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## Role Perceptions of Georgia High School Principals in Light of Requirements of No Child Left Behind: A Qualitative Profile of Experiences

Ja'net S. Bishop

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# ROLE PERCEPTIONS OF GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

IN LIGHT OF REQUIREMENTS OF NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND:

A QUALITATIVE PROFILE OF EXPERIENCES

by

JA'NET BISHOP

(Under the Direction of Brenda L.H. Marina, PH.D)

## ABSTRACT

Georgia high school principals are under extreme pressure to meet new education standards through No Child Left Behind, such as ensuring and improving teacher quality, meeting and exceeding state mandated testing, increasing graduation and graduation rates, and meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP). The role of principal is important in an effective school where student achievement is occurring. The perceived implications of the principals' roles may also impact how efficiently they can improve student achievement in their schools. Principals' perceptions of their roles, and their perceived changes in their roles, may have an effect on how they address achievement in their school. The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of Georgia high school principals' awareness and perceptions of their role in addressing the requirements of NCLB who had been in that position at least 5 to 7 years. A qualitative method was used to conduct the research. Procedures for this study involved employing a research instrument of 10 questions designed to elicit responses relating to three research sub-questions. The researcher interviewed five Georgia high school principals, one principal recently retired from public education. The study allowed the participants to articulate their experiences as they reflected upon the impact of NCLB on their roles as high school principals and how their roles

evolved over their tenures. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for recurring patterns and themes by the researcher. This information supports the conclusion that the requirements of NCLB mandates have had an impact on the role of Georgia high school principals in the selected regions. Principals have seen an evolution in their roles and responsibilities since the law has been enacted. Therefore, the answer to the overarching question is that Georgia high school principals are aware of their roles and perceive that NCLB mandates have affected their roles and responsibilities by requiring them to rely on their human relations and communications skills in developing teacher leaders and being more data driven in their instructional leadership. This research points to a definite evolution in the role of the high school principals studied as a result of NCLB.

**INDEX WORDS:** Educational leadership, Secondary principals, No Child Left Behind, Roles

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to:

God Almighty.

My husband William Brian Bishop, Sr.

With your influence and encouragement,

I entered education and school administration as a second career.

Nor would I have ever considered completing my doctorate

if it were not for your non-stop reference to me as, “Doc”,

during times when I was willing to stop and save my sanity!

My sons William II and Matthew

who endured many activities affected by my research...but loved me unconditionally.

My parents James and Carrie Smalls

who raised me to believe that with an education, all things were possible.

My brothers Darryl and James Tyrone Smalls

who kept me humble....and laughing through it all.

To my best sister-friend Roslyn Ferrell

who reminds me of growing up and staying in touch with the ‘*girl at heart*’.

Without everyone’s encouragement, patience, and influence,

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of Georgia high school principals' perceptions of their role in addressing the requirements of NCLB. Georgia high school principals are under extreme pressure to meet new education standards through NCLB, such as ensuring and improving teacher quality, meeting and exceeding state mandated testing, increasing graduation and graduation rates, and meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP). The role of principal is important in an effective school where student achievement is occurring. The perceived implications of the principals' roles may also impact how efficiently they can improve student achievement in their schools. Principals' perceptions of their roles, and their perceived changes in their roles, may have an effect on how they address achievement in their school (Boyer, 1997; Gray, 1992).

Christenson (1993) asserted, "The success or failure of any type of change within schools rests upon principals and their ability to resist, ignore, accept, or lead the reform" (p. 16). The role of the high school principal is a critical factor in a success rate of the school (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Chopra, 1994; Glasman, 1986; Manatt, 1989; Niece, 1993). Changes in the success rate of schools and the manner in which student achievement are assessed have influenced the role of the principal (Ashby & Krug, 1998). These authors stated that the role of the principal is in a state of transformation. As federal accountability policies require building principals to implement school-wide change to improve student achievement, the role of the high school principal continues to evolve.

Increased responsibilities and the awareness of the demands of the principal position have in turn, contributed to a shortage of principals (Ediger, 2002). The increased responsibilities are evidenced by fostering school improvement based on federal, state, and district initiatives such as accountability for high stakes testing, and outcomes-based promotion and graduation (Ediger, 2002). Demands on the principals include keeping parents, teachers, the central office, and the community satisfied (Ediger, 2002). The shortage of aspiring principals is even more complicated by changing demographics of the community, teacher shortages, the proliferation of technology, and pressure to raise standardized test scores (Quinn, 2002; Schiff, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001).

Expectations for principals and their varied roles have been described as unrealistic. The principal's position is burdened, and responsibilities should be shared so that the principal can allot additional time to curriculum, instruction, and school improvement (Quinn, 2002; Schiff, 2002; Supovitz, 2000). Increasing accountability pressures to improve test scores and graduation rates, and the changing demands of the job, require the development of a new set of skills for principals (Copland, 2001; Elmore, 2000; Fullan, 2002; Quinn, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001). For example, the principal must engage faculty members and share leadership responsibilities with teachers. The duties and responsibilities in the role of the principal continue to evolve and must be modified to meet the rising tide of accountability (Tirozzi, 2001).

The concept of comprehensive accountability, such as mandates associated with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), has been a benchmark of education in the 21st century. Historically, principal accountability involved a more general approach to doing a job well, maintaining strong teacher relationships, assuming the role of instructional leader, and exhibiting sound budgeting practices (Lashway, 2000). The emphasis has shifted from accountability for how

money and other resources are used to accountability for outcomes of student achievement (Elmore, Abelman, & Fuhrman, 1996).

Consequences for failing to meet adequate yearly progress targets affect student graduation rates, district funding, and the retention of principals (Bonstingl, 2001). All of these consequences place increasing pressure on principals to collaborate with teachers to ensure that learning goals are linked to instructional strategies. These complex roles, combined with the perception that schools continue to decline, have resulted in a call for a higher level of principal leadership to address the additional accountability placed on local school districts (Christie, 2000; Portin & Shen, 1998; Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998). This increased accountability presents a dilemma for high school principals, who must find remedies to improve student achievement levels.

The emphasis on accountability has resulted in additional pressures on the roles of principals (Brewer, 2001; King, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001). NCLB placed additional pressure on the role of high school principals by increasing their responsibility for student achievement for advantaged and disadvantaged students. All student groups, not merely the economically disadvantaged, racial or ethnic minorities, students with disabilities and English language learners, must achieve state-defined targets within NCLB (Anthes, 2002).

#### Statement of the Problem

Several studies have been conducted in Georgia since 1982, which have provided insight regarding principals' perceptions of their roles (Bowden, 1990; Boyer, 1997; Davis, Anderson, & Kolka, 1986; Gray, 1992). The extent to which high school principals perceive changes in their roles in the school environment might or might not impede their ability to create, sustain, and

manage educational reform in their school (Borman, G. D., Hewes, G. M., Overman, L. T., & Brown, S., 2003; Bowden, 1990; Carlin, P., 1992).

What has not been fully researched and definitively described are high school principals' perceptions of their role as impacted on by NCLB mandates, particularly in Georgia high schools. Research was minimal regarding investigations concerning Georgia public high school principals perceived their roles while addressing the NCLB accountability system. Therefore, this research shed new light on informative, principals' perceptions of their role due to NCLB using narrative discourse.

In this study the researcher identified Georgia high school principals' awareness and perceptions of their role in conjunction with the mandates of NCLB. Responses to specific questions about their roles since NCLB were submitted to selected high school principals throughout Georgia to gather data for analysis. This research built on the existing literature associated with the high school principals' perceptions of their roles as a result of school reform mandates.

Through the findings of this study, the researcher conveyed real-life experiences of high school principals who were high school principals pre-NCLB (2001-2002) and post-NCLB (2008-2009) in an attempt to convey dimensions inherent in their roles for those who may pursue the opportunity of the high school principalship.

### Research Questions

The overarching research question to be explored in this study were:

1. What are the perceptions of Georgia high school principals on how NCLB mandates affect their roles and responsibilities?

*Sub questions:*

1. What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?
2. How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates?
3. What, if any, job-related pressures/demands do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB?

Significance of the Study

Few studies have been conducted on high school principals and their role awareness. Those that have been conducted have not delved into the awareness of their role(s) within the context of a federal mandate such as NCLB. Nor, have studies explored awareness of changes in leadership style and the extent to which these changes are due to the mandates of NCLB.

Implementing reform initiatives was cited as a reason that the principal's role has expanded (Sinatra, 2001; Tirozzi & Ferradino, 2000). Furthermore, Tirozzi and Ferradino suggested as a relevant concern, that the diversity of the principal's role may have influenced the national shortage of qualified principals to fill existing vacancies (Tirozzi & Ferradino, 2000). A call for redefinition and revision of the principal's role to eradicate the shortage and encourage recruitment of qualified individuals to assume the position has been suggested.

In this study, commonalities that may be associated with the role(s) awareness of high school principals will be explored. How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB? Has NCLB changed their roles, and are there any job-related pressures/demands they perceive that they faced as a result of NCLB?



### Limitations

A limitation to this study was the small sample of participants. Miles and Huberman (1996) contended that a qualitative study should have a limited number of participants in an effort to complete an in-depth study and interact with the participants in this study. As such, the findings were not generalizable to other populations. The 5 high school principals in this study were purposely selected to represent a group of high school principals from rural, urban, and suburban areas in Georgia high schools. These principals represented a variety of backgrounds, school size, and years of experience.

### Assumptions

The high school principals' awareness of their roles and leadership style due to NCLB mandates was examined by using the semi-structured interview process, an accepted qualitative research technique in education. For purposes of this study, an assumption was made that the researcher will obtain honest, open responses from the high school principals who were interviewed.

### Definition of Terms

*Accountability system.* The accountability system includes academic standards for students' academic achievement each year (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).* AYP is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year as determined under the NCLB Act (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

*Assessment.* Assessment is a test or system of appraisal. Under NCLB, tests/assessments are aligned with academic standards in all core subjects (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

*Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* NCLB revises this federal legislation governing public schools (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

*Flexibility.* Flexibility is a NCLB concept of funding that gives states and school districts unprecedented authority in the use of federal education dollars in exchange for strong accountability for results (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

*High School.* A school, usually including Grades 9-12 (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

*Needs improvement (NI).* NI is a status given to schools that fail to make AYP for two consecutive years or more (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

*No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).* NCLB is an authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a federal law that affects K–12 education (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

*Restructuring.* Restructuring is a concept that applies to Title I schools not meeting AYP for 6 or more years in a row and follow one of the following options: (a) reopen as a charter school; (b) replace all or most of relevant school staff; (c) contract with outside entity to operate school; (d) face state takeover; or (e) any other major restructuring of school's governance (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

*School choice.* School choice is the option parents have to transfer children from a *Needs Improvement* (NI) Title I school to a school that meets AYP (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

*Student subgroups.* Sub-groups include racial/ethnicity, students with disabilities, limited English proficiency (LEP), and economically disadvantaged students (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

*Supplemental services.* Supplementary services include free opportunities (such as outside tutoring, or research based academic assistance) provided to Title I schools that are in the Needs improvement (NI) category for 2 years (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

*Teacher quality.* Teacher quality is based upon certification in assigned teaching areas (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

*Title I.* Title I is the first section of ESEA and refers to funding programs aimed at the United States' most disadvantaged students in both public and private schools (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

### Summary

Chapter 1 provided an introduction to the study. After the statement of the problem, the research question and sub-questions followed. The purpose of the study and the significance of the study provided insights into the NCLB and details how findings from this study might add to the literature on school leadership under NCLB. A discussion of the limitations, and assumptions is provided. Then the chapter concludes with the definition of terms.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Chapter 2 provides a discussion of the literature pertinent to this study. Major topic areas include history of education reform, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and High Schools, federal education legislation and public school reform, requirements of NCLB and accountability, evolution of the principal role, distributed leadership, transformational leadership, roles and challenges high school principals face under NCLB, and Influences of NCLB on principals' leadership.

#### History of Reform in Education

Federal involvement in public education has produced various waves of school reform efforts that aim to increase student achievement. Post-World War II federal education policy directed attention toward specific programmatic areas that addressed the science and math fields (Urban & Wagoner, 1996). Marked by the Sputnik launch of 1957, this era was a time in which American policy makers and educators began to establish reform to help students meet or exceed the academic achievement level of leading foreign countries (Urban & Wagoner, 1996). The largest federal education program, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, provided interventions to address issues affecting the education of low socioeconomic and low achieving students.

By the late 1980s, however, with the publication of *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), concerns about the nature of education from community, political, business, and university sectors mounted over the need to address systemic changes in education to impact issues such as functional illiteracy among minority students in the

American educational system (Beck & Murphy, 1993; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Even though little success resulted from adopting system-wide reform policy nationally, state legislators began increasing graduation and teaching requirements (Timar & Kirp, 1988). In addition, state legislators established initiatives to shift the responsibility of reform from state to local educators and to make schools accountable for implementing programs to improve student achievement (Elmore, 1978; Fuhrman, 1999).

Reform initiatives included instituting site autonomy, professional development and certification of staff as strategies to achieve change school-by-school. Through these types of comprehensive reform initiatives, principals had to play a critical role in developing school and community support to effect school-wide change and improvement (Mintrop, Gamson, McLaughlin, Wong, & Oberman, 2001).

The 1990s reflected a return to three types of large-scale reform, (a) whole school district reform involving all schools in a district; (b) whole school reform in which hundreds of schools attempted to implement particular models of change, and (c) state or national initiatives in which all or most of the schools in the state were involved (Fullan, 2002). The roles and responsibilities of the high school principal include being instructional leaders of their schools, understanding instructional strategies, and analyzing student achievement data to make more effective instructional decisions (Taylor & Williams, 2001).

The role of the school principal influences the success of organizational and instructional reform as well as change within the school (Copland, 2001). High school principals face substantial challenges if their schools do not accomplish the NCLB federal mandates (i.e., being placed on a *needs improvement list*, parental school choice, and school restructuring) as they adjust to the NCLB requirements (Anthes, 2002).

## No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act

United States President George W. Bush signed Public Law 107-110 NCLB on January 8, 2002. The provisions of NCLB strongly reflect the Bush administration's emphasis on raising standards for educational performance and accountability, combined with increased flexibility over the disposition of federal funding at the state and local levels. Among the most ambitious and controversial mandates of NCLB was the requirement that each state develop a comprehensive plan detailing a strategy by which it would (a) ensure that every student attain educational proficiency, and (b) eliminate achievement gaps between high and low performing groups within 12 years (by the 2013-2014 academic year). Although specifics of defining and implementing certain key elements of the standards and accountability system remain in the purview of the states, the expectation is that state plans conform to the terms of the federal legislation (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Swanson, 2003; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002, 2003).

Some legislators consider the NCLB legislation as a significant attempt to make schools accountable for student achievement in both elementary and secondary education (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002, 2003). However, media attention has focused on criticism and resistance from state legislatures, principals, teachers, parents, and other community members (National Education Association, 2004). In March, 2004, the Oklahoma House of Representatives passed a resolution calling for repeal of NCLB. An overwhelming vote to forbid spending state funds to comply with NCLB mandates by the conservative Utah House of Representatives showed the bipartisan nature of opposition. Maine legislators followed suit, also refusing to spend state funds on NCLB. The Republican-dominated Virginia legislature voted 98 to 1 for a resolution objecting many aspects of NCLB. In reaction to a growing chorus

of disapproval, the National Conference of State Legislatures (2004) convened a task force to study the consequences of NCLB.

By mid-March 2004, at least 21 states had passed or proposed measures to opt out of NCLB or to request changes in the law (School Board News, 2004). By mid-April 2004, over 27 states had bills or resolutions calling for changes in the law, requesting full funding, calling for studies of the costs, prohibiting state funding on the law, or for opting out altogether (National Education Association, 2004).

The most apparent complaints were claims that the federal law is under funded and overly invasive. Criticism of massive federal intervention in state and local educational policy takes several forms. The criticism includes resistance (a) to NCLB's bureaucratic requirements; (b) to having to alter state accountability programs to join together with the federal requirements; (c) to increasing use of standardized tests; (d) to the arbitrary Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) formula; and (e) to the sanctions imposed for failure to make AYP (National Education Association, 2004; School Board News, 2004).

