1	5.6	4	13.3
Self-Assurance	0	0.0	1	5.6	2	6.7
Significance	1	7.7	1	5.6	3	10.0
Strategic	1	7.7	5	27.8	9	30.0
Woo	3	23.1	2	11.1	6	20.0
Total**	65	500.0	90	500.0	150	500.0

*Note. * Each of the 61 participants reported five strengths.*

** Percent total does not equal 100% because each participant reported five strengths.

Table 23: Top Five Strengths Displayed by 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants by Position

Administrative Dean (Position to support school administrative functions; no assigned students or classes)			Instructional Support (Position to support teachers and instruction; no assigned students or classes)			Teacher (Full time classroom teacher)		
Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)	Strength	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (n)	Participants displaying this strength as one of their top five strengths (%)
Relator	9	69.2	Relator	8	44.4	Responsibility	12	40.0
Achiever	6	46.2	Responsibility	8	44.4	Learner	12	40.0
Focus	5	38.5	Achiever	7	38.9	Relator	11	36.7
Competition	4	30.8	Maximizer	7	38.9	Achiever	10	33.3
Learner	4	30.8	Learner	6	33.3	Maximizer	9	30.0
						Strategic	9	30.0

Research Question 3

To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?

As shared in Table 24, the majority of participants in the Aspiring Leader Academy (81.9%) either already held a graduate Educational Leadership degree or were enrolled in an Educational Leadership program at the time of their acceptance into the Aspiring Leadership Academy. Only eleven of the participants had not applied nor were accepted into an Educational Leadership program.

To further analyze this information, a chi square Goodness of Fit test was conducted to determine if degree/certification level had a significant effect on whether a participant was nominated by their principal to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy. Based on this analysis, it was determined that degree/certification level had a significant effect on the likelihood of a participant being nominated to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy, $\chi^2 (1, n=61) = 24.93, p < .001$.

Table 24: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leader Academy Participants by Certification

Certification	Participants (n)	Participants (%)
Hold Educational Leadership Certification or Enrolled in an Educational Leadership Program	50	81.9
Not yet enrolled in an Educational Leadership Program	11	18.1
Total	61	100.0

Research Question 4

To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?

As shown in Table 25, the number of Aspiring Leaders Academy participants that were classroom teachers (n=31) was virtually identical to the number of participants who had moved into administrative/instructional support roles.

To further analyze this information, a chi square Goodness of Fit test was conducted to determine if a participant's current position had a significant effect on whether a participant was nominated by their principal to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy. For the purpose of this analysis, all participants were placed into one of two groups; a) administrative or instructional support or b) teacher. Based on this analysis, it was determined that a participant's current position did not have a significant effect on the likelihood of being nominated to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy, χ^2 (1, n=61) p = 0.016.

Table 25: 2007-2008 Aspiring Leaders Academy Participants by Position

Position	Participants (n)	Participants (%)
Administrative Dean*/ Instructional Support Teacher**	31	50.8
Classroom Teacher	30	49.2
Total	61	100.0

*Note. * Position to support school administrative functions; no assigned students or classes.*
*** Position to support teachers and instruction; no assigned students or classes.*

Summary

Chapter 4 presented demographic information and an analysis of data obtained from the results of the StrengthFinder profile completed by each participant in the study. Four research questions provided the framework for the analysis of the data. A discussion of the results, as well as conclusions, implications for practice, and recommendations for future research follow in the Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter 5 provides the results and conclusions of the study and discusses how the data presented in Chapter 4 relate to each of the four research questions. The chapter concludes with the implications for practice, recommendations for future research and concluding comments.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to answer the following two major questions; a) what characteristics or talents, as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder profile, did Orange County Public School principals look for in identifying potential school administrators and b) what differences, if any, existed within the variables (school level, certification, gender, and prior work experiences).

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?
2. How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, or high) degree or certification, gender or race?