NCLB requires education agencies of states to institute standards and assessments. It also targets schools for improvement by disaggregating student test data. NCLB requires officials of states to ensure that migrant students, disabled students, and students from all major racial, ethnic, and income groups reach state-determined benchmarks of academic proficiency within the next 12 years (107th Congress of the United States, Public Law 107-110, 2002).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended by NCLB (2002), offered educators in public schools opportunity to improve teaching and learning for children across the state of Georgia. NCLB is built on the groundwork of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and it maintains the fundamental framework of assessments, standards, and

accountability. With increased accountability for policy makers at the states, districts, and schools levels, NCLB stipulates important changes that administrators in schools need to implement relative to educating their students (Learning Alliance, 2002). The primary educational mandates associated with high schools and NCLB are delineated in the following key concepts: ensuring highly qualified teachers, testing requirements, graduation and graduation rates, and making AYP.

#### *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and High Schools*

Although the NCLB law addresses Grades K-12, much attention is on how the law affects K-8 schools and, most notably, the testing requirements for Grades 3-8. However, high schools must also comply with several specific provisions of the new law, including acquiring highly qualified teachers, improving test scores, increasing graduation rates, and accomplishing AYP. High schools that have failed to have the majority of their students graduate, and are receiving the NCLB Title I funds, are sanctioned the same as elementary and middle schools, including school choice (the option parents have to transfer children from a *Needs Improvement* Title I school to a school that meets adequate yearly progress), supplemental services (free opportunities, such as outside tutoring or research based academic assistance, provided to Title I schools that are in the *Needs Improvement* category for 2 years), and eventual restructuring (concept that applies to Title I schools not meeting adequate yearly progress for 6 or more years in a row with the option to reopen as a charter school; replace all or most of their relevant school staff; contract with outside entity to operate school; face state takeover; or, any other major restructuring of school's governance (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Georgia Department of Education, 2004; Green, 2002, U.S. Department of Education, 2003).



Under NCLB, high school administrators (Grades 9-12) are required to make sure that their teachers are highly qualified. Each state education agency that receive Title I grant funds, must ensure that teachers of core academic subjects, including English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography meet specific qualifications. The specific qualifications for the highly qualified status include full state certification, or a passing grade on the teacher licensing examination, a license to teach in the state; a bachelor's degree, and a demonstrated high level of competency in each of the academic subjects in which the teacher teaches by the end of school year 2005-2006 (P.L. 107-110, 2002).

Within the NCLB mandate, high schools have to test all students in at least one grade (10 –12) in reading and math, and by 2012, science testing will be required. State education agencies must include limited-English-proficient (LEP) students, and students with disabilities in the testing process, providing appropriate accommodations when necessary. These measures should steadily increase students' test scores and graduation rates, and ensure that 100% of students meet required proficiency levels of achievement by the spring of 2014 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Green, 2002; P.L. 107-110, 2002).

High schools will have to end the practice of counting alternative graduation certificates, such as the General Education Development (GED), as comparable to graduating from high school; and will have to define graduation rates in a rigorous, quantitative, and standardized manner. For example, graduation rates will be determined by the percentage of ninth graders who graduate from high school 4 years later to more closely reflect the number of students who complete the standard high school program within the typical 4-year period attributed to the high school experience (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Green, 2002; P.L. 107-110, 2002).

One method of assuring that the school changes and improvements are made at all levels is by reporting the AYP. AYP represents the annual academic performance targets in reading, language arts, and mathematics that the state, school districts, and schools must reach to be considered on track to meet the NCLB requirement for 100% proficiency by school year 2013-2014 (Georgia Department of Education, 2004). The federal law requires each state to set high academic standards and implement a student testing program which is aligned with standards and measures students' achievement based on the standards. In Georgia, high schools are required to meet AYP standards in the following three areas: (a) test participation for both mathematics and reading or English language arts; (b) academic performance for both mathematics and reading or English language arts; and, (c) graduation rates for Grades 9-12 (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

Educators in schools that fail to meet AYP goals must offer families other school choices; give additional support services to low-income families; replace school staff; decrease management authority at the school level; and implement new curricula, and change the school's governance structure (Anthes, 2002; P.L. 107-110, 2002). These sanctions rest directly upon principals who are accountable for ensuring that AYP is met each year.

NCLB's challenges for high schools principals include the issue of under-funding. Secondary school funding does not meet the needs of the high school students who are challenged by low reading levels, which affect their performance on mandated standardized tests. Scores on these tests directly impact AYP of students' respective schools' AYP (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Public Law the 107-110, 2002).

The U.S. Department of Education's fiscal year 2006 budget provided 56 billion dollars in federal education funding. This allocation represents a 33% increase since George W. Bush signed into law NCLB (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). The criteria for distribution of this federal money allows for disbursement among the states for districts with Title I programs. The funds are allocated to be spent on effective research-based programs and practices targeted to improved schools and to enhance teacher quality (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002).

Historically, the principal's primary role was school manager. District office curriculum directors made initial curriculum decisions after collaborating with textbook publishers. Teachers initiated programs and principals conducted the day-to-day activities of the school. Banach (1999) contended, "Educators are living in a pressure cooker environment. There are demands for improved performance, higher standards, new accountability measures, and pressure to integrate technology. And the heat is being turned up!" (p. 4). In order to survive the pressures of these demands, educational leaders must realize and accept "education's new market-driven environment" (Banach, 1999, p. 4). There is a shift in thinking and the requirements of accountability will make it necessary for the school principal to become an empowered leader.

New roles for principals evolved with the mandates of high stakes accountability and the enactment of NCLB. Therefore, high school leaders are responsible for the adequate yearly progress (AYP) of students, the quality of teachers, test performance of students, and graduation rates.

The skills needed for high-stakes testing and standards-based accountability set forth in NCLB require a different type of educational leader who is able to address effectively evolving roles. To be prepared for the role of school administrator and effectively lead the systemic change required by NCLB, principals must: (a) understand their roles and responsibilities and,

(b) must possess the skills needed to examine critically the functioning of the school and plan for school-wide change to improve instruction and ensure student achievement.

### Review of Related Literature

#### *Federal Education Legislation and Public School Reform*

Congress passed the National Defense Education Act in 1958. The act increased funding to schools in order to improve instruction in science and math. As the first time that the federal government intervened in public education, this involvement was predicated by Russia's launching of Sputnik. In 1965 Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), launching the involvement of the Federal government's involvement in the public schools of nation. Seen as "the single largest federal support for K-12 education" (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2003), ESEA was a component of Ex-President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty.

In 1965, Congress reauthorized ESEA. With the 1965 reauthorization, federal emphasis concentrated on academic achievement of the disadvantaged students, and strengthened "the federal presence in state and local programs" (Stallings, 2002, p. 6). In 1968, ESEA provided funds for the special needs of limited English proficient students. The goals of ESEA were "to help states improve educational opportunities for the underclass" (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2004, p. 1).

The Education of All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) was established in 1975. The act provided "a free and appropriate public education which emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet children's unique needs" (U.S. Congress, 1975). The act further provided federal funding to provide the services for special needs/handicapped students.

Educators in schools examined the special needs of each handicapped student and developed an individualized education program (IEP) to address those needs. Parents and school

staff members were charged with the responsibility of collaboratively establishing plans as well as completing an annual review of progress. Historically, special needs/handicapped students were excluded from education in public schools, or if they did attend a public school were expected to meet the same educational goals as a regular student. This act ordered all public schools to educate special needs/handicapped students in an appropriate manner.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter established the Department of Education. The first Secretary of Education, the Honorable Shirley Hufstедler, suggested that “Federal-state-local cooperation should focus on individual students and not focus on educational interests” (Stallings, 2002, p. 4). Her most significant goal was to once again elevate the importance of education in the nation.

The status of the Department of Education was tentative during the Reagan Administration. President Reagan “saw the (Department) as an intrusion on the local and state control of education” (Stallings, 2002, p. 4) Though then Secretary of Education, Terrell H. Bell, reestablished the importance and necessity for a Department of Education, there were significant cuts in federal funding during the Reagan era, and “federal involvement in education was reduced.” (Stallings, 2002, p. 5)

One of the most significant influences on public school reform was the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. This document, published in 1983 by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, notified the public of the mediocre education being received by the students in the United States. The Honorable T. H. Bell created the commission to investigate the quality of education in the United States. Coeyman (2003) stated that “*A Nation at Risk* is a report chock-full of strong language and disturbing findings” (p. 1). This work stimulated interest by the American public in the education of the nation’s children. The report contained no hard

statistical data but rather retrieved the information to prepare the “practical recommendations of educational improvement” (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p.4) from five sources:

1. Papers commissioned from experts on a variety of educational issues;
2. Administrators, teachers, students, representatives of professional and public groups, parents, business leaders, public officials, and scholars who testified at eight meetings of the full Commission, six public hearings, two panel discussions, a symposium, and a series of meetings organized by the Department of Education’s Regional Offices;
3. Existing analyses of problems in education;
4. Letters from concerned citizens, teachers, and administrators who volunteered extensive comments on problems and possibilities in American education; and,
5. Descriptions of notable programs and promising approaches in education (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p. 193). The Commission stated,

The educational dimensions of the risk before us have been amply documented in testimony received by the Commission, ‘with no mention of the use of statistical analysis of and results’ (U.S. Department of Education, 1983, p. 7), additionally, the results are peppered with the no statistical terms many, about, and some. Even so, the findings jaded the U.S. public’s confidence in the public education system. Frequent statements reflecting that the lack of quality public education ‘under girds American prosperity, security and civility’ (USDOE, p.6) and ‘the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people’ (USDOE, p. 6).

*A Nation at Risk* led to the realization that “the federal government couldn’t afford to leave education to state and local governments” (Coeyman, 2003, p. 1). The Commission

indicated that “the federal government has the primary responsibility to identify the national interest in education. The federal government is responsible for national leadership; it is also responsible of ensuring that the Nation’s public and private resources are marshaled to address the issues” (USDOE, 1983, p. 7).

The federal government became more involved with the performance of students, teachers, and administrators and spawned numerous committees and conferences on education. The most widely known of these is the National Education Summit assembled in 1989 by President George Bush. The nation’s governors attended the summit and established five education goals. The summit produced a seven-part education plan that rewarded high achieving students and successful schools (Stallings, 2002).

Later, the National Governors Association held an Education Summit in Charlottesville, Virginia. During that summit, led by then governor Bill Clinton, the summit established a need for the creation of National Education Goals, the state’s obligation to raising achievement levels of all students, the improvement of education standards, and the importance of the involvement of the Federal Government in the improvement of education.

The GOALS 2000 Act provided a framework for the reform initiatives outlined in the findings of the 1989 Charlottesville Education Summit. This Act did not establish a national school board but instead established a guide for the reform and rebuilding of the current public school system. The role of the federal government became that of promoter of comprehensive change to the public school system to better the education of all students.

In 1994, The U.S. Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) as the Improving America’s Schools Act. The premise of this act was to transform the way policy makers and educators deliver education, promote comprehensive systemic school

reform, and advance instructional and professional development to align with high standards, bolster accountability, and encourage the coordination of resources to improve education for ALL children. (U.S. DOE, 1983, p.193) State Educational Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) were challenged to incorporate four standards into their programs:

1. High standards for all students.
2. Professional experiences that better prepare teachers to teach to high standards.
3. Flexibility to stimulate local initiatives coupled with responsibility for results.
4. Partnerships promotion among families, communities and schools. (US DOE, 1983, p. 193).

This reauthorization was further enhanced by the Goals 2000: Educate America Act, enacted in 1994. This act provided \$104 million for fiscal year 1994. States were required to apply for funds by submitting plans “describing the process by which the state would develop a school improvement plan” (NCREL, 1994, p.1) The Act also established the following eight National Education Goals to be implemented by 2008

1. All children in America would start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate would increase to at least 90%.
3. All students would leave Grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics in government, economics, the arts, history, and geography, and every school in America would ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our nation’s economy.
4. United States students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement.



5. Every adult in America will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

6. Every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

7. The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

8. Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children (NCREL, 1994, p. 1)

In 2001 ESEA was reauthorized as No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The 2001 reauthorization and revision provided substantial support for the improvement of low-performing schools. "The first component is that states must adopt a single statewide system to show that all students are making AYP the second major component applies a series of interventions to schools that fail to demonstrate AYP" (Cracium, 2002, p.1). NCLB requires that states and districts develop accountability systems (Delisio, 2002) to insure that each student in Grades 3 through 8 makes AYP. Progress is to be determined by data collected from a state determined test, for example the high school graduation tests in each state. The goal of this testing, according to the United States Department of Education (Delisio, 2002) is to provide teachers with information about the academic progress being made by students.

*Requirements of NCLB Accountability and Their Effects*

NCLB, the most recent reauthorization of ESEA, expanded on the requirements of Goals 2000 by imposing more demanding accountability obligations. The legislation increased the federal position in education. Student achievement is at the core of the legislation and schools and states are held responsible for student academic success. Provisions of NCLB are more definitive in their requirements and embody significant changes in education in the United States. These directives include:

1. Annual testing. The education agencies of states are required to test students in Grades 3 through 8 annually in reading and math by 2005-2006 school year. By 2007-2008 the testing must be expanded to encompass science. All tests must be aligned with state academic standards.

2. Academic Progress. The education agencies of states are required to demonstrate that all students have reached a proficient level on state tests by 2012-2014. Additionally individual schools must exhibit AYP for both their students' populations and for certain demographic subgroups.

3. Report cards. Education decision makers in states, districts, and schools must provide school report cards with information broken down into subgroups by 2002-2003.

4. Teacher qualifications. By 2005-2006 all teachers in core content areas must be highly qualified in the subjects taught. Each state will determine the characteristics that are required to meet these requirements. Additionally, all paraprofessionals who work in Title I schools must have completed at least 2 years of college, obtained an associate's degree or higher or passed an evaluation to demonstrate knowledge and teaching ability.

5. Reading First. A \$1.02 billion grant was provided to assist states and districts in establishing a ‘scientific, research-based’ reading program for students in Grades K – 3. This also established a reading program for children from 3- to 5-year-olds in areas of poverty.

6. Funding changes. Title I funding formulas were revised to provide additional funds to school districts with high concentrations of children of poverty. This provision also provided more flexibility in how school districts spend their Title I funds.

Each state established the standards for accomplishing these tasks with no standards provided nationally. Likewise, the measures to determine adequate progress are established by each individual state with no guidance from the United States Department of Education. The federal provisions are often in addition to already established state accountability programs as seen in the states of Florida, Kentucky, and Texas. “Twenty-one states are maintaining their own accountability systems while also complying with the federal law” (Hoff, 2004, p. 2).

*High school requirements.* NCLB requires school administrators in high schools, districts, and states to adopt measures to ensure that all students meet high academic standards. NCLB’s requirements for high schools fall into four primary categories: teacher quality, testing, graduation and graduation rates, and AYP (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003).

*Teacher quality.* NCLB requires state education policy makers to (a) measure the extent to which all students, particularly minority and disadvantaged students, have highly qualified teachers, (b) adopt goals and plans to ensure all teachers are highly qualified and, (c) publicly report plans and progress in meeting teacher quality goals. State educators prepared to meet the 2005-2006 deadlines to ensure their teachers were highly qualified. Highly qualified teachers are deemed as such if they have: (a) a bachelor’s degree, (b) full state certification or licensure, and (c) prove that they know each subject they teach (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

Teachers (in middle and high school) must prove that they know the subject they teach with: (a) a major in the subject they teach, (b) credits equivalent to a major in the subject, (c) passage of a state-developed test, (d) high objective, uniform state standard of evaluation (HOUSSE) for teachers only, (e) an advanced certification from the state, or (f) a graduate degree.

HOUSSE: NCLB allows states to develop an additional way for teachers to demonstrate subject-matter competency and meet highly qualified teacher requirements. Proof may consist of a combination of teaching experience, professional development, and knowledge in the subject garnered over time in the profession. Clear requirements are noted by NCLB for ensuring that high school teachers are highly qualified. School districts must ensure that teachers of core academic subjects, English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, and geography, are qualified in their specific areas (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Bracey, 2003; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002, 2003). The U.S. Department of Education (2004) provides three additional areas of flexibility for teachers to demonstrate that they are highly qualified. This new flexibility will benefit teachers and local and state administrators.