3. To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?
4. To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?

Data Collection

All participant information was collected in two major areas; applicant information in the form of each participant's application (Appendix A) and signature theme information from the Clifton StrengthsFinder Profile (Appendix B). Sixty-one employees who participated in the Orange County Public Schools (OCPS) Aspiring Leaders Academy (n=61) were required as part of their application process to complete the Clifton StrengthsFinder online and submit their results to the Aspiring Leaders Academy program director. This information was then obtained from OCPS district personnel. Once collected, this information was organized within an SPSS worksheet. These data were then analyzed to answer the research questions using the appropriate data sources.

Reliability and Validity

According to Buckingham and Coffman (1999), two reliability studies related to the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument have been conducted, one measuring internal consistency and the other measuring the extent to which scores are stable over time. In a study involving over 50,000 respondents, the average internal consistency for each theme was 0.785 (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999, p. 252). Given the fact that the maximum possible internal consistency is 1, the StrengthsFinder themes demonstrate internal consistency. In a separate study to measure reliability over time, technically known as "test-retest", the majority of the 34 StrengthsFinder themes demonstrated test-retest reliability between .60 and .80 over a six-month interval (p. 252).

According to Lopez et al. (2005), many items were pilot tested in the development of the Clifton StrengthsFinder instrument to assess their ability to accurately identify and measure themes. A balance was developed, utilizing the items with the strongest psychometric properties along with a proper assessment length. This resulted in 180 item pairs, measured in 20 second intervals to develop an assessment that could be administered in 30-45 minutes (Schreiner, 2005).

In a study of over 600,000 respondents to analyze construct validity, Lopez et al. (2005) found "the average item-to-proposed-theme correlation (corrected for part-whole overlap) was 6.6 times as large as the average item correlation to other themes" (p. 5).

Summary and Discussion of the Findings

The following section discusses the results of the data analysis for each of the four research questions within this study.

Research Question 1

> What characteristics exist most frequently for employees nominated as potential administrators as identified by the StrengthsFinder Profile?

In analyzing the characteristics of the group, both demographic information and results from the Clifton StrengthsFinder were used. There was a great deal of diversity in several demographic areas (Race, Current Position, and Work Assignment Level) and less diversity in others (Gender and Certification). The majority of participants were females (78.7%, n=48) and had either already received a graduate degree in Educational Leadership or were enrolled in an Educational Leadership program (81.9%, n=50). Over half of the participants worked at the elementary level (52.5%, n=32) and were employed as a teacher (49.2%, n=30).

The Clifton StrengthsFinder was used to identify areas where an individual's greatest potential for building strengths exists (Lopez et al., 2005). Results were "presented to the respondent as a ranked ordering of 'Signature Themes', where the five highest scoring themes were provided to the respondent (p. 5)".

To participate in the Aspiring Leaders Program, employees had to be recommended by their principals via an application and recommendation form (Appendix A). Employees were scored on the following skills using a five point Likert scale; vision,

instructional leadership, decision making skills, interpersonal skills, ethical leadership, technology skills, community partnerships, and potential for administration.

For those who were accepted and participated in the Aspiring Leaders Program, the following five strengths as identified by the Clifton StrengthsFinder were the most common and provided insight into the profile of employees that are seen by Orange County Public Schools principals to display potential for school leadership: a) Relator, b) Achiever, c) Responsibility, d) Learner, and e) Maximizer. As defined by Buckingham and Clifton (2001), this profile defines a person with the following characteristics: a) someone who enjoys close relationships with others, b) someone with a great deal of stamina and work ethic who enjoys being productive, c) someone who takes ownership of what they do and are honest and loyal, d) someone who has a great desire to learn and wants to continuously improve and e) someone who focuses on personal and group excellence, striving to make something good even better. To summarize this into common terminology, a hardworking, people person who displays integrity, cares about their school, and is always looking to improve.

This profile reflects talents that could be classified as "traditional" school administrator strengths. Of the 32 strengths measured by the Clifton StrengthsFinder, several strengths that were not in the top five seem to identify the problem solving strengths important in the educational landscape that exists in the era of No Child Left Behind; Analytical (ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation), Restorative (good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it), and Strategic (can create alternative ways to proceed). Other talents not listed within this profile that would

seem to be vital for success as a school administrator would be Command (the ability to take control of a situation and make a decision), Communication (good conversationalists and presenters), and Futuristic (inspire others with their visions of the future) (Buckingham & Clifton, 2001).

Research Question 2

> How do strengths of those employees identified as potential leaders vary by grade served (elementary, middle, high) degree or certification, current position, gender or race?

For each of the five variables listed (grade, degree, current position, gender and race) a cross-tabulation comparison was conducted to highlight the differences and similarities among the top five strengths for each variable. Shown in Tables 26, 27, 28, 30 and 31 were each variable directly compared to the overall profile developed through a cross-tabulation comparison of all participants to show the variance between each variable and the group as a whole

In comparing participants at each school level to the group profile, there were many commonalities, with each grade level having at least three of the five group profile strengths in common (Achiever, Relator, and Learner). At the secondary level, both the middle and high school profile included the Belief strength. As defined by Buckingham and Clifton (2001) individuals who display this strength among their top five have certain core values that are unchanging and define purpose for their life. As notable an observation was that the Maximizer theme was not included within the secondary profile

at middle or high school, defined as someone who focuses on personal and group excellence, striving to make something good even better. This contrast of one's beliefs versus what is best for the group was an interesting result that could be defined by the difference between the team dynamic at the elementary and secondary school levels.

Table 26: Comparison of Overall StrengthsFinder Profile to Profile by School Level

Rank Order	Overall Profile (n)	Elementary School (n)	Middle School (n)	High School (n)
1	Relator	Achiever	Relator	Relator
2	Achiever	Responsibility	Responsibility	Learner
3	Responsibility	Learner	Belief	Belief
4	Learner	Maximizer	Achiever	Achiever
5	Maximizer	Relator	Learner	Woo Competition Input

There was little difference in strengths reported among all four degree/certification categories with the exception of those participants who had applied for admission into an Educational Leadership program. While this category included a small number of participants (n=5) their collective profile was much different than the overall profile and the profile of the other three degree/certification groups. Four strengths (Harmony, Consistency, Empathy, and Context) were not evident in any other group or subgroup profile.

Table 27: Comparison of Overall StrengthsFinder Profile to Profile by Degree/ Certification

Rank Order	Overall Profile	Hold Degree	Enrolled in an Educational Leadership Program	Applied for Admission	Not Enrolled
1	Relator	Relator	Relator	Responsibility	Achiever
2	Achiever	Achiever	Learner	Harmony	Responsibility
3	Responsibility	Maximizer	Responsibility	Woo	Relator
4	Learner	Learner	Strategic	Consistency	Learner
5	Maximizer	Responsibility	Achiever	Empathy	Strategic
			Maximizer	Context	Belief
			Input		Focus
					Includer
					Significance

There was a noticeable difference in comparing the male and female participant's profile. While the female profile contained the same five strengths as the overall profile, this was to be expected due to the large number of female participants included in this study (78.7%, n=48). The profile for male participants only had two strengths in common (Relator and Achiever) and included four other strengths (Belief, Strategic, Input, and Focus). According to Buckingham and Clifton (2001), these are strengths which define a person who: a) has certain core values that are unchanging and define purpose for their life, b) can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues and then create alternative ways to proceed, c) has a craving to know more, and d) can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track.