*Rural teachers.* Often, the teachers in rural areas are required to teach more than one academic subject. Under this new policy, teachers in eligible, rural districts who are highly qualified in at least one subject will have 3 years to become highly qualified in the additional subjects that they teach. They must be provided professional development, intense supervision, or structured mentoring to become highly qualified in those additional subjects.

*Science teachers.* Like rural teachers, science teachers are often needed to teach in more than one field of science. State education agencies may determine that teachers are highly

qualified either in broad field science or individual fields of science (i.e., physics, biology, or chemistry).

*Multi-subject teachers.* Under new guidelines, states may streamline the HOUSSE evaluation process by developing a method for practicing, multi-subject teachers to demonstrate through one process that they are highly qualified in each of their subjects and maintain the same high standards in subject matter mastery.

On January 4, 2005, the Georgia Department of Education (2005) created the Teacher Quality (TQ) Division in the Office of Teacher and Student Support. The goal of the TQ Division is to promote and support quality teaching to improve student learning in every classroom in the state. NCLB does not require annual testing at every grade level (or in every subject area) in high schools. Students must be tested at least once in Grades 10 to 12, and reading/language arts, mathematics, and science are the only required subject-area assessments. High schools, unlike elementary and middle schools, are required to participate in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2003).

*Testing.* NCLB requires state standardized tests. The Georgia Department of Education administers the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) to evaluate student performance at high schools. The GHSGT areas include English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Georgia high school diploma requirements dictate that students must accomplish passing scores in each GHSGT subtest, as well as on the Georgia High School Writing Test (GHSWT).

Popham (2001) stressed that the emphasis on testing has resulted in curricular reductionism. Kohn (2001) characterized schools simply as testing centers. Teachers under

pressure from school boards, and principals, tend to focus instructional emphasis on content, concepts, and skills that are tested. Principals, in some instances, have modified existing programs to raise test scores. Daggett (2002) indicated that teachers and principals expressed anger and frustration resulting from pressure to teach a narrow set of skills for short-term gains in lieu of concepts that students needed to learn for long-term success. He further suggested that high-stakes testing impacts job security for teachers and principals.

Olson (1999) reported that 48 state education agencies assess students, 36 issue report cards, and 16 have the authority to take over failing schools. Policymakers mandate accountability through processes including student achievement targets, assessment standards, dissemination, and wide publication of test results to the media (Popham, 2001). Consequences for failing to meet targets affect students' graduation status, teachers' bonuses, district funding, and principals' retention levels (Bonstingl, 2001). All of these consequences place increasing pressure on principals to collaborate with teachers to ensure that learning goals are linked to instructional strategies.

Complex roles combined with the perception that schools continue to decline have resulted in a call for higher levels of principal leadership to address increased accountability among educators in local school districts (Christie, 2000; Portin & Shen, 1998; Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998). Increased accountability presents a dilemma for the secondary school principal who must find and implement interventions for higher student achievement levels which were nurtured and sustained through the students' early years in elementary and middle school. The emphasis on accountability has resulted in additional pressures and recommendations for new principals' roles (Brewer, 2001; King, 2002; Tirozzi, 2001).

High school principals are beginning to grasp their roles in NCLB. Principals are accustomed to complying with new laws and mandates. Communicating with staff and parents in regard to school improvement initiatives is one aspect of the role of high school principals that is necessary to improve high schools in accordance with NCLB requirements. To achieve improvements, high school principals must have the financial resources and flexibility to address the needs of their at-risk students and the NCLB requirements (Ferrandino & Tirozzi, 2002). High schools are going to be held even more accountable which will, therefore, exponentially increase the NCLB impact on the role high school principals because of federal mandates.

#### *Graduation and Graduation Rates*

NCLB (2002) defined a regular high school diploma as one which does not include any certification that is not aligned with state standards (i.e., alternative certificates or the GED). In 2001, over 945,000 students in the United States completed at least one of the four GED tests (language arts, social studies, science, and math), an increase of 31.6% over 2000 (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Bush, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2003).

In addition to excluding alternative certification of high school completion, NCLB enables each state to determine the high school diploma graduation requirements. In addition, NCLB does not require state education agencies to administer high school exit exams, allowing states to make individual mandates in these areas. However, NCLB does mandate the graduation rates of the students in each state to be reported to the U.S. Department of Education on a yearly basis (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003).

NCLB requires every state education agency to report its graduation rates for all high school students, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, low income status, disability status, English language proficiency, gender, and migrant status. The AYP relies on academic assessments and

reported graduation rates to serve as a required second indicator for high schools. NCLB identifies graduation rates as the number of students measured from the beginning of high school who graduated with a regular diploma in the standard number of years (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002, 2003).

The construct of risk, a characteristic of individuals, is common in studies of school dropouts (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990; Pallas, 1989). Authors often divide this construct into two categories: academic and social risk. Social risk includes demographic factors associated with a higher likelihood of school difficulties: race, age, language-minority status, gender, family income, parents' education, and family structure. Students who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups drop out at higher rates than White students, as do those low-income families, from single-parent households, and from families in which one or both parents did not complete high school (Rumberger, 1987; Natriello, et al., 1990). Most dropouts actually leave school between the 10th and 12th grades (Frase, 1989), in part because the legal age for withdrawing from school is 16 years old in most states.

Academic risk factors that refer to students' school behavior and performance reflect the actual manifestation of school-related problems (Caterall, 1998). For example, students who eventually drop out often have a history of absenteeism and grade retention (Lee & Burkam, 1992), academic trouble (Bryk & Thum, 1989), and more general disengagement from school life (Entwisle et al., 1997; Finn 1989; McNeal, 1995). Leaving school may actually represent some students' final attempt to resolve much of their problems (Croninger & Lee, in press; Fine, 1987). Even young children may be at academic risk of eventually dropping out if they manifest such early school behaviors as low grades, low educational expectations, special education



placement, early grade retention, and discipline problems (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997). As is the case with social risk, academic risk factors are also cumulative.

Existing research has rejected the common focus on individuals' risk of dropping out of school. Several qualitative or interpretive studies have considered how schools themselves engage in practices or create conditions that force certain types of students out of school (Delgado-Gaitan, 1988; Fine, 1991). These studies go well beyond the documented findings that dropout rates vary widely between high schools (Pallas, 1986) and between student populations within high schools (Rumberger, 1987). Large comprehensive high schools, especially in urban areas, report the highest dropout rates (Bryk & Thum, 1989); even exceeding half of 9th grade cohorts in some urban high schools (Council of Great City Schools, 1994).

*Georgia.* Georgia students must meet the course unit requirements for the graduation rule pertaining to the student's particular graduation rule (State Board Rules 160-4-2-.30, 160-4-2-.06, 160-4-2-.36, or 160-4-2-.46). Greene's (2002) study to determine the percentage of public high school students receiving a high school diploma in the nation revealed a graduation rate of 71%. The report's findings reflected that Georgia had the lowest overall graduation rate in the nation with 54% of students graduating, followed by Nevada, Florida, and Washington, DC.

Critics of Georgia's state test are concerned that many students are failing to graduate from high school because of the testing component of the state's graduation requirements. The Georgia Board of Education has considered those concerns and has proposed that additional students will be able to graduate if they comply with the conditions of the Waivers and Variances of High School Graduation Assessments Guidelines (Donsky, 2005). Tofig spokesman for the state Department of Education, said state School Superintendent Kathy Cox is determined to

improve Georgia's graduation rates. Georgia reported a 65% graduation rate in 2004, up from 63% in 2003 and 61% in 2002 (Donsky, 2005).

*Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)*

Under the federal No Child Left Behind Act, each school, school system and the state must meet annual performance goals for reading and math on state assessments for each student group as categorized by race, ethnicity, disability, English proficiency, and socioeconomic status in order to make Adequate Yearly Progress, or AYP. AYP is the measure by which all schools (including high schools), districts, and states are held accountable under NCLB.

Each state education agency has the responsibility for developing an AYP definition that must be met by all of its districts and schools. This definition is part of each state's accountability plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Education in January 2003 and differs from state to state. Each state must have a thorough explanation of AYP in its accountability plan. The primary factor in the state's measure of AYP must be the state tests. High schools must also use graduation rates as an AYP indicator (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Bush 2001; U.S. Dept. of Education, 2002, 2003). Each state can decide whether other indicators, such as reducing violent incidents on student property are used to determine AYP (U.S. Department of Education, 2002, 2003).

*Georgia.* From fall 2002 through June 2003, the Office of Student Achievement, at the request of Georgia's State Board of Education, led the development of AYP Plan for Georgia schools (Georgia Department of Education, 2003). The effort was to ensure that Georgia's plan was in compliance with all aspects of the NCLB Act as well as other federal laws such as the IDEA Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, and Equal Opportunity laws (Georgia Department of Education, 2003). In May 2003, Georgia's 62-page AYP Plan was approved by the U.S.

Education Department (Georgia Department of Education, 2003). The Georgia determinations for AYP include a federal requirement that 95% of the students at each school participate in state assessments (Georgia Department of Education, 2004).

Accountability pressures upon the principal's role have resulted in strained relationships with districts' central offices. In a study of 40 school districts and 130 schools, Webster (1996) found that principals had limited cooperation from their peers and little support from school districts. Principals operated independently with little agreement on values, commitments, or competencies. District goals were not seen as beneficial and not incorporated into the management of schools. Goals and objectives cited were indistinct and not subject to measurement or accountability. Individual teachers headed up most improvement plans with no school-wide plan for improvement. Principals denounced educational leadership theory and philosophy, embracing a more pragmatic view of school leadership instead (Webster, 1996).

#### Evolution of the Principal's Role

In the 19th century, American public schooling was rural, non-bureaucratic in structure, limited in its professionalism, and dependent on promoters and trustees for economic support. In 1860, approximately 80% of Americans lived in places defined by the census as rural. As late as 1890, almost 71% of Americans still lived in an area defined as rural (Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

The *principal*, referring to a controlling head of an educational institution, first appeared in the literature of the common school during 1820-1870. The term *common school* refers to a type of schooling that would educate all using the same curriculum. Common schools were to be funded by taxes and open to all children, namely Irish Catholics. Early common school principals had minor administrative duties, acting as moral rather than educational leaders. These principals typically viewed themselves as missionaries spreading a Puritan-influenced value

system and using school as a forum to teach curriculum that was laden with Protestant beliefs about God, country, and social order (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The common school movement began to gain power and support during the 1840s. The leaders of the common school movement viewed the public schools as the best institution to help solve the major issues (immigration, large cities, and changing social values) of the time. Education would be the vehicle to defend against the perceived social threats facing America in the nineteenth century (Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

During the common school movement, the principalship role evolved to one in which the principal would ensure that the belief systems that drove the common school would be carried out. There was great pressure on immigrants of this time to assimilate into mainstream America. Schools were called upon to help in the process of assimilation, and school principals became the upholders of stern standards, morality, and common civic virtues defined by the political and Protestant leaders of this time period (Tyack & Hansot, 1982; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The common school movement is mentioned because many of the virtues of the common school still exist today. Common school leaders called for schools to be free and open to all, for schools to foster morality and ethics, for teachers to be trained properly, and for school to foster the public good and prepare individuals for success. The common school provided a shift from one-room schoolhouses to the creation of a bureaucracy to organize the growing field of education at the change of the 19th century. The creation of a uniform and general system gave direction to American public schooling (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

*Corporate Movement (1900-1960)*

Early in the twentieth century, there was movement away from the independent agricultural lifestyle of the farmer to a more specialized, industrial mentality of a developing nation. The end of the agricultural period marked another transition toward a more industrialized model of production. By the mid 1920s and early 1930s, there was a waning interest in the spiritual side of schooling and a growing fascination with, and faith in, business principles. Instead of being the guardians of values, principals became middle managers within an educational bureaucracy. As America became more industrialized, schools began modeling themselves after the American factory, based on the principles of technology, precision, continuity, and a certain amount of business efficiency (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Milstein, 1999; Tyack & Hansot, 1982).

As a result of this shift in society toward a factory model with a corporate hierarchy, the principalship began to emerge as a role unto itself. The role of the principal became akin to that of an executive or manager. The principal's primary tasks were administrative in nature and had little to do with direct instruction or moral uplift. The principal's roles and responsibilities expanded to include being responsible for maintaining the organizational structure in schools, supervising teachers to ensure they were implementing the organizational goals, and maintaining the physical plant (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

As American schools implementing practices similar to business enterprises, administrative training models began to reflect the business metaphor of efficiency. It was the popular belief of this time that by creating a hierarchy within individual schools, with stratified roles and clear objectives for each role, schools would become more efficient. The principals were at the top of the hierarchy and managed the other positions below them. Principals

answered to their boards of education directives and were responsible for implementing policies to ensure the achievement of organizational goals, and to maintain the physical plant (Bates, 1987; Beck & Murphy, 1993; Levine, 1994).

Trained to create and support a bureaucratic hierarchy, principals were driven by the concepts of organizations. Principals evolved to be middle managers in this bureaucratic hierarchy where they controlled and maintained their subordinates. Maintaining the hierarchy was important and this focused the role of the principalship on legitimacy, supporting the hierarchy, and self-interest. Principals managed their buildings by using specialized tasks, sequential work, close supervision, and top-down decision-making (Bates, 1987; Beck & Murphy, 1993; Levine, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1990).

The Sputnik launch of 1957 and the fear that America was losing academic ground to a foreign country created a stir in education that was felt from local schools to the federal government. In 1958 the National Defense Education Act was created and this act opened the door for federal government funds to be used in education. Attention was given to curriculum that addressed the math and science fields. The federal government was involved in school affairs, and added another layer of bureaucracy to the system (Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The legal battle of *Brown vs. Board of Education* in 1954, and the civil conflict over school desegregation in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1958, ushered in the Civil Rights Movement. Schools came face-to-face with the inequity of segregation, and in many parts of the country federal troops were called in to restore order. During the 1950s, principals made solid attempts to maintain stability and a sense of normalcy within their school buildings. Principals were expected to be skillful principals, focusing on how to make efficient use of time, as well as on

the operational aspects of running a building. Principals were judged on how organized, orderly, and smoothly they ran their buildings (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The 1960s were a time of great turmoil and political activism in America. This was also a time of teacher organization in American education. Teacher unions gained strength and the development of teacher organizations empowered and united teachers across the country. Principals found themselves in turbulent times. Being pressured from all sides, principals typically chose the path of supporting and representing the established bureaucracy (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

*Expanding the Community and an Education for All Students (1970)*

During the 1970s there began a slow retreat from the social unrest of the 1960s. However, these years brought major changes for principals. The Civil Rights Movement was at its peak, moving beyond color, race, and gender; it also began to address the inequity of education for all students. For example, the *Lau vs. Nichols* (1974) court case recognized the rights of second language learners to a fair and equitable education. In 1975, U.S. Public Law 94-142 created special education for children who were normally excluded from public school, and school desegregation was enforced nationwide. By the end of the 1970s, urban schools were dealing with the need to create equity for students by addressing the ethnic, special educational, and language needs of their students. Urban schools also faced critical community pressures. Teacher unions organized and formed strong voices influencing policy and procedure (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The roles and responsibilities of the principal grew as new federal and state guidelines were implemented. Principals had to create learning environments for handicapped students and second language learners. Unions pressured principals to meet the needs of teachers, and

community activism pressured principals to create equitable learning environments. Principals found themselves addressing state and federal policies that enforced student and parent rights, with teacher unions and contracts, and with broader community partnerships. This expanding of school boundaries and mandated changes forced principals to create change and accommodate the needs of any who had previously been excluded or marginalized (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

During the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, there was a moving away from the factory model of leadership toward the science of organization. The science of organization is rooted in the belief that leaders, in order to be effective, must make proper use of time management, must delegate tasks, and must focus on main issues. Organization at this time meant maintaining order, consistency, and structure. Principals focused on the fine details of their role; they were judged not on how they created change, but on how successfully they managed their time (Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

In response to the changes associated with their respective contexts, principals typically resorted to holding the line and supporting the established system. During the late 1970s, principals were given the added duties of desegregating their schools, restructuring for the special educational needs of their students, and expanding their roles as community liaisons. However, policy makers believed that the principals should be responsible for the observation and supervision of every aspect of their school buildings. Principals could accomplish the task by making proper use of their time, paying attention to details, and delegating responsibilities to other members of the staff. By the end of 1970s, the principal emerged as an executive within a rational, clearly defined educational hierarchy (Beck & Murphy, 1993).



*Reform and a Nation at Risk (1980 – 1990)*

During the decades of 1980 and 1990, principals began to be pressured in ways that had never been felt. The 1980s marked a time when the interest of individuals from the community, political, business, and universities reached into schools for control of curriculum, direction, and funding (Beck & Murphy, 1993).

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983) report changed the landscape of education and redefined the role of the principal. The report stated that American schools were being overwhelmed by a rising tide of mediocrity, and economic failure would result if America could not keep up educationally with foreign competitors. This report, called a *Nation at Risk*, was released in 1983 (Carlin, 1992; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The report cited that 13% of all American 17-year-olds were functional illiterates and that functional illiteracy among minority students was close to 40%. Standardized achievement scores were low, Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores were in decline since 1950; and, business and military leaders complained that they were spending money and time in remedial education programs on new employees and military recruits (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

The *Nation at Risk* report set off a chain reaction of educational reform at the state and local levels. Educational reform focused on aspects of public education such as teacher certification, teacher reward structures, financial support, school management structures, and the development of standards based assessment. During this period language such as *instructional leader*, *site-based management*, and *change agent* began to be associated with the role of principal (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The *Nation at Risk* report directly affected the principal's roles and responsibilities. The report called for an expansion of school boundaries to include parents, students, colleges, industry, and public officials, giving all stakeholders a voice in the development of educational policies. Principals had to play a crucial role in developing school and community support. Principals found they were being judged on their ability to be persuasive, to set goals, and to develop community consensus behind them. Principals still had to manage and supervise, but now they were being called upon to create a vision and create support for it (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The 1980s produced the idea that principals were instructional leaders and were the problem solvers and providers of resources. Reform efforts sought to strengthen collegial participation between staff and students, realign curriculum, and generate standards (O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The role of principals in the 1990s was to facilitate and sustain change in their schools. Principals found themselves dealing with a diversified group of stakeholders and under increasing pressure at the local level to produce results (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Emonto, 1997; Overholt & Kroeger, 1994; O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

The 1980s and 1990s produced an educational environment that was constantly changing. The primary focus for reform in the 1990s was instruction. Changes that supported a more efficient and effective way to prepare all students for life in the next century needed to be made. For example, legislative acts required reorganization of curriculum, teacher training, and a need to involve all stakeholders within the school community. Principals found themselves in a firestorm of change (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Urban & Wagoner, 1996).

Fullan (1997) in his book, *What's Worth Fighting For In The Principalship*, cited a Toronto Board of Education study of 137 principals and vice principals regarding their role since educational reform (Edu-con, 1984). This study included asking the participants to respond to 11 major expectations (i.e., new programs, number of board priorities, directives from the ministry, etc.) in terms of whether expectations had increased, decreased, or remained the same over the 5 years (Edu-con, 1984).

On average, 90% of school principals responded that they noticed an increase of responsibilities and demands placed upon them. Principals and vice principals all reported a number of specific duties added, but could not think of any responsibilities removed. Most participants agreed that more time and energy was being directed into community and parental issues, administrative services, staff involvement, social services, and board directives.

Principals and vice principals also felt that they were less effective because they had less authority and because of the perception of a decreased trust in leadership by staff. They cited a decrease in decision-making and in general power. When asked the question, *Do you think the principal can effectively fulfill all the responsibilities assigned to him or her?* 91% responded, *No*, thereby noting the need for further review of the principals' role.

Checkley (2000) wrote in an article on the principalship that she viewed the contemporary principal as a person who must manage far more than the administrative tasks of running a school. Schools are in the midst of examining proper work of teachers and students. Accountability has created a situation in which principals must also be instructional leaders who promote teacher growth. Principals must function in an environment that is data driven, goal oriented, and progress oriented across the school environment. Principals must share responsibility and authority, must trust in the ability of others, and must be willing to allow

teachers to take risks, even though the final outcome will reflect solely on the principal for the ultimate accountability regarding school performance and student achievement. As leaders, a clear understanding and perception of the role will have a positive impact on school improvement and student performance within federal, state, and local mandates.

In the 2002-2003 school year, under NCLB, educators in public schools became more accountable for student academic performance. NCLB reinforced and reflected a major shift in thinking about the responsibilities and role of principals. School leaders became responsible for providing an environment of change and improvement. School principals experienced increasing pressure to improve achievement, decrease the test-score gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students, and maintain high quality teachers in their schools (Anthes, 2002).

#### *School Reform and the Role of the Principal*

A literature review on school reform and restructuring revealed that the school principal is the key player in all successful reform efforts, and the principalship is the key position in an effective school (Boyer, 1983; ERS, 1999; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Institute for Educational Leadership [IEL], 2000; National Policy Board for Educational Administration [NPBEA], 2001; Public Agenda, 2001). In the first wave of reform efforts, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983) specifically recommended strong leadership as a means for facilitating student achievement. The effective schools movement recognizes the importance of quality leadership by consistently identifying strong instructional leadership as instrumental in creating a school climate conducive to student success (Grubbs, Leech, Gibbs, & Green, 2002).

The Educational Research Service (ERS, 1997) concluded in its recent study on principals that good school principals are the keystone of good schools within reform. Without

the principal's leadership, efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed (IEL, 2000). A report by Hallinger and Heck (1996) synthesizing 15 years of research on how principals impact their schools found that principals influence school performance by shaping goals, direction, structure, and by working through organizational and social networks. Most importantly, the role of the successful principal includes leadership which guides the school policies, in addition to training procedures and practices that contribute directly to student learning.

Moreover, the fact that in floor discussion of amendments to the Better Education for Students and Teachers (BEST) Act, several senators emphasized the role of the principal seems to be evidence that the centrality of the position is understood in the political climate as well as in education. For example, former Senator and 2004 U.S. Presidential candidate John Kerry (D-MA) suggested that effective school in the U.S. are directly influenced by the principal's leadership (National Association of Secondary School Principals [NASSP], 2001). Yet principals reported growing concern about increased responsibilities and accountability and decreased autonomy and authority (NASSP, 2001).

NCLB requires school administrators to use standards-based reform to improve student academic performance. Historically, schools did not exhibit a strategic approach to learning. Neither was there consistency in the expectations of student achievement between states, districts, schools and individual classrooms. This lack of consistency has resulted in fragmentation in program implementation and the failure of consistency in the implementation of "successful instructional practices that grow out of research or exemplary practice" (Elmore, 2000, p. 6). The drive toward academic progress requires the school administrator to become the instructional leader. Though important, "direct involvement in instruction is among the least frequent activities performed by administrators" (Elmore, 2000, p. 7).

Historically, the role of principals, the role of manager, required the school administrator to do things right; “with the emphasis being placed on school reform, the principal as instructional leader must do the right thing” (SEDL, 2004) The thrust has shifted from “a managerial model to a visionary, collegial model focused on the centrality of student learning” (Chenoweth, 2002, p. 4). The principal assumes a transformational leadership role, and is a leader who empowers the school to develop the skills necessary to analyze student performance data and prepares a comprehensive strategic school reform plan (Lumsden, 1992). Lumsden (1992) added, “Principals must tap into problem-identification skills and problem-solving skills” (p. 2).

Legislators in the state of Washington passed an extensive reform act in 1993 to “tie the states’ high standards of achievement to advancements in school” (Fouts, 2000, p. 1). The legislative efforts resulted in higher academic achievement by the students. Studies conducted in the state suggested that “successful restructuring resulted of careful planning, collaboration, and teamwork; clear and common goals, redirected resources, and an ownership and belief in the restructuring process” (Fouts, 2000, p. 1). These systemic changes resulted in students’ improved academic performance. The researchers concluded that “instructional leadership within the school is of paramount importance. School leaders must be visionary, have extensive knowledge in teaching practices, modes of learning, and school organization” (Fouts, p. 3). “The school principal as the instructional leader and catalyst for change must be equipped with the expertise to guide systems change to insure success” (King & Frick, p. 2; Lumsden, 1992, p. 2).

NCLB Act of 2001 placed standards and accountability into the educational spotlight. Principals and school administrators must develop comprehensive plans within this school reform initiative to ensure improved school performance in order to have every student proficient

in reading, mathematics, and science by the year 2014. These requirements placed greater responsibility upon principals and teachers to use standards and evidence-based practices to reform schools and ensure that student achievement occurs (Barth 2001; Tirozzi, 2001).

*Increasing Accountability.* Accountability is a trademark of education. Principals' accountability once involved a more universal approach of doing a job well, sustaining strong teacher relationships, assuming the role of instructional leader, and demonstrating sound budgeting practices (Lashway, 2000). Since the passing of NCLB legislation in 2002, the emphasis has changed from accountability for how money and other assets are used to accountability for outcomes or student achievement (Copland, 2001, Elmore, Abelman, & Fuhrman, 1996).

#### *Role of the Principal in NCLB Standards-Based Accountability*

The greatest impact of any federal legislation on the school administrator is the enactment of NCLB. Rudalevige (2003) noted, "NCLB does mark an unprecedented extension of federal authority over states and local school. The accountability measures of the law were not initially developed in 2001. NCLB legislation is the cumulative result of a standards and testing movement. NCLB was a reauthorization of the original ESEA legislation but requires states to "make 'continuous and substantial' progress toward the goal of academic proficiency for all students" (Rudalevige, 2003). NCLB mandated each state to prepare an improvement plan. The improvement plan directed each district to prepare an improvement plan. Generally the district plans directed school principals to prepare their own strategic improvement plan. Unlike the previous accountability legislation, NCLB set a deadline for proficiency achievement and outlined sanctions for failure of educators to achieve the standards (Rudalevige, 2003).

The impact of NCLB and societal changes on the role of the school administrator has “evolved significantly. Principals constantly multi-task and shift roles at a moment’s notice” (Trail, 2000, p. 1). Not only are schools responsible for the education of all children, but educators in schools often take on many responsibilities that were previously assumed by the church, and the strong family structure. With the deterioration of these structures, societal issues are passed on to schools and ultimately to school principals. Tirozzi and Ferrandino (2000) indicated that the principal is, should be, and must be in charge of learning. He added, “The traditional responsibilities, enormous management requirements, and discipline duties are still present” (p. 1). The school principal is not only the manager of the school, but the litigator, the counselor, the mentor, the curriculum leader, and often the referee.

The belief in the principal’s influence on student achievement goes back to research in the 1970s and early 1980s. Concentrating on effective schools, these studies found principals who were strong instructional leaders to be one of the correlates to school performance. These studies suggested that specific actions by principals could directly influence student achievement (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bender-Sebring & Bryk, 2000; Heck & Marcoulides, 1993).

In the 1990s, the growth of standards-based accountability has intensified the inquiry about defining the principal’s role. The Institute for Educational Leadership (2000) cited a long list of the principal’s traditional managerial responsibilities. Principals must also serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques, work with teachers to strengthen skills, and collect, analyze, and use data in ways that fuel excellence. Principals must rally students, teachers, parents, local health and family service agencies, youth development groups, local businesses and other community residents and partners around the



common goal of raising student performance. In addition, they must have the leadership and skills and knowledge to exercise the autonomy and authority to pursue these strategies.

In a standards-oriented age, contemporary visions of leadership can be found in the professional standards established by policymakers, practitioners, and university professors. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed guidelines which have gained rapid acceptance. The six key themes are as follows: (a) facilitating shared vision; (b) sustaining a school culture conducive to student and staff learning; (c) managing the organization for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment; (d) collaborating with families and community members; (e) acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner; and (f) influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. The standards guide principal preparation programs in at least 35 states, and provide the guidance principals need to envision these six dimensions as pathways to the one overriding goal of student achievement (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996).

Similarly, the National Association of Elementary School Principals' (NAESP, 2001) guide to professional development for principals emphasizes the leader's role in creating a dynamic learning community by giving the highest priority to student and adult learning, setting high expectations, demanding content and instruction that ensure student achievement, creating a culture of continuous learning for adults, using data to guide improvement, and actively engaging the community (NAESP).

The ISLLC and NAESP standards represent an approach based on the judgment of experienced practitioners. Research evidence that supports the standards is evidenced in a major review of the literature by Leithwood and Riehl (2003) where core practices were identified that appeared consistent with the standards: (a) setting directions, which include identifying and

articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, and creating high performance expectations; (b) developing people, which involves offering intellectual stimulation, providing individualized support, and providing an appropriate model; (c) redesigning the organization, which includes strengthening school cultures, modifying organizational structures, and building collaborative processes.

Beyond these core roles, Leithwood and Riehl (2003) noted that the current education-reform environment may require principals to carry out several roles that are specifically related to accountability, creating and sustaining a competitive school (market accountability); empowering others to make significant decisions (decentralization accountability); providing instructional leadership (professional accountability), developing and executing strategic plans (managerial accountability).

#### *Studies on Principals' Roles*

The relevance of studying roles is that roles provide the framework within which individuals organize social expectations (Horrocks & Jackson, 1972). Performed within a contextual perspective, role implementation varies according to a situation or circumstances and is influenced by the individual's cognitive development, personal qualities, values, and relationships with others (Horrocks & Jackson, 1972). From an organizational perspective, "theories and research usually treat leadership as the province of certain roles in organizations," such that leadership is not simply one role, but a combination of responsibilities that influence others in a social context to accomplish identified objectives (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995 p. 228). Functioning as heads of school organizational units, principals are described as those educators who perform leadership roles (Ogawa & Bossert).

Greenfield (1995) corroborated role performance defined by Horrocks and Jackson (1972) and offered a more specific, related perspective, postulating that principals' personal attributes contributed to the ways in which they perceived and solved problems, and in general, to the ways they conceptualized and interpreted their roles. Specific problems that challenge school leaders include moral, social/interpersonal, instructional, managerial, and political role demands (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995).

Numerous researchers have described the need for changing of the principals' role to meet the needs of school populations in the midst of restructuring, and for meeting the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Chan & Pool, 2002; Checkly, 2000; Conley, 1993; Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993; Leithwood, 1992; 1994; Sagor, 1992; Schlechty, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1990). Richardson, Flanigan, Smith, and Woodrum (1997) proposed, "The role of the educational leader is constantly changing, perhaps at a greater rate today than at any time in the history of this country" (p. 296). A scarce amount of research, however, has chronicled specifically how the role of the principal changes in addressing reform initiatives (Hallinger & Hausman, 1993).

High school principals often have different responsibilities and need to be well equipped with a variety of skills to manage schools effectively and to achieve positive results. Some of the responsibilities of principals include: (a) leading the instructional process and student achievement; (b) managing school budgets; (c) being knowledgeable about happenings in the school environment; (d) communicating with teachers, students, parents, and the community; and, (e) guiding, motivating and evaluating teachers, amongst many other functions (Grubbs, Leech, Gibbs, & Green, 2002).

Cooley and Shen (2003) found that high school principals reported they were engaged in new roles that were integrated into the job, and the new duties were simply added to what was

already there in order to accomplish standards-based accountability. Some high school principals suggested that the job might have created conflict and became impossible along with the increasing workload discouraging talented educators from accepting leadership positions (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Pounder & Merrill, 2001).

The demands create role change and conflict. Surveys found that principals felt conflicted between instructional leadership and the daily management chores of managing a school (Chan & Pool, 2002; Cooley & Shen, 2003; Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress, 2003; Osterman, Crow, & Rosen, 1997; Ricciardi & Petrosko, 2001). The role of principal is all encompassing. Principals reported apprehension about the challenges of stress, limited time, changes in the principalship, increased responsibility, and decreased autonomy and authority (Goodwin et al, 2003).

In an effort to understand what changes practicing principals believe occurred in their roles and responsibilities and what changes they believe should occur, a national study examined the contemporary high school principalship (Goodwin, 2002). Goodwin's (2002) study described changes in the principalship and the role of the contemporary principal. The participants' discussions reinforced conclusion of other studies that the principalship increased in difficulty and significant conflict existed in the principals' perceptions of their position (ERS, 1999; IEL, 2000; Public Agenda, 2001; USDOE, 2000). Goodwin's study revealed role conflict, accountability conflict, autonomy conflict, and responsibility conflict.