Table 28: Comparison of Overall StrengthsFinder Profile to Profile by Gender

Rank Order	Overall Profile	Male	Female
1	Relator	Relator	Relator
2	Achiever	Achiever	Responsibility
3	Responsibility	Belief	Learner
4	Learner	Strategic	Achiever
5	Maximizer	Input	Maximizer
		Focus	

To understand if the percentage of males or females were disproportionate at any level that may have impacted these results, a cross-tabulation table was developed to compare males and females identified to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy to the level at which they were working at the time of this study. The results are shown in Table 29. Males were distributed almost equally among all three levels (elementary, middle, and high) while the majority (63.6%, n=28) of females were working at the elementary School level.

The differences between the male and female StrengthsFinder profile may be best explained by the percentage of male and female participants working at each grade level. As stated in Table 29, 63.6% of females (n=28) reported working at the elementary level and 69.2% of males (n=9) reported working at the secondary level. Therefore, the difference that appears to be related to gender could in fact be influenced by the school level.

Table 29: Comparison of Overall StrengthsFinder Profile to Profile by Gender

Level	Male		Female	
	n	%	n	%
Elementary School	4	30.8	28	63.6
Middle School	4	30.8	11	25.0
High School	5	38.4	5	11.4
Total	13	100	44	100.0

Two of the three races included within the study (Black and White) had much in common with the general profile. Both groups had four (Relator, Achiever, Responsibility, and Learner) of the same five strengths included in the overall profile (Table 30). Those participants who reported Hispanic/Other had a profile less similar to the overall profile, with only three strengths in common (Responsibility, Relator, and Maximizer).

Table 30: Comparison of Overall StrengthsFinder Profile to Profile by Race

Rank Order	Overall Profile (n)	Black (n)	White (n)	Hispanic/Other (n)
1	Relator	Relator	Achiever	Responsibility
2	Achiever	Achiever	Responsibility	Relator
3	Responsibility	Learner	Learner	Belief
4	Learner	Responsibility	Maximizer	Maximizer
5	Maximizer	Focus	Relator	Input
				Arranger
				Connectedness
				Focus
				Futuristic

When analyzing the profile of participants based on position, an interesting commonality was discovered. Aspiring Leader Academy participants who were either an Instructional Support teacher or a Teacher at the time of this study held a very similar profile (Table 31), with the only difference being that the profile for those who were

teachers also included the Strategic strength, which was tied with the Maximizer for the fifth ranked strength (30.0%, n=9). The profile for those participants who were administrative deans at the time of this study (21.3%, n=13) differed the most from the overall profile, with only three of the five strengths in common (Relator, Achiever, and Learner).

Table 31: Comparison of overall StrengthsFinder Profile to profile by position

Rank Order	Overall Profile (n)	Administrative Dean (n)	Instructional Support (n)	Teacher (n)
1	Relator	Relator	Relator	Responsibility
2	Achiever	Achiever	Responsibility	Learner
3	Responsibility	Focus	Achiever	Relator
4	Learner	Competition	Maximizer	Achiever
5	Maximizer	Learner	Learner	Maximizer Strategic

Research Question 3

> To what extent do employees who have or are working towards a degree or certification in Educational Leadership identified as potential administrators more often than those with no Educational Leadership coursework?

Based on the results shown in Table 24, an overwhelming majority of participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy (81.9%, n=50) either already held a graduate degree in Educational Leadership or were already enrolled in an Educational Leadership program. It was determined through a chi square Goodness of Fit test that a participant's degree/certification level had a significant effect on the likelihood of being nominated by their principal to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy.

Based on this information, the questions that resulted were, "Were principals truly searching for talented employees to nominate for the Aspiring Leaders Academy or were principals nominating those who showed interest in administration by starting an Educational Leadership program" or "Did participation in Educational Leadership programs influence response?"

These questions certainly raise an important issue that could be detrimental to efforts to recruit potential employees into school administration. Based on the uncertainty of the quantity and quality of employees interested in pursuing school administration, the pool from which to choose from should not be limited to those who are seeking a degree or certification in Educational Leadership. For success, talent should be sought out and encouraged. By focusing only on those who have already considered the path to school administration, there would be a pool of potentially talented school administrators who do not receive the proper support or encouragement.