Goodwin's (2002) national study validated the importance of the high school principal as the strategic leader of the school by describing the power of the principalship and the importance of the principal's role as a visionary and a change agent. In this study, principals from every state

described the changes in the principalship, the role of the contemporary principal, and the preferred future direction of the principalship.

However, at the same time, principals recognized, along with other studies, that as the principalship increased in complexity, the disconnection between the expectations of instructional leadership, strategic leadership, organizational leadership, and community and political leadership has also increased (ERS, 1999; Goodwin, 2002; IEL, 2000; NPBEA, 1995; Public Agenda, 2001; USDOE, 2000). The principals perceived the role of the high school principal as one that is complex and stressful because of increased organizational and political demands that have the power to diminish the instructional and strategic leadership of the secondary principal (Goodwin, 2002).

Although these conflicts create frustration and possibly contribute to the shortage of applicants for the position, practicing principals valued their work and believed in their role and the importance of what they did. Principals in the study indicated that they found their jobs rewarding, and they understood the power they had to influence their school and their community. Increasingly, principals were at the center of the school, and they were expected to make the school successful (Lewis & Lee, 2000; Mann, 2002; Marnik, 1998; Sennett, 2001).

#### *Eight Roles for Effective School Leadership*

Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) conducted an extensive review of research on best practices in educational leadership. This research supported the *Eight Roles for Effective School Leadership* as a framework for the preparation of school administrators to lead schools to improved achievement. The framework is considered well-suited, and well-trained for supporting and guiding the training and development of educational leaders.

GLISI led a collaborative endeavor to develop the *Eight Roles for Effective School Leadership* as part of a partnership consisting of the Georgia Department of Education, the office of the Governor, the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, business leaders, and K-12 educators. Through research and through validation against other national educational and business standards, GLISI has identified the Eight Roles which include:

1. *Data analysis leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to lead teams to collect and analyze multiple sources of data to identify improvement needs, symptoms and root causes and monitor progress and results (Davenport & Anderson, 2002). Principals (a) analyze standardized test scores and other school data; (b) disaggregate data to reveal achievement gaps between groups of students; (c) lead team(s) to analyze classroom, grade level, and school results; (d) present data for further analysis school-wide; (e) lead root cause analysis to determine reasons for needed improvements; (f) assist team(s) to generate individual teacher and grade level goals based on analyzed data; (g) assist team(s) in monitoring goal progression through the school year (Borman et al, 2003; Calhoun, 1994; Davenport & Anderson, 2002; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Skrla, Scheurich, and Johnson, 2000).

2. *Curriculum, assessment, instruction leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to implement a systems approach to instruction in a standards-based environment (Skrla, Scheurich, and Johnson, 2000). Principals (a) leads team(s) in learning about performance standards, (b) assist teachers in unwrapping performance standards, (c) lead grade-level team(s) in prioritizing grade-level standards based on analyzed student achievement data, (d) insure alignment of prioritized curriculum with state and national assessments, (e) assist teachers in mapping instructional delivery of prioritized curriculum, (f) lead team(s) in design of formative

assessments to determine student learning and guide effective instruction, (g) and assist in the development of common, periodic benchmark assessments to monitor instructional effectiveness and student learning. The principal organizes meetings to allow teachers to collaboratively examine student work (Cawelti, 1999; Edmonds, 1986; Marks & Printy, 1987; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003; Skrla, Scheurich, and Johnson, 2000).

3. *Performance leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to strategically plan, measure, monitor, organize, and manage systems and processes necessary to improve student achievement and organizational effectiveness (Seashore & Spillane, 2002). Principals (a) assist in development of school-wide plan for improvement by identifying realistic performance measures and aligning key indicators for goals; (b) develop processes for monitoring, managing and communicating indicators of achievement for goals; (c) assist teacher in development of measurable individual and grade level goals that focus on student achievement; (d) collaborate with team(s) in teacher selection and assignment; (e) help develop monitoring system of focused walk-through supervision and observation to ensure identified curriculum is also the implemented curriculum; (e) develop selection, assignment, and scheduling of teacher peer coaches and mentors; (f) link individual and organizational goals, performance, and results (Seashore & Spillane, 2002).

4. *Operations leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to effectively and efficiently analyze and organize resources, processes and systems to support teaching and learning and organizational effectiveness. They (a) assist in determining and providing necessary resources for teachers to effectively implant the instructional program; (b) assist with budget development to align resources with school-wide instructional priorities; (c) participate in the development of the school-wide schedule to allow for collaborative teacher planning time and sufficient time and

opportunity for student achievement; (d) monitor school discipline practices and needs; and (e) ensure school safety by recommending and implementing proven security practices (Seashore & Spillane, 2002).

5. *Process improvement leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to identify and map core processes and results, create action plans, manage projects and engage others in improving processes to improve student achievement and organizational effectiveness (Lashway, 2001). They (a) assist in identifying and mapping core school processes; (a) assist in development of school-wide plans for improvement; (c) lead cross-functional teams to analyze school issues for improvement; (d) guide teacher teams and individuals to use analysis and decision-making tools and processes; (e) conduct action research to study pilot instructional programs and practices; (f) study improvement results and makes recommendations for continuation, or modification (Ball & Cohen, 1999; Lashway, 2000; Sykes, 1999).

6. *Relationship Development Leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to identify and develop relationships among student, faculty, staff and stakeholder groups and communicate goals and priorities focused on student learning and organizational effectiveness (Hoy & Sabo, 1998). Principals (a) focus on relationships between school(s), customers, and stakeholders; (b) communicate school priorities to the public; (c) assist in communication strategy implementation including school newsletter, webpage, brochures, and events; (d) participate as a member of the school council; (e) encourage parental participation in the school through focused activities and volunteer groups; (f) develop and administers perception surveys to identify customer satisfaction from parents, teachers, and students; (g) conduct focus groups to determine further information revealed from perception surveys (Hoy & Sabo, 1998; Hoy & Tarter, 1997; Hoy, Tarter, & Kottkamp, 1991).



7. *Change Leader*. Principals demonstrate the ability to drive and sustain change in a collegial environment focused on continuous improvement in student achievement (Weiss & Molinaro, 2005). Principals (a) develop strategies for assisting the school community with change such as new programs, attendance lines, instructional practices, school calendar and so forth; (b) nurture the team(s) as they navigate through change processes; (c) assist school leadership in balancing pressure and support for change; (d) build buy-in from staff and community for change implementation (Collins, 2001; Collins & Porras, 1997; Deal & Peterson, 1999; Hoy, Sweatland, & Smith, 2002; Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; Weiss & Molinaro, 2005).

8. *Learning and performance development leader*. Principals apply proven, systematic processes for improvement through analyzing human performance; planning for improvements; designing, developing, and supporting implementation of solutions to close performance gaps. Principals provide the leadership to help individuals make full use of their strengths toward personal and organizational goals and work to create a collaborative teaching and learning organization which develops leaders at all levels (Grogan & Andrews, 2002).

Principals (a) lead development of professional learning plans for staff; (b) model continuous learning; (c) lead development of professional learning communities throughout the school; (d) assist in the development and implantation of study groups of teacher to learn effective, proven instructional practices; (e) encourage collaborative, job-embedded professional learning, where teachers share their learning as a normal part of the school culture; (f) provide learning opportunities for parents and other stakeholders (Blankstein, 2004; Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Hord, 1997).

The traditional view of one individual leading a school has shifted to a perspective of distributed or shared leadership. GLISI framed the analysis of the eight roles of leadership in a model of distributed leadership. The distributed leadership model of school administration is correlated by research to improve student achievement.

### *Distributed Leadership*

Distributed leadership has evolved in the literature connecting instructional leadership to improve student achievement (Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides, 1990). Distributed leadership is a broad term that is constructed from theoretical views within educational research which includes democratic school governance, participatory decision-making, and shared leadership with teachers within the school (Weiss & Millinaro, 2005).

Marks and Printy (2003) studied “24 schools that made progress in their reform efforts” (p. 378). The study used a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods which included class observations, staff interviews, teacher surveys, and a review of school performance data to measure the impact of shared and transformational leadership on student achievement. The study revealed the effectiveness of leadership, including transformational and instructional leadership. Consistent with other studies (Ogawa & Bossert, 1995; Spillane & Halverson, & Diamond, 2001; York-Barr & Duke, 2004), findings revealed that when principals interact with and provide for high levels of commitment and professionalism from teachers in a shared instructional capacity, schools which benefited from distributed leadership, were organizations that learned and performed at high levels (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Studies on distributed leadership linked teacher leadership to student achievement. Principals in high-achieving schools involve teachers in instructional decision-making, thereby, improving student achievement. Marks and Printy (2003) built upon the literature on

instructional leadership by developing a model that combined shared instructional leadership with transformational leadership. Marks and Printy contended that transformational leadership is necessary for reform-oriented school improvement but speculated on its ability alone to achieve high-quality teaching and student learning required in a standards-based environment.

### *Transformational Leadership*

Expectations for principals are described as idealistic. Numerous researchers described the need for rebuilding of the principal's role to meet the needs of schools in the midst of reform, and for meeting the challenges of the 21st century (Conley, 1993; Hallinger, 1992; Hallinger & Hausman, 1993). Hallinger and Hausman stated, "Principals are being exhorted to become transformational leaders or facilitators rather than directors of school improvement" (p. 2).

Skepticism has been revealed by education researchers regarding the ability of principals to grasp the complexities of leadership roles during the 21st century (Leithwood, 1992; 1994; Sagor, 1992; Schlechty, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1990). Leithwood and Duke (1999) asserted, "It seems unlikely that any single existing leadership focus or theory can capture, adequately, the range of qualities required of future leaders" (p. 328). Supporting this contention, Hoyle (1995) stated, "Many school leaders lack the vision to guide their schools into a complex and troubled 21st century" (p. 215).

The transition of the principal's role to one of a visionary leader includes empowering teachers and responding to stakeholders. According to Ashby and Krug (1998), the principal's leadership orientation should include qualities befitting the transformational leader. Those qualities were identified as the capability to be the central change agent of the school, the ability to positively influence professional development of teachers and the instructional program of students, and persuasiveness to influence the adoption of shared visions and goals by

stakeholders. Teschke (1996) succinctly characterized the principal of the future as one who should be the “leader of leaders” (p. 13).

Leithwood and Duke (1999) offered that schools of the future will require visionary leaders; however, specific attributes the principal will need to achieve those visions successfully have not been clearly delineated. It has been suggested that transformational leadership should be considered as a set of practices that leaders possess in variant degrees rather than an absolute entity that may be attainable by a privileged few (Leithwood, Jantzi, Silins, & Dart, 1993). Terry (1996) opined, however, that the transformational leadership orientation was impractical and idealistic.

Transformational leadership was described by Burns (1978) as the relationship between leaders and followers, where both interact in such a way as to “raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality. Transformational leadership raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus, it has a transforming effect on both” (Burns, p. 20). Northouse (1997) characterized transformational leaders as those who “set out to empower followers and nurture them in change. Northouse said, “Transformational leaders attempt to raise the consciousness of individuals, and get them to transcend their own self-interests for the sakes of others” (p. 142).

Sergiovanni (1990) defined transformative leadership as an orientation toward “higher-order psychological needs for esteem, autonomy, and self-actualization and, then, with moral questions of goodness, righteousness, duty, and obligation” (p. 23). Application of this framework in the school arena typified the successful leader as one who builds up the leadership of others and who strives to become a leader of leaders. Sergiovanni explained, “The successful leader is also a good follower, one who is committed to ideas, values, and beliefs. (p. 27).

According to Yukl (1998), leader behavior was viewed to affect organizational culture in the following ways: “Examples set by the leader, what the leader attends to, how the leader reacts to crises, how the leader allocates rewards, and how the leader makes personnel decisions” (Yukl, p. 346). The ways that transformational leaders were thought to influence and alter culture in an organization included “formulating a vision, developing commitment to it among internal and external stakeholders, implementing strategies to accomplish the vision, and embedding the new values and assumptions in the culture and structure of the organization” (Yukl, p. 347). Conley (1993) complemented this perspective, suggesting that the leader must be willing to allow stakeholders to sculpt and adjust their vision of education, with the preeminent goal being creation of collaborative vision of and for all stakeholders.

Sagor (1992) provided examples of transformational leadership from a study of three schools. He found that in successful schools, both teachers and students reported “a culture conducive to school success” (p. 13). Additionally, principal leadership included three tenets of transformational leadership. These tenets included (a) a clear and unified focus, (b) a common cultural perspective, and (c) a constant push for improvement (p. 13). After analyzing findings from three studies, Leithwood (1992) similarly concluded that transformational leaders “are in more or less continuous pursuit of the three fundamental goals: (a) helping staff members develop and maintain a collaborative, professional school culture; (b) fostering teacher development; and (c) helping them solve problems more effectively” (p. 9-10).

Sarason (1990), in predicting why school reform will fail, stated “any effort to reform (literally, to give new form to) our schools has to do with the nature and allocation of power” (p. 73). An early study examining facilitative power as it related to administrators and teachers participating in site-based school reform projects involving professional development and school

improvement confirmed Sarason's assumption (Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993). Essential to the success of reform implementation was an encouraging and collaborative relationship between administration and faculty. Furthermore, Goldman, and his associates found that "the key ingredient to these successful reform projects is that these school professionals had the skill and opportunity to experiment with reform until they found a way that it made great sense for them" (p. 24).

The literature reflects four dimensions which underlie the transformational leadership construct (Barbuto, 1997; Bass & Avolio, 1997; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998) namely:

1. *Charismatic leadership or idealized influence*: The leader instills pride and faith in followers, provides a vision and a sense of mission, gains respect and trust and sets high standards for emulation;

2. *Inspirational leadership*: the leader inspires followers to accept challenging goals, provides meaning for engaging in shared goals and arouses team spirit through enthusiasm and optimism.

3. *Individualized consideration*: the leader recognizes individual uniqueness, links the individuals' current needs to the organization's needs and provides coaching, mentoring and growth opportunities;

4. *Intellectual stimulation*: the leader encourages followers to approach problems in new ways and to creatively think of new ways to carry out their daily responsibilities.

### *Transactional Leadership*

Transactional leaders motivate subordinates to perform beyond expectations; transactional leadership is based on the traditional, bureaucratic authority and legitimacy where

followers receive certain valued outcomes when they act according to the leader's wishes. The relationship is based on a series of exchanges or implicit bargains between leader and follower, clarifying role expectations, assignments and task-oriented goals. Transactional leaders thus focus their energies on task completion and compliance and rely on organizational rewards and punishments to influence staff performance (Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997; Tracey & Hinkin, 1998; Trott & Windsor, 1999). Transactional leadership theory rests on the notion that when the environment and the job do not motivate, direct and satisfy the follower, the transactional leader has to rely on their behaviors to compensate for the deficiency. The leader clarifies what they expect from staff regarding acceptable standards of performance and what they will receive in return (Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997). Transformational and transactional leadership models differ with regard to the process by which the leader motivates staff and the types of goals set (Hater & Bass, 1988).

Research on transactional leadership indicates that there are three dimensions underlying the transactional leadership construct (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997):

1. *Contingent rewards or reinforcement*: The leader uses rewards, promises and praise to motivate followers to achieve performance levels contracted by both parties.

2. *Active management-by-exception*: The leader monitors followers' performance, taking corrective action in anticipation of problems or when irregularities occur.

3. *Passive management-by-exception*: The leader waits passively for mistakes to occur, or for things not to go as planned, before taking corrective action with negative feedback or reprimand.

Hater and Bass (1988) indicated that, by contrasting transformational and transactional

leadership, it does not mean that the two models are unrelated. In fact, researchers have indicated that, although the two are distinct concepts, they are interrelated, meaning that a leader can be both transactional and transformational. It is argued that transformational leadership builds on transactional leadership and not the other way around. Transformational leadership is thus viewed as an extension of the transactional leadership style (Avolio & Bass, 1999; Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998; Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997). Transactional and transformational leaders are described as such, because at the defining moment their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors resemble that of either the transactional or the transformational leader (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1998). Bass and Avolio (1997) were of the opinion that, although transformational leadership may be more effective in changing times, the transactional process of clarifying certain expectancies for a reward, is an essential component of the full range of effective leadership.

#### *Laissez Faire Leadership*

Transactional and transformational leadership, two active forms of leadership, are often contrasted to a passive laissez faire leadership style. As no attempt is made by the laissez faire leader to motivate others or to recognize and satisfy individual needs, researchers have concluded that this leadership style is indicative of an absence of leadership. The laissez faire leader avoids decision-making, supervisory responsibilities, the provision of rewards and the provision of positive/negative feedback to subordinates (Bass & Avolio, 1997; Hartog & Van Muijen, 1997).

#### **Role Challenges High School Principal Face Under NCLB**

School leaders in all settings face common challenges in meeting expectations. High schools require a significant amount of work by teachers and principals to make certain that students accomplish state performance standards. As a result, principals, experience a variety of



pressures and demands that impact on their role(s) relative to NCLB. These challenges include the following:

1. Increased accountability as it relates to quality teachers and student achievement;
  2. Limited funding; using effective practices and programs (research based) to improve student achievement; addressing parental choice as to which schools to attend;
  3. The stress of increased organizational and political demands;
  4. The conflict between instructional leadership and daily building management chores
- (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003; Chan & Pool, 2002; Cooley & Shen, 2003; Goodwin et al, 2003; Osterman et al, 1997; Ricciardi & Petrosko, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Ferrandino & Tirozzi, 2002).

Funding is a significant challenge that high schools face due to federal dollars being limited. School districts may have to choose between investing their dollars at the elementary level rather than at a higher level (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003). Title I, Part A, of NCLB (grants which are given to school districts to serve low-performing students), has resources to accommodate students in grades K through 12.

Unfortunately, even though policy makers from districts and states may use the resources for high schools, many decide not to. In many cases, even though the resources may be intended for elementary and secondary schools, only approximately 5% of Title I, Part A, goes to high schools, as districts attempt to focus their limited funds on improving results among early – elementary schools students in an effort to prevent later problems in high school (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003).

High schools, even when targeted, typically receive fewer Title I funds than elementary schools. On average, elementary schools average \$495 per student compared to only \$372 for

middle school and high school students, a \$123 difference per child. This tends to affect the positive progress that may have been made in the early grades, not sustaining itself as the students continue to progress through high school (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2003).

In a survey of more than 1,000 superintendents and 925 principals, Farkas, Johnson, and Duffet (2003) reported that school principals indicated that insufficient funding was their biggest challenge, followed by politics and bureaucracy. They believed that standards were inevitable, but they indicated that NCLB needed revision to succeed. Principals identified gaps between the abilities of new teachers and what schools needed, but principals pointed to the difficulties in removing unqualified teachers. Most superintendents in the study indicated that principals are the key to successful schools, while principals were less likely to feel they could solve all problems.

#### *Influences on Principals' Perceptions*

*Leader perceptions.* Perceptions and opinions are dimensions of personality that influence individual action. Understanding principals' awareness of their roles and changes in leadership style due to NCLB mandates may help to clarify their roles and responsibilities for aspiring high school administrators. Kouzes and Pozner (1995), in their study on leader characteristics, noted exceptional leaders as those who were viewed by organizational members as promoting practices that improved organizational functioning. Those exceptional leaders were described as having personal values in accord with the values of the organization.

The ability to view the organization as a whole and to effectively solve organizational problems has been noted as significant leader functions (Lunenberg, 1995). These abilities, Lunenberg stated, require a perspective that "draws on one's mental abilities to acquire, analyze and interpret information received from various sources and to make complex decisions that achieve the organization's goals. In essence, leader functions concern the ability to see how the

different parts of the organization fit together and are interdependent (p. 10). The leader must possess the ability to express organizational concepts effectively to the members of the organization. Lunenberg contended, that in order for effective communication to occur, there must exist a “healthy and realistic self-perception” (p. 152).

In earlier research, De Pree (1992) noted that leaders’ actions were conveyed as an extension of their belief systems. He also postulated that accurate self-perception was essential for understanding the essence of personal worth. Allport (1955) explained that perception involved the process of constructing meaning from events, situations, and sensory stimuli, and interpreting that meaning from a personal perspective.

Another personality feature, opinion, is closely aligned with attitude. Smith, Bruner, and White (1964) described opinion as the way individuals view reality. They further contend that opinion is the manner in which the individual copes with problems and is the most revealing thing about the individual. Smith et al. explained, “The solutions to his problems are conveyed in the form of values: ways of looking at and evaluating himself, the people about him, and the world around him” (p. 281).

### *Principalship Demographics*

Research suggested that leadership behaviors influence role performance (Smith, Maehr, & Midgley, 1992). Leadership behaviors are influenced by personal characteristics, according to the findings of a study of 160 elementary, middle, and high school principals in Illinois (Smith, Maehr, & Midgley). The study indicated that five administrative behaviors were related to principals’ characteristics relative to gender, age, and experience, among other personal characteristics that were examined. According to Smith and his associates, the older principals revealed emphasizing improvement of the school’s instructional climate. Conversely, those who

had been in principalship roles longer were not found to stress improving the instructional climate, as much as their less-experienced counterparts.

DeKeyser (1989) discovered that gender affected the way principals viewed their peers and faculty, with female principals conveying more positive perceptions than male principals. He further found that female principals and female teachers working together were significantly more satisfied in their work setting than were female principals and male teachers working together.

Differences in the way male and female principals express leadership have been noted in several studies. Ballou and Podgursky (1995) found that female teachers perceived female principals as more effective than male principals, and female principals' leadership styles were viewed as more democratic. Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) revealed similar results from their study, reporting that female elementary principals were regarded by teachers as stronger instructional leaders than their male counterparts. Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, and Lee (1982) noted that female leaders were judged to be more effective leaders than male leaders.

Research on secondary school leadership revealed similar findings. Lee, Smith, and Cioci (1993) noted that teachers viewed female high school principals as more active and visibly involved in school activities than male high school principals. Additionally, they revealed that female high school teachers had a preference of female leaders to male leaders, while male teachers did not value, to the same degree, the leadership of the female principal.

Pavan and Reid (1994) published findings from a study of urban female principals in Philadelphia. In one school, only 12% of the students were reading on grade level. Another principal reported that parents, for various reasons, were unable to help their children with homework. However, results of the study confirmed principals, predominantly women, who

emphasized instructional issues in a supportive climate had more productive schools. Several differences existed in the problems faced by principals working in varied geographical locations that might be unique to urban, suburban, and rural settings (Alexander, 1992; Goodlad, 1984; Kozol, 1991, 1995; Mirel, 1993; Pavan & Reid, 1994).

In an examination of city demographics, political and economic factors, and historical events that provided a foundation to the overwhelming reform legislation that was passed in 1988 in Illinois, Mirel (1993) delineated specific characteristics of the urban population that affected public education. Northern urban populations, the Chicago population in particular, he contended, are plagued by such factors as high levels of unemployment, poverty, crime, economic decline, and unstable families. Mirel described the migratory trend of large corporations from urban to suburban locations resulting in the redistribution of job opportunities to upscale communities. The wealth of suburban communities provides stark contrasts between urban and suburban geographical areas.

Alexander's (1992) investigation of urban principals' perceptions of their leadership styles and orientations shows that the principals were concerned about changes in their roles reflected in changes within their student populations. Some principals noted the societal shifts might result in extraordinary demands on their roles as school leaders. They related to the requirement of satisfying the basic survival needs of their students (Alexander, p. 22).

The challenges of inner-city families and the variety of problems they face are graphically illustrated through qualitative case studies (Kozol, 1991; 1995). The dire inequities for urban children in public education, as contrasted with educational opportunities available to students living in suburban communities, were chronicled, indicating socioeconomics and access to resources impacts educational achievement.

Biographical data are useful in the study of job satisfaction and effectiveness, motivation, and leadership. In a nationwide study of principals, the U. S. Department of Education (1996) selected (among other biographical data), age, educational level, and sex of the principal to design a profile of current practitioners. Stogdill (1948) attempted to unearth personal characteristics that could be related to individual leaders after analyzing numerous research studies. Although specific characteristics could be found among the many studies examined.

Stogdill (1948) cautioned that the list could not be conceived as static, nor could the identified traits be exclusively attributed to those holding leadership positions. Instead, he advised, leadership should be considered from a contextual point of view. He predicted that leadership was situational, and found that a compelling factor that differentiated leaders from followers was group orientation. Identified attributes that were pervasive throughout the study included “the capacity for organizing and expediting cooperative effort, intelligence, alertness to the needs and motives of others, and insight into situations, further reinforced by such habits as responsibility, initiative, persistence, and self-confidence” (Stogdill, 1948, p. 66).

Ford and Bennett (1994) found that principals participating in a large-scale reform initiative in the Chicago area predicted that they would not remain in the principalship for a long period of time. Of the 457 elementary and high school principals surveyed, nearly half were hired during the first 3 years of mandatory reform, which began in 1989. Almost half of the surveyed group noted that they intended to remain in their positions for a maximum of 10 years. A study commissioned by the National Association of Secondary School Principals in conjunction with the National Association for Elementary School Principals and conducted by the Educational Research Service (ERS) in 1999, revealed that a nationwide shortage of qualified

principals existed. Of the school districts participating in the study, 50% indicated a shortage of qualified principals to fill existing vacancies (ERS, 1999).

### *Principalship in Georgia*

The principalship in Georgia is diverse. In a regional comparison of Georgia school principals (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003); an examination of certification history in Georgia revealed that most principals began their education careers as teachers. Over 79.9% of Georgia principals were issued regular Georgia teaching certificates, while only 13.8% received Leadership Certificates when they joined the educator workforce. Other types of certifications received were: Provisional (2.0%), Service (1.9%), and Conditional (.7%) certificates. This confirms that principals in Georgia are mostly local individuals (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003). Principals' earliest certificates were issued in the following fields in order of incidence: Elementary grades (P-8) – 18.1%; Early Childhood Education (P-5)-10%; Educational Leadership (P-12) – 10.2%; Middle Grades (4-8) – 9.4%; Health & Physical Education (P-12) – 8.5%; and Social Science (7-12) – 5.3% (p. 4) (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003).

As of Fiscal Year (FY) 2002, there were a total of 2,048 principals in Georgia with, 71.2% Caucasians and 27.9% African American. Half (55%) were female, continuing the rise in the number of female principals from a total of 850 in FY97 to 1,129 in FY02. There was, in contrast, a steady decline in the number of male principals over the same period from 1,027 in FY97 to 919 in FY02. It is expected that this trend will continue given that females dominate the assistant principal pool from which the position of a principal is filled (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003, p. 5).

The mean age of Georgia principals in 2002 was 50.12 years, and the mean years of experience were 23.47. Two-thirds (66.3%) of principals possessed an Educational Specialist degree. As expected, the majority of the principals possess a Leadership certificate (97.61%). In general, the average school principal was White, female, and had an Educational Specialist degree (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003).

There was a continuous increase in the number of principals leaving the workforce annually. A comparison of principal and teacher attrition rates shows that principal attrition is much higher, almost twice as much, than teacher attrition (principal – 15.2%, teacher – 8.8% in FY01). Principals are retiring (or leaving the profession) at a much younger age (FY01 ranged from 32 to 72 years, while their years of experience ranged from one to 49 years). The problem of principal attrition is increasingly complex due to the fact that school districts are also reporting a shortage of qualified candidates for the job. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the need for school principals will increase by 10 to 20 percent by 2006 (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

In Georgia, in 2003, there were regional differences in the racial composition of principals. Throughout Georgia, the majority of the school administrative population was White. The North region had a majority personnel group of White principals (90.6%). The highest percentage of Multiracial (1.2%) and Hispanic (0.4%) principals was found in the North Central region. Principals in the Southwest region were African-American (36%) and White (64%) (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003).

The North and Southwest regions have more male principals (Georgia Professional Standards Commission, 2003). The principals' mean age and experience in all the regions are similar to the state level. High demands of the job and NCLB legislation made it imperative that



school systems hire not just qualified teachers but that they also hire or promote highly qualified, experienced, and flexible (or adaptive) principals.

### Summary

The principalship manifested itself as the controlling person of an educational institution in the 1800s during the Common School Movement. To the Corporate Movement of the 1900s – 1960s, when the principal was at the top of the hierarchy and managed positions below them, in the mean time, answering to a board, enforcing politics, ensuring that organizational goals were achieved and maintaining the physical plant. The 1960s – 1970s was marked by the Civil Rights movement and the role of principal expanded the community in achieving education for all. The role and responsibility of the principal grew as new state and federal guidelines were implemented.

Historically, the roles and responsibilities of the school administrator was critically changed throughout the years by societal change, business practices, and federal legislation from managers to instructional leaders. The National Commission on Excellence in Education in its 1983 report *A Nation at Risk* alerted the public of the need for change in the public education system of the United States. The publication spurred further involvement of the federal government in the education of students, the effectiveness of teachers, the performance of principals, and school accountability.

The role of the principal is ever-evolving. The NCLB (2001) federal mandates provides increased accountability measures such as improving teacher quality, testing achievement, improved graduation and graduation rates, and accomplishing AYP. Understanding their role and how principals perceive the NCLB impact on their role in helping the school to accomplish its objectives, is critical to the success of a school and student achievement.

NCLB required a shift in the role and responsibilities of principals for providing an environment of change and improvement. As a result, principals are pressured to be strategic in their efforts to improve achievement, decrease test-score gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged students and ensure that teachers are highly qualified, in addition to being the instructional leader to ensure that curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment of student progress are coherent components in the teaching and learning process. The principal's role is integral to school success and student achievement. As leaders of their schools, high school principals have become pivotal influences on standards-based reform implementation which impacts on student achievement. Further data are needed for understanding the roles of principals as leaders of their organizations as impacted on by current federal mandates.

The individual perceptions and opinions may reflect dimensions of principals' personality that may influence their actions as school leaders. As such, their perceptions become important barometers of the manner in which reforms are contextually interpreted. These perceptions may be impacted on by a variety of demographic variables to include personal background information and the types of schools in which they serve. Georgia research also showed regional differences in principalship representation, which upon closer examination may present pertinent information relative to the principal's role.

Leadership and personal characteristics such as gender, age, and experience was found to have an impact on administrative behaviors. Additionally, demographic variables such as urban, suburban, or rural settings were researched to affect administrative behaviors. The principalship in Georgia is denoted by regional differences in racial composition of the principals, with the majority of the school administrative population being Caucasian, female, 50+ years old, with 23 years of experience, and with an educational specialist degree.

A number of studies have been conducted to explore role perceptions; however, no study addresses the topic of the high school principal in Georgia through the use of demographic information and the results of the in-depth interviews with principals who have remained in high school administration pre- and post-NCLB. This study will add to the existing body of literature concerning the phenomenon of principals' role perceptions and fill the aforementioned gap in the existing literature as this researcher acquires a more complete portrait of the Georgia high school principal in this era of reform. By exploring the role perceptions in light of NCLB requirements, the findings of research in educational administration for aspiring and practicing high school principals will be expanded.

Table 1. Review of Literature Pertaining to Principal Roles

| <b>Study</b>                             | <b>Purpose</b>  | <b>Participants</b>                         | <b>Design/Analysis</b>            | <b>Outcomes</b>   |
|--|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Cooley and Shen, 2003                    | Investigated whether new roles are integrated into the job of principal   | 4000 secondary principals across the nation | Quantitative (questionnaire)<br>x | Principals reported they were engaged in new roles integrated into the job. The job has created conflict with increasing workload discouraging educators from accepting leadership positions  |
| Educational Research Service (IEL), 1998 | Provide portrait that today's principals must serve as leaders for student learning   | 400 superintendents                         | Quantitative (questionnaire)      | 50% of superintendents reported trouble filling principal vacancies. Principals must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must strengthen teacher skills. They must collect, analyze, and use data in addition to rallying students, teachers, and the community. |
| Edu-Con, 1984                            | Investigated responses in terms of whether expectations had increased, decreased, or remained the same over the last 5-years. | 137 principals & vice principals in Toronto | Quantitative and Qualitative      | 90% reported an increase over the previous years in demands made on their time and responsibilities.  |
| Ford and Bennett, 1994                   | Investigated principals participating in a large-scale reform initiative in Chicago   | 457 elementary and high school principals   | Quantitative (questionnaire)      | Predicted principals would not remain in the principalship for a long period of time.   |

|                          |  |   |                              |   |
|--------------------------|--|---|------------------------------|---|
| Goodwin, 2002            | Described changes in the principalship from every state. Investigated the current role of the principal, how the role has changed, and how it should change. | National study  | Quantitative (questionnaire) | Practitioners identified 45 descriptors of the principal's role. The analysis of the descriptors revealed four themes: role conflict, accountability conflict, autonomy conflict, and responsibility conflict. Validated the importance of the high school principal role as strategic leader, visionary, and change agent.   |
| Hallinger and Heck, 1996 | Examined the empirical literature (40-studies) on principal effects (school leadership and student achievement) that emerged between 1980 and 1995           | Synthesized 15-years of research on how principals impact their schools | Meta-analyses                | Principals influence school performance by shaping goals, direction, structure, and by working through organizational and social networks.  |
| Kouzes and Pozner, 1995  | Examine leader characteristics   | 60,000 organizational leaders, employees, and constituents,             | Quantitative (questionnaire) | Noted exceptional leaders as those who were viewed by organizational members as promoting practices that improved organizational functioning.<br>-Noted 5 fundamental practices of exemplary leaders. The 5 practices of exemplary leadership are: (1) challenging the process, (2) inspiring a shared vision, (3) enabling others to act, (4) modeling the way, and (5) encouraging the heart. |

Table 2. Review of Literature Pertaining to Item Analysis of Interview Questions

| Interview Questions                                 | Literature  | Research Questions                                     |
|---|---|--|
| P.1<br>Profile<br>Leadership Theory                 | Alexander (1992); Conley (1993); Hallinger (1992); Hallinger & Hausman (1993); Klein and Maher (1976); Leithwood & Duke (1993); Sagor (1992); Sarason (1990); Sergiovanni (1990).   | 1. Role perception<br>3. Demands and challenges        |
| 1.1<br>Duties and Responsibilities                  | Alexander (1992); Chenoweth (2002); Cawelti (1999); Cooley & Shen (2003); Edmonds (1986); ERS (1999); Goodwin (2002); Grubbs, Leech, Gibbs & Green (2002); IEL (2000); Lumsden (1992); Lunenberg (1995); Marks & Pinty (1987); McCarthy (1999); NPBEA (1995); Public Agenda (2001); Scheurich & Skrla (2003); Seashore & Spillane (2002); Skrla, Scheurich, & Johnson (2000); USDOE (2000). | 1. Role perception                                     |
| 2.1<br>Duties and Responsibilities Relative to NCLB | Alliance for Excellent Education (2003); Borman, etal (2003); Cooley & Shen (2003); Davenport & Allport (2002); Grubbs, Leech, Gibbs & Green (2002); Rudalevige (2003); Seashore & Spillane (2002).   | 1. Role perception<br>2. Role and NCLB mandates        |
| 2.2<br>Time Allotment                               | Goodwin, etal (2003); Seashore & Spillane (2002).   | 1. Role perception<br>2. Role and NCLB mandates        |
| 3.1<br>Job Expectations                             | Alexander (1992); Blankstein (2004); Goodwin, etal (2003); Grogan & Andrews (2002); Hord (1997).  | 2. Role and NCLB mandates<br>3. Demands and challenges |
| 3.2<br>Evolving and Ever-changing                   | Chan & Pool (2002); Cooley & Shen (2003); Elmore (2000); Goodwin, Cunningham, & Childress (2003); Osterman, Crow, & Rosen (1997); Ricciardi & Petrosko (2001).  | 3. Demands and challenges                              |
| 3.3<br>Future of High School Principals             | Heck, Larsen, & Marcoulides (1990); Marks & Pinty (1987); Ogawa & Bossert (1995); Schlechty (1991); Sergiovanni (1990); Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond (2001); Weiss & Millinaro (2005); York-Barr, & Duke (2004).  | 1. Role perception<br>3. Demands and challenges        |
| 3.4<br>Standards-based Accountability and Reform    | Boyer (1983); Calhoun (1994); ERS (1999); Hallinger & Heck (1996); IEL (2000); NPBEA (2001); Leithwood & Riehl (2003); Public Agenda (2001); Trail (2000).  | 1. Role perception<br>3. Demands and challenges        |
| 4.1<br>Negative and Positive Changes                | Alliance for Excellent Education (2003); Chan & Pool (2002); Cooley & Shen (2003); Ferradino & Tirozzi (2002); Goodwin, etal (2003); Osterman, Crow, & Rosen (1997); Portin (2001); Ricciardi & Petrosko (2001); USDOE (2002).  | 1. Role perception<br>3. Demands and challenges        |
| 5.1<br>Experiences and Recommendations              | Allport (1995); Goodwin, etal (2003); Lawler (1973); Smith, Bruner, & White (2003).   | 2. Role and NCLB mandates<br>3. Demands and challenges |

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an outline of the research methodology, include an overview of the research design, a restatement of the research question and sub-questions, population and sample, instrumentation, procedures for data collection, and data analysis procedures. With no previous formal studies providing qualitative data with an understanding of principals' perspectives of their roles within the context of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), this research focused on the actual role awareness and its leadership style implications relative to the phenomenon of NCLB.

This study is original in that there were no previous formal studies in Georgia which provided qualitative data with an understanding of principals' perspectives of their roles within the context of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This research focused on the actual role awareness and its leadership style implications relative to the phenomenon of this federal mandate, NCLB. This study extended our knowledge in the literature in that reform initiatives and federal mandates were cited as a reason that the principal's role has expanded.

This study also attempted to expand beyond the scope of known research by allowing the researcher to include a personal subjectivity in the methodology. In this type of research, having a researcher with this personal connection to the setting is an advantage. A clear description of the high school principalship experience must be understood before a reflection of the impact of NCLB on the roles and responsibilities can be determined.

## Phenomenology of Leadership

Cooper (1996) defined phenomenology as: “A twentieth century philosophical movement distinguished by a concentration on descriptions of experience which reveal the *meanings* things have for a human being prior to theoretical interpretation (p.400).”

Phenomenology sought to ask this question, “What is the structure and essence of experience of this phenomena for these people” (Patton, 1990, p. 69). Relative to the proposed research it would ask, what was the essence of the experience to the role awareness of high school principals and changes in leadership style due to NCLB mandates? The phenomenon need not be a fixed event, for it may also be an emotion, program, and organization (Patton, 1990).

According to Van Manen (1990), the emphasis of phenomenological research is “always on the meaning of lived experience (p.62). The purpose of phenomenological research was a means to understand the “deeper meaning or significance of an aspect of human experience” taking in other’s experiences and their reflections on their experiences. Van Manen also stated, “literature, or other story forms serve as a fountain of experiences as to which the phenomenologist may turn to increase practical insights” (p.70). Additionally, Van Manen noted that the story provided what was possible in human experiences, allowing the audience to experience life situations that would not normally be experienced, as it enabled the audience to broaden their horizons (Van Manen, 1990).

Through qualitative inquiry, the researcher expects to gain more than the sharing of experiences from 5 high school principals. During this journey, there will be a connection between the researcher and the participants, because the researcher is also a high school principal. The researcher’s role in this study was as an observer and a participant at the same time, as the researcher traveled through this phenomenological study.

Phenomenology seeks to understand a principal's awareness of their roles and what they believe was the impact of NCLB upon their roles. The researcher sought to determine not just a description of high school principals' roles, but descriptions of the essence of operating as a high school principal within the context of the NCLB experience.

“The aim of phenomenologically informed research is to produce clear and accurate descriptions of a particular aspect of human experience” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p.42). Phenomenology utilizes data-gathering techniques designed specifically to develop generalized descriptions of an experiential process. Because of this, a phenomenological methodology differs from that of a standardized or positivist methodology. In phenomenology, the methodology serves a general guideline and outline for the researcher. Each phenomenological methodology is designed specifically to expand upon the essence of a particular experience. As a researcher of a phenomenon, it is important not to start the process with any preconceived hypothesis. Instead, the researcher embarks on a journey to develop and interpret “verbal portraits” of a phenomenon (Polkinghorne, 1983, p 43). The methodology of this particular phenomenology is outlined in the following sections.

### *Personal Subjectivity*

In conducting research, one's own personal experience often influences the gathering process and the resulting data. Phenomenological research is gathered with the understanding that there is “no viewpoint outside of consciousness from which to view things as they exist independently of our experience of them” (Polkinghorne, 1989, p45). It is important for a researcher to examine their own experiences with the phenomenon that is being studied, “locating the presuppositions and biases the researcher holds as well as clarifying the parameters and dimensions of the experience before beginning subject interviews” (Polkinghorne, 1989,



p46). Having this awareness that the researcher's own personal experiences can influence data collection and interpretation is in its own awareness protection against the imposition of the researcher's expectations of the study.

The researcher chose to pursue this area of role awareness and the perceptions of high school principals within the context of NCLB, based on my personal experience. The following is a narrative explaining how I evolved to my current position as a high school principal, and how my own life experiences may shape this research.

I was born on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1962 in New York City. As the oldest of three children and the only daughter of my parents, leading began at a young age, much to their dismay...with my brothers. My working class parents instilled in me that I could accomplish anything with an education. I have been intrigued by leadership and management most of my professional life. While as a sophomore attending Hunter College (New York), a Reserve Officer's Training Corps (ROTC) commandant, introduced me to the benefits of leadership training and the skills that would empower me in life. It was too late to participate in ROTC through its 4-year program, so a recruiter convinced me to join the Army Reserves.

The Spring of 1982, I was assigned to an Army reserve unit in New York City, preparing to go to Basic Training that summer. While assigned to the unit, I met a female officer...a Major...and she was African American! I was intrigued with the prospect of an African American female leading soldiers to accomplish a mission for the military. With this realization, I believed that in addition to college, I could develop my leadership and management skills if I investigated ROTC further.

The summer of 1982, I left New York for eight weeks of Army Basic Training in Ft. Jackson, South Carolina. Shortly after arriving, Drill Sergeant Locklear gave me my first true

leadership position as Squad Leader, with the responsibility of ensuring that my assigned squad of eight recruits were accounted for in all of our training. That experience nurtured the belief that leadership is oftentimes thrust upon you due to your preparation (by this time, I had completed 2-years of college); leading by example; and, being a relationship-builder.

Upon returning to college in New York after completing Basic Training, and completing the final 2-years of ROTC, I graduated from Hunter College. That same year, I earned my commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Adjutant General's (AG) Corps in the Army Reserves. Over the course of the next 13-years that I spent in the Army Reserves and Army National Guard, I earned the rank of Captain. I held leadership positions which included *AG officer*, *Finance Officer*, and *Public Affairs Officer*. Military training provided a strong foundation for my leadership development.

After leaving the military, as a civilian, I became the *Coordinator* of the Parent Net Program, a drug abuse prevention program for teen parents. This opportunity led to becoming the *Executive Director/Child Advocate* of the Augusta Child Advocacy Center, an agency that collaborated with law enforcement officials and the court systems for youth who were victims of abuse. In this capacity, I also collaborated with local school systems to provide child abuse prevention training for teachers.

After 2-years at the Augusta Child Advocacy Center, I was offered the opportunity to become a *School Counselor* at Harlem Middle School; *School Counselor* at Harlem High School; *Counselor/Administrator* at Crossroads Academy Alternative School; *Assistant Principal* at Evans High School; and, I've been the *Principal* of Warren County High School for 2-years. My leadership development in education was an atypical path to the high school

principalship, and yet, the diversity of my professional background, contributed a unique blend to my style of school leadership.

### *Research Design*

The researcher used the qualitative research approach of phenomenology to explore the role awareness and experiences of high school principals operating within the NCLB mandates, so that a description of the essence of the principals' roles and leadership style could emerge. This approach was chosen because it identified as the most feasible way to answer the research question. Phenomenology is:

...the name for a philosophical movement whose primary objective was the direct investigation and description of phenomena consciously experienced, without theories about their casual explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions (Spiegelberg, 1975, p.3)

The aim of phenomenology is to gain an understanding of the phenomena through a recognition of its meaning (Van der Zalm & Bergum, 2000). Phenomenology has been described as involving broadly stated questions about human experiences and realities, studied through people in their natural environment and generating rich, descriptive data that helps us to understand the experiences of the participants (Boyd, 1990).

The origins of phenomenology have been attributed to Husserl. Husserl (1931) was concerned with the fundamental nature of reality. He established phenomenology as the true essence of "being", dealing not with facts but with transcendently-reduced phenomena. Husserl suggested that the truths lies in the study of things with human experience, because the meanings and truths that people attach to their existence is the essence of life (Roberts & Taylor, 1998).

Husserl's (1931) phenomenological method focuses on the origin of knowledge that is embedded in everyday activities. He argued that real events, with real people living in the world create lived experience. In order to see the experience as it is, Husserl (1931) called for a breaking away from the positivist viewpoints. Husserl began to see the world from the standpoint of everyday life, looking at the world as it confronts us. Husserl (1931) suggested that there is a body of knowledge, which is subjective and personal, and this body of knowledge provides insights and understandings to the human experience. It is the role of the qualitative researcher to explore these meanings and bring an understanding to the experience not gained by the scientific method of investigation (Graham, 2001).

The concepts of essences, intuiting, and phenomenological reduction were also developed by Husserl (Spiegelberg, 1965). Essences are the elements that are related to the ideal or true meaning of something, the concepts that give common understanding to the phenomenon under investigation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). According to Natanson (1973), "Essences are unities of meaning intended by different individuals in the same acts or by the same individuals in different acts".

Polit and Hungler (1993) talked about the essence of a phenomenon as to what the researcher is trying to extract in the research. The essence of the experience has been called the "lived-in" experience (Polit & Hungler, 1993). The "lived-in" experience of the participants was the aim of this study. In this study, the purpose was to explore the experience of how principals perceived their roles and leadership style in fulfilling the mandates of NCLB. The researcher sought to get "into" the participants' world and provide an in-depth discussion of their interpretations.

Intuiting is an accurate interpretation of what is meant in the description of the phenomenon under investigation (Streubert & Carpenter, 1999). The intuiting process in phenomenological research requires the researcher to seek the common understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This is done by varying the questions or investigative process until a common thread appeared. The researcher avoids criticism, evaluation, or opinion and pays strict attention to the phenomenon under investigation as it is being described (Spielberg, 1965; Spiegelberg, 1975).

Through the variation of the data, the researcher gained an understanding of the phenomena in relationship to the descriptions generated. It is the main aim of phenomenology to make transparent the essence of what is being investigated. Husserl (1931) explained "...the transition to pure essence provides a knowledge of the essential nature of the real" (Husserl, 1931). Experiences contain essences and that is the aim of phenomenology, to extract these essences to give a clear picture of the phenomena under investigation.

Spiegelberg (1975) identified a core of steps or elements central to phenomenological investigations. These six steps are (1) descriptive phenomenology, (2) phenomenology of essences, (3) phenomenology of appearances, (4) constitutive phenomenology, (5) reductive phenomenology, (6) interpretive or hermeneutic phenomenology (Spiegelberg, 1975).

Descriptive phenomenology refers to a group of research endeavors in the human sciences that focus on describing the basic structures of a lived experience. Descriptive phenomenology directly explores, analyses and describes particular phenomena as free as possible from unexamined presuppositions. (Spiegelberg, 1975).

However, phenomenology of essences involves probing through the data to search for common themes or essences and establishing patterns of relationships shared by particular

phenomena. Probing for essences provides a sense for what is essential and what is accidental in the phenomenological description (Spiegelberg, 1975). The phenomenology of appearances involves giving attention to the ways in which phenomena appear. Phenomenology of appearances “can heighten the sense for the inexhaustibility of the perspectives through which our world is given” (Spiegelber, 1975).

Constitutive phenomenology is the study of phenomena as they become established or “constituted” in our consciousness. Constitutive phenomenology “means the process in which the phenomena ‘take shape’ in our consciousness, as we advance from first impressions to full ‘picture’ of their structure” (Spiegelberg, 1975). Within reductive phenomenology, the researcher continually addresses personal biases, assumptions and presuppositions and brackets or sets aside these beliefs to obtain the data in its purest form. Suspending judgement can make us more aware of the precariousness of all our claims to knowledge, “a ground for epistemological humility” (Spiegelberg, 1975). Finally, hermeneutic phenomenology is an interpretive methodology. The phenomenological-hermeneutic approach is essentially the interpretation of the phenomena as it appears in text or the written word (Heidegger, 1962; Paley, 1998).