Research Question 4

> To what extent do employees who are currently serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom (administrative dean, resource teacher, literacy coach, etc.) identified more often than teachers currently teaching in the classroom as potential administrators?

Based on Table 25, the number of participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy was very evenly distributed, with 50.8% (n=31) of participants serving in teacher leadership roles outside the classroom and 49.2% (n=30) of participants working in classrooms as teachers. To further investigate this question, a chi square Goodness of Fit

test was conducted to determine if a participant's position had a significant effect on whether a participant was nominated by his/her principal to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy. Based on this analysis [χ^2 (1, n=61) p=0.016] it was determined that participants' position did not have a significant effect on whether a participant was nominated to participate in the Aspiring Leaders Academy.

A cross-tabulation table was developed to determine what the distribution of teachers to those working outside of the classroom looked like at the elementary, middle and high school levels. These results are shown in Table 32 and show that at each grade level there is similar representation of teachers and administrative dean/instructional support teachers.

Table 32: Cross-tabulation Comparison between Position and School Level

	Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
Position	n	%	n	%	n	%
Administrative Dean/ Instructional Support Teacher	13	40.6	9	60.0	5	50.0
Classroom Teacher	19	59.4	6	40.0	5	50.0
Total	31	100.0	15	100.0	10	100.0

While this analysis might lead one to believe that an employee's position and h ability to move up into administration is not related, it is important to understand the ratio of teachers to Administrative Dean/Instructional Support teachers per school. On average, a typical school may have only two to five employees in Administrative Dean/Instructional Support teachers. For example, per the Orange County Public

Schools budget model, schools were allotted one Instruction Support Dean for every 3,200 students and one Administrative Dean position per 3,000 students. A school with 3,000 students in this model would have well over 100 teachers (Orange County Public Schools, 2008c).

Given this information, with an estimated ratio of one administrative dean/instructional support teacher to every 50 teachers, it is clear that within this study administrative deans and instructional support teachers had a better opportunity to be nominated for the Aspiring Leaders Academy.

Conclusions

This study investigated the strengths and talents of potential administrators who participated in the Aspiring Leaders Academy program during the 2007-2008 school year in Orange County Public Schools. The review of literature exposed the state of public education in 2008 and the increased accountability that was placed on schools. At the same time, retirement and other factors led to a lack of qualified leaders to become school principals. This made talent identification, talent management and succession planning practices an important facet of human resource and leadership development for school districts. Based on the review of literature, as well as the data collected from the participants of the Aspiring Leaders Academy, the following conclusions were made:

1. Due to the importance of the principal position (Hallenger & Heck, 1998; Lashway, 2000, Marzano et al., 2005) and the shortage of qualified candidates

that was impacting much of the country (Potter, 2001; Pounder et al, 2003; Roza, 2003), school districts need to initiate talent recruitment/talent management programs to maintain school effectiveness and productivity.

2. Of the 61 participants in the Aspiring Leaders Academy, the following five strengths were most commonly identified among the top five strengths based on responses to the Clifton StrengthsFinder assessment: a) Relator (45.9%), b) Achiever (37.8%), c) Responsibility (37.7%), d) Learner (36.1%) and e) Maximizer (25.9%).
3. There were varying degrees of diversity dependent upon the subgroup. While several subgroups were distributed somewhat evenly (Race, School Level, and Current Position) others were not (Gender and Certification).
4. The profile of candidates (top five strengths) did not vary much in comparing subgroups identified to the profile of the group as a whole. Only two subgroups (Males and Participants who had applied but not yet been accepted to an Educational Leadership program) had less than three strengths in common with the overall profile (Males and Participants who had applied but not yet been accepted to an Educational Leadership program).
5. Individuals who had either already earned a Graduate degree in Educational Leadership or were enrolled in an Educational Leadership program (81.9% of participants) were recommended for participation in the Aspiring Leaders Academy more often than those individuals who had not yet enrolled or applied for admission into an Educational Leadership program (18.1%).

6. Current position had no impact on whether or not an individual was recommended for participation in the Aspiring Leaders Academy program (Administrative Dean/Instructional Support, 50.8%; Teacher, 49.2%).
7. The talents identified for participants at all levels were not statistically different, supporting the notion that talents principals looked for to identify potential administrators were relatively the same at all three levels. In an era where there may be a shortage of talent (Potter, 2001; Pounder et al, 2003; Roza, 2003), school districts should be careful in not limiting talented employees aspiring to become administrators to positions and opportunities at their current level of employment (elementary, middle or high). Furthermore, programs such as the Aspiring Leaders Academy should strive to provide staff development and experiences for all participants to prepare them for success at any school level.
8. To best capitalize on the talent pool within a school, principals must look beyond those individuals that either serve in administrative or instructional support roles in identifying and encouraging talent to pursue school administration. Specifically, this would include talented teachers and employees not currently enrolled or seeking admission into an Educational Leadership program.

Implications for Practice

As demonstrated in the review of literature, there will be a need to identify and recruit talented administrators over the next decade. School districts will need to begin to adopt aggressive and strategic talent identification and talent management processes to

build an effective leadership succession plan. Through this study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. In developing and implementing a talent identification program, such as the Aspiring Leaders Academy in Orange County Public Schools, it is important for all involved to understand the purpose and the benefits. To accomplish this, consistency among referring administrators would be an important factor. A training outlining the qualities desired and a definition of those qualities would be a beneficial exercise.
2. While job experiences are certainly important in talent identification, a profile of personal strengths (as identified by an instrument such as the Clifton StrengthsFinder) in addition to job experiences would make for a well rounded candidate profile and would ensure participants were well qualified. In public schools, this profile may differ for elementary school, middle school and high school candidates.
3. Talent identification and succession planning programs should not use current work level or current position as a limiting factor. To best capitalize on a district's talent resources, administrator preparation programs should orient and prepare potential administrators for success at all school levels.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following are recommendations for future research:

1. This study could be extended to include several cohorts of Aspiring Leaders Academy participants to increase the number of participants and generate more statistically significant data. Due to the low number of participants within this study, this was a limitation.
2. A study could be conducted analyzing the strengths as defined by the Clifton StrengthsFinder of those administrators at academically successful schools based on standardized test scores.
3. A study analyzing the strengths of administrators as defined by the Clifton StrengthsFinder based on their years of experience could provide insight into how generational differences impact an individual's strength profile.
4. A study analyzing the strengths of successful administrators within school districts could provide insight to whether the profile for potential administrators and the profile for successful administrators are similar.

APPENDIX A: APPLICATION FOR THE ASPIRING LEADERS ACADEMY PROGRAM*

APPLICATION FOR THE ASPIRING ADMINISTRATOR LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

(Formerly known as TAP II)

Return to Christopher Bernier, Professional Development Services
by <u>Friday, March 23, 2007</u>
Please Print or Type

<u>Candidate Application:</u>

Name: _____ Current Position: _____
School:_____ Principal: _____
Date of Application: _____

Please check <u>one</u> of the following:
_____ Currently hold certification in Educational Leadership
_____ Currently enrolled in courses to qualify for certification in Educational Leadership
_____ Have recently applied for admission into a masters level program to work on certification in Educational Leadership (name of college or university _____)
_____ Have not started working on obtaining certification in Educational Leadership

Please give specific performance examples of your level of proficiency in the following areas:

1. **<u>Vision:</u>** has an aligned vision for their school and the knowledge, skill, and ability to develop and implement projects that are supported by the larger organization and the school community.

_____
_____
_____

2. **<u>Instructional Leadership:</u>** promotes a positive learning culture, provides effective instruction, and applies best practices to student learning, especially in the area of reading and other foundational skills.