The researcher inevitably brings certain background expectations and frames of meaning to phenomenological studies (Poggeler, 1986; Koch, 1995; Koch, 1996). However, these prejudices/values are useful to include in the study to assist us to understand when we are absorbed in the research process (Koch, 1995; Koch, 1996). They cannot be ignored or forgotten, in fact, it is vital to acknowledge pre-understandings to keep in focus with the phenomenological methodology. Thus, phenomenology provides a perspective that allows for

the opportunity to illuminate central issues that surround principals relative to their roles and leadership style operating within NCLB.

Phenomenology is both a philosophy and a descriptive, inductive method (Poggeler, 1986). The researcher must be able to use the phenomenological method to “describe experience as it is and to describe it directly, without considering the various casual explanations” (Merleau-Ponty, 1956, p. 59). This method of research seeks to uncover the meaning of humanly lived experience through the analysis of the participants’ descriptions to disclose the internal meaning of the lived experience. With its focus on human experience as it is expressed, phenomenology is a method consistent with the values and beliefs of the humanistic discipline of school leadership. Rejecting the scientific approach and focusing on the lived experience of principals through the collection and analysis of narrative and subjective materials, allows the richness of the data to emerge. This in turn helps principals to provide a description of their roles and responsibilities within the NCLB phenomena of the lived world. Husserlian phenomenology seeks the meaning of the human experience; the reality is the life-world (Koch, 1995).

Understanding experiences from the participant’s perspectives is crucial in qualitative inquiry. This understanding supported the purpose of this study, which was to identify roles and how roles and responsibilities were perceived in light of NCLB requirements. The researcher believed there was a need to explore the topic of this study to determine if the results might help improve principalship preparation in implementing federal reform initiatives in the high school setting, and thereby, improving student achievement. Qualitative studies are best suited for this type of exploration as they produce detailed information about a smaller number of participants but increase the understanding of the situation being studied (Patton, 1990). The rich experiences of the participants gathered as data in this study resulted in an understanding of the meaning

people have constructed, or how they perceived their roles as high school principals in addressing NCLB mandates (Creswell, 1996).

The researcher's principle purpose of this study was to gain insight into the role awareness held by high school principals who work in public schools in Georgia in light of requirements of NCLB. Information were gathered on perceptions held by participants who were in their position prior to and after the implementation of NCLB regarding: their role(s) in general, their role(s) in addressing NCLB, and job-related pressures as a result of NCLB.

### Research Questions

The overarching research question to be explored in this study will be:

1. What are the perceptions of Georgia high school principals on how NCLB mandates affect their roles and responsibilities?

#### *Sub questions:*

1. What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?

2. How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates?

3. What, if any, job-related pressures/demands, do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB?

### Population and Sample

The population for this study will be public high school principals in Georgia. There are 392 high schools in Georgia. There are 56 public high schools within the selection criteria and unit of analysis consisting of Georgia high school principals in 2001-2002 (pre-NCLB) and who were in their high school principalship in 2008-2009 (post-NCLB). This ensured that the



participants had a clearer recollection of their roles before and after the NCLB, thereby further exploring the perceived impact, changes, or evolution in their roles over these 7-years.

This researcher used the *2001-2002 and the 2008-2009 Georgia High School Association Directory (GHSA)*, and the *2008-2009 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL)/Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals (GASSP) Directory* to identify and cross reference the public high school principals in Georgia. The number of participants were limited to finding high school principals who were in their positions prior to NCLB (2000-2001) and remained until the 2008-2009 school year (Appendix F).

The unit of analysis, or sample (Merriam, 1998), for this study were Georgia high school principals who were members of the Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals (GASSP) and the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). The sample was diverse and representative of individuals in high school principalship positions in that it provided for a variety of experiences. Having diverse experiences and personalities allowed for varied experiences with school leadership within NCLB mandates. Taking not only the issues of roles and responsibilities into consideration, this study also focused on the evident leadership style. In doing so, not only was the group representative of high school principals, but also diverse in their phenomenological experiences. In order to determine the true essence of the phenomenon of NCLB on the roles and school leadership of high school principals, it was necessary to choose participants coming from a variety of backgrounds (Polkinghorne, 1989).

According to Morse (2000), purposive sampling requires selecting participants who are knowledgeable about the topic and are experts by virtue of their involvement in specific life events. They must have undergone or be undergoing the experience of the event being studied, be able to reflect on, and be willing to share detailed experimental information about the

phenomenon. The data, not the sampling units must be representative and the number of participants cannot be recommended, this is made separately for each research project (Morse & Field, 1996). The number of Georgia high school principals working in schools who were in their positions in 2001-2002 were 56. Approximately 15 were within a 3-hour travel distance from the researcher. 5 principals and 1 retired principal originally agreed to participate.

The sample size needed for this study did not need to be extensive, as the nature of the phenomenon was known and not hidden. Therefore the extraction of the data was anticipated to be straightforward. For this reason a purposive sample of five Georgia high school principals and 1 retired principal were chosen for the study. This number of participants allowed for a significant amount of data to be generated, more than enough to deduce concepts and themes for the study (Morse, 2000).

Morse (2000, p. 4) states that:

There is an inverse relationship between the amount of useable data obtained from each participant and the number of participants. The greater the amount of useable data obtained from each (as number of interviews and so forth), the fewer the number of participants.

It will be necessary to select participants who had in fact experienced the NCLB mandates since in selecting participants for phenomenological research only two elements are required: (1) the people interviewed have truly experienced the phenomenon, and (2) they are articulate (Polkinghorne, 1989). Accordingly, the participant's verbal skills necessary to convey their experiences with NCLB will be determined through the researcher's observations.

While it is not necessary in phenomenological research to have diverse subjects, the selection process in this study involved obtaining a diverse sample. The researcher wanted to

make sure that people from a variety of experiences were interviewed. When conducting phenomenology, it is important to limit the number of participants due to the in-depth nature of the study. The number of participants in a phenomenological study can vary greatly, from three participants to as many as thirty (Polkinghorne, 1989). For the purpose of this study, the researcher chose 6 principals, 4-males and 2 females. Of those principals, there were 4-Caucasians and 2-African Americans. Five of the principals served in their positions during the 2001-2002 and 2008-2009 school years, and one administrator was a retired high school principal. The researcher chose principals who represented a variety of school sizes (A-AAAAA), Title I status, and geographic locations (urban, rural, and suburban) for a diverse group of participants. After several re-scheduled attempts to fulfill the interview session, one principal rescinded their participation due to their unavailability within the researcher's timeframe. This resulted in four principals and one retired high school principal who participated in this study. This criterion helped to identify common patterns or themes and capture "the core experiences and central, shared aspects" or experiences (Patton, 1990, p. 172).

#### Instrumentation

The researcher used a self-designed instrument. In looking at qualitative research, Marshall and Rossman (1999) stressed, "The researcher is the instrument. Her presence in the lives of the participants invited to be part of the study will be fundamental to the paradigm" (p. 79). The researcher used an in-depth interviewing process consisting of 10 semi-structured, open-ended questions with a variety of sub-questions developed from a review of the literature and the researcher's own experience as a high school principal in Georgia (see Table 1 and Table 2).

The researcher developed the questions that she felt delved into a deeper qualitative understanding of the phenomena of role awareness and leadership style as impacted by NCLB. The questions were analyzed to insure that they were related to the review of the literature (Table 1) and the study's research questions (Table 2). The researcher's dissertation committee members reviewed the interview questions and the committee's methodologist reviewed the interview questions prior to the implementation to contribute to validating the instrument. The researcher used the comments of the dissertation committee's chairperson and methodologist to fine tune the final version of the 10 interview questions/protocol. For the in-depth interviews, the researcher used the 10 interview questions (Appendix E) as a guide.

#### Procedures for Data Collection

Prior to the beginning of the research project, the researcher identified the potential interviewees through GASSP and GHSA membership (Appendix F) to participate in this study. The researcher, a high school principal herself, selected the interviewee candidates. Consequently, the researcher believed that the selected interviewees would be able to relax and express themselves well in an interview.

After successful completion of the Prospectus defense with her dissertation committee, the researcher submitted a proposal for approval to utilize human subjects in the research to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Georgia Southern University. Upon receiving approval from the IRB (Appendix A), the researcher contacted interviewees by phone and email to outline the purpose of the study, share the interview process, and confirm their interest in participating in this qualitative study. The researcher then emailed the interviewees' superintendents (Appendix B) and outlined the purpose of the study, shared the interview process, and asked the

superintendents to respond by email with consent for the researcher to conduct the qualitative interview with their system's high school principal.

With the superintendents' approval, the interviewees were contacted by email to outline the purpose of the study and share the interview process (Appendix C). The researcher phoned the interviewee and scheduled the date, time, and location of the interviews. The researcher considered where the interviews were to be held, decided that the location would be convenient, and the setting reflected an atmosphere that would be quiet, physically comfortable, and private. The researcher planned to visit the interviewees in their office at their schools to conduct the interviews. The researcher deferred to the respondent's needs because their willingness to cooperate with the researcher was paramount. Both interviewee and researcher agreed on an appropriate date, place, and time for the interview.

In preparation for the scheduled semi-structured interview, a copy of the informed consent (Appendix D) and the interview protocol (Appendix E) were emailed to the interviewee prior to the agreed upon interview date for their preliminary review. A follow-up reminder phone call/email contact was made prior to the scheduled interview, to ensure the interviewee's availability and convenience. Upon arriving and prior to beginning the interview session, the researcher reviewed the informed consent with the interviewee and gained their signed consent. All interviewees were guaranteed total confidentiality (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). Interviewees were reassured that their privacy would be protected and that they could conclude the interview at any time that they felt uncomfortable with the process.

The interviews were designed to last from 1 ½ to 2 hours and were electronically recorded with two tape recorders with the interviewee's prior approval. The principals shared their role awareness as impacted by NCLB requirements and their successes or challenges

therein, during the taped interviews. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) gave the advantages of the use of tape recorders in addition to note taking for recording interview data. It reduced the temptation for interviewers to “make an unconscious selection of data favoring their biases” (p. 320). Tape recordings gave a complete verbal record and could be studied more thoroughly than data in the form of notes. Tape recordings required an electrical outlet or a rechargeable battery pack. The researcher gave attention to the quality of the cassettes, tape recorders, and microphones. The researcher used a microphone that was centrally positioned for the researcher and the participant in the event that there was sound around the interview site or if the participants were soft-voiced.

The main disadvantage of the tape recorder was that the presence of the tape recorder could be somewhat intimidating to the interviewee who might be reluctant to express personal feelings while being recorded. Fontana and Frey (1994) described how interviewing had undergone a profound change in that the respondent was now considered a “real person” (p. 373) rather than a “cataloged faceless respondent” (p. 373). The researcher made every attempt to make sure that the recorders were unobtrusive as possible and made the interviewees feel very comfortable and at ease in relating their stories. The interviewer informed each interviewee that if they wished to speak off the record, the tape recorder would be turned off during those comments. Interviewees were assured that the audiotapes would be destroyed after the study was completed, within the year IRB approval, and, before publication of the study. The interviewee received a written copy of the interview for their final approval.

The researcher used an assistant to transcribe the audio taped interviews verbatim as soon as possible after the interview. An account was maintained from every interview to include, but not be limited to: old questions requiring more information; questions already covered; where to resume, if necessary and miscellaneous information that needed to be addressed. The themes

were realized from the participants' accounts that was revealed through this research and reported through this study.

### Data Analysis Procedures

Marshall and Rossman (1999) described the analysis of data as the “process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data” (p. 150). It is time-consuming and ambiguous at best; it is not a linear, well-defined process. Marshall and Rossman added, “Qualitative data analysis is a search for general statements about relationships among categories of data (p. 150)” and layering themes.

Miles and Huberman (1994) stressed that it is important to have a good storage and retrieval system to keep track of available data. The researcher investigated several storage systems to include NVIVO, ETHNOGRAPH, MAXQDA, and QSR NUD.IST 5 software. The researcher determined that much of this storage would be accomplished through the use of MAXQDA software. The use of such software worked “on the principle of allowing the researcher to identify text segments, attach category labels to the segments, and sort for all text segments that relate to the specific category” (Creswell, 1996). The researcher looked for themes and categories that emerged from the data. Using the transcribed copies of the 5 in-depth audiotaped interviews, the researcher coded recurring patterns and themes from the transcripts.

The transcripts from the interviews were analyzed using a phenomenological approach. The qualitative data were analyzed using the steps developed by both Polkinghorne (1989) and Colaizzi (1978). The steps are outlined and detailed below.

1. Development of Subjectivity Statement/Epoch

The first step in the analysis of the qualitative data is to determine the researcher's own personal subjectivity. Having done this during the development

of the methodology, the researcher will be compelled to ensure that throughout the subsequent steps, the subjectivity is always in mind. One's own personal subjectivity can and will skew data; therefore, in order to minimize this, it is important to refer back to the subjectivity and how it could be causing the researcher to interpret data in a certain way (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989).

## 2. Horizontalization

Horizontalization of the data is the process in which each of the transcribed interviews is read and any pertinent statements are extracted and noted. Reading each participant's verbatim transcript carefully several times to ensure accuracy of the transcript of the interview, and then to acquire a preliminary feeling for them and making sense of them (Colaizzi, 1978). Upon completion, the researcher reviewed the statements and eliminated those that were not deemed necessary due to redundancies. As a result, the researcher had a group of unrelated statements that were individual and referred back to the phenomenon of NCLB mandates impacting high school principals' role perceptions and leadership style (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989).

## 3. Clustering

This step in the analysis process examines the remaining statements and groups them into clusters of meanings (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989). Underlining meaningful statements (sentences or phrases) pertaining to principals' role awareness and leadership style, and then extracting key statements from the transcript. These statements were



placed in a text document with the code number of the participant, to formulate meaning from these significant statements and phrases.

Creative insight will be needed to use what the participants expressed in order to elicit any hidden meaning. For the purpose of this study, the data was presented in a fashion to allow the voices of each participant to present their lived experience of what it was to be a high school principal operating within a federal mandate like NCLB as they reflected upon their role and leadership style.

#### 4. Textural Descriptions

Themes and sub themes are identified from formulated meanings (Colaizzi, 1978). Validation occurred by referring these themes back to the original descriptions and will involve repeated examination of the significant statements. The interpreted meanings will evolve into the resulting themes. According to DeSantis and Ugarriza (2000),

A theme is an iteration or recurrence of a variety of experiences that is manifested in patterns or configurations of behavior, that is, ways of thinking, feeling, or acting. As such, themes are embedded in repetitive or variant, often disparate expressions of social behavior or verbal interaction.

Statements that remain in the clusters are further defined into a textural description. Each individual statement will be combined into one statement that incorporates all of the different aspects associated with the cluster (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989).

## 5. Structural Description

This final step in the qualitative data analysis is to develop an overall structural description of the phenomenon of high school principals' role awareness and leadership style as impacted by NCLB. Each of the textural descriptions is combined into one overall description which results in the essence of the lived NCLB phenomenon (Colaizzi, 1978; Polkinghorne, 1989).

6. Finally, all of the participants were asked to review the evolving findings and were asked to comment and validate the discovered themes. Short telephone interviews and/or email correspondence were conducted with all of the participants to achieve this.

## Summary

This qualitative study sought to explore the role awareness of high school principals as impacted by NCLB requirements. After reviews by the researcher's dissertation committee, an interview guide that reflected the review of literature was finalized. Data was collected through the method of semi-structured, open-ended interviews. The researcher conducted interviews with 4 high school principals and 1 retired high school principal in Georgia to garner awareness of their roles and changes in leadership style due to NCLB mandates. After receiving informed consent, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and coded for recurring patterns and themes by the researcher along with the use of *MAXQDA* software for information storage. The researcher assimilated the findings to determine the perceptions of high school principals on their roles as impacted by the NCLB requirements and to formulate implications for high school principals impacting student achievement within federal school reform mandates.

## CHAPTER 4

### REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative research methodology was selected for this study because it allowed the researcher to delve into the lived experiences of the participants. This approach led the researcher to a greater understanding of the participants' thoughts, perceptions