_____
_____
_____

3. **<u>Ethical Leadership:</u>** acts with integrity, fairness, and honesty.

_____
_____
_____

4. **Interpersonal Skills:** utilizes excellent communication skills with stakeholders including the principal, staff, students, parents, and/or community members.

_____
_____
_____

5. **Community and Stakeholder Partnership:** examples of collaboration with families, business, and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, working effectively within the larger organization.

_____
_____
_____

Principal Recommendation:	Fair		Average		Excellent
Vision	1	2	3	4	5
Instructional Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Decision Making Skills	1	2	3	4	5
Interpersonal Skills	1	2	3	4	5
Ethical Leadership	1	2	3	4	5
Technology Skills	1	2	3	4	5
Community Partnerships	1	2	3	4	5
Potential for Administration	1	2	3	4	5

Principal Verification:

I hereby recommend _____ for consideration as an applicant for the Aspiring Leadership Program. I attest that the above-referenced examples are an accurate reflection of the teacher leadership skills demonstrated by this individual.

_____ Date: _____
Signature of Principal

Professional Development Services
Christopher S. Bernier, Senior Director
berniec@ocps.net

***Note: Also referred to as the Aspiring Leaders Academy**

APPENDIX B: THE THIRTY FOUR THEMES OF THE CLIFTON STRENGTHSFINDER INDEX*

Achiever: People strong in the Achiever theme have a great deal of stamina and work hard. They take great satisfaction from being busy and productive.

Activator: People strong in the Activator theme can make things happen by turning thoughts into action. They are often impatient.

Adaptability: People strong in the Adaptability theme prefer to "go with the flow." They tend to be "now" people who take things as they come and discover the future one day at a time.

Analytical: People strong in the Analytical theme search for reasons and causes. They have the ability to think about all the factors that might affect a situation.

Arranger: People strong in the Arranger theme can organize, but they also have a flexibility that complements this ability. They like to figure out how all of the pieces and resources can be arranged for maximum productivity.

Belief: People strong in the Belief theme have certain core values that are unchanging. Out of these values emerges a defined purpose for their life.

Command: People strong in the Command theme have presence. They can take control of a situation and make decisions.

Communication: People strong in the Communication theme generally find it easy to put their thoughts into words. They are good conversationalists and presenters.

Competition: People strong in the Competition theme measure their progress against the performance of others. They strive to win first place and revel in contests.

Connectedness: People strong in the Connectedness theme have faith in the links between all things. They believe there are few coincidences and that almost every event has a reason.

Consistency: People strong in the Consistency theme are keenly aware of the need to treat people the same. They try to treat everyone in the world with consistency by setting up clear rules and adhering to them.

Context: People strong in the Context theme enjoy thinking about the past. They understand the present by researching its history.

Deliberative: People strong in the Deliberative theme are best described by the serious care they take in making decisions or choices. They anticipate the obstacles.

Developer: People strong in the Developer theme recognize and cultivate the potential in others. They spot the signs of each small improvement and derive satisfaction from these improvements.

Discipline: People strong in the Discipline theme enjoy routine and structure. Their world is best described by the order they create.

Empathy: People strong in the Empathy theme can sense the feelings of other people by imagining themselves in others' lives or others' situations.

Focus: People strong in the Focus theme can take a direction, follow through, and make the corrections necessary to stay on track. They prioritize, then act.

Futuristic: People strong in the Futuristic theme are inspired by the future and what could be. They inspire others with their visions of the future.

Harmony: People strong in the Harmony theme look for consensus. They don't enjoy conflict; rather, they seek areas of agreement.

Ideation: People strong in the Ideation theme are fascinated by ideas. They are able to find connections between seemingly disparate phenomena.

Includer: People strong in the Includer theme are accepting of others. They show awareness of those who feel left out, and make an effort to include them.

Individualization: People strong in the Individualization theme are intrigued with the unique qualities of each person. They have a gift for figuring out how people who are different can work together productively.

Input: People strong in the Input theme have a craving to know more. Often they like to collect and archive all kinds of information.

Intellection: People strong in the Intellection theme are characterized by their intellectual activity. They are introspective and appreciate intellectual discussions.

Learner: People strong in the Learner theme have a great desire to learn and want to continuously improve. In particular, the process of learning, rather than the outcome, excites them.

Maximizer: People strong in the Maximizer theme focus on strengths as a way to stimulate personal and group excellence. They seek to transform something strong into something superb.

Positivity: People strong in the Positivity theme have an enthusiasm that is contagious. They are upbeat and can get others excited about what they are going to do.

Relator: People who are strong in the Relator theme enjoy close relationships with others. They find deep satisfaction in working hard with friends to achieve a goal.

Responsibility: People strong in the Responsibility theme take psychological ownership of what they say they will do. They are committed to stable values such as honesty and loyalty.

Restorative: People strong in the Restorative theme are adept at dealing with problems. They are good at figuring out what is wrong and resolving it.

Self-Assurance: People strong in the Self-Assurance theme feel confident in their ability to manage their own lives. They possess an inner compass that gives them confidence that their decisions are right.

Significance: People strong in the Significance theme want to be very important in the eyes of others. They are independent and want to be recognized.

Strategic: People strong in the Strategic theme create alternative ways to proceed. Faced with any given scenario, they can quickly spot the relevant patterns and issues.

Woo: People strong in the Woo theme love the challenge of meeting new people and winning them over. They derive satisfaction from breaking the ice and making connection with another person.

*Source: Buckingham, M., & Clifton, D. (2001). *Now discover your strengths*. New York, New York: The Free Press. p. 83-116

APPENDIX C: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board
Office of Research & Commercialization
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246
Telephone: 407-823-2901, 407-882-2012 or 407-882-2276
www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html

Notice of Expedited Initial Review and Approval

From : **UCF Institutional Review Board**
FWA00000351, Exp. 6/24/11, IRB00001138

To : **Arthur R. Anderson**

Date : **September 23, 2008**

IRB Number: **SBE-08-05810**

Study Title: **STRENGTHS AND TALENTS OF POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATORS IN ORANGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FLORIDA**

Dear Researcher:

Your research protocol noted above was approved by **expedited** review by the UCF IRB Chair on 9/23/2008. **The expiration date is 9/22/2009.** Your study was determined to be minimal risk for human subjects and expeditable per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.110. The categories for which this study qualifies as expeditable research are as follows:

5. Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis).

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

All data, which may include signed consent form documents, must be retained in a locked file cabinet for a minimum of three years (six if HIPAA applies) past the completion of this research. Any links to the identification of participants should be maintained on a password-protected computer if electronic information is used. Additional requirements may be imposed by your funding agency, your department, or other entities. Access to data is limited to authorized individuals listed as key study personnel.

To continue this research beyond the expiration date, a Continuing Review Form must be submitted 2 – 4 weeks prior to the expiration date. Advise the IRB if you receive a subpoena for the release of this information, or if a breach of confidentiality occurs. Also report any unanticipated problems or serious adverse events (within 5 working days). Do not make changes to the protocol methodology or consent form before obtaining IRB approval. Changes can be submitted for IRB review using the Addendum/Modification Request Form. An Addendum/Modification Request Form **cannot** be used to extend the approval period of a study. All forms may be completed and submitted online at http://iris.research.ucf.edu .

Failure to provide a continuing review report could lead to study suspension, a loss of funding and/or publication possibilities, or reporting of noncompliance to sponsors or funding agencies. The IRB maintains the authority under 45 CFR 46.110(e) to observe or have a third party observe the consent process and the research.

On behalf of Tracy Dietz, Ph.D., UCF IRB Chair, this letter is signed by:

Signature applied by Joanne Muratori on 09/23/2008 01:49:04 PM EDT

Joanne Muratori

IRB Coordinator

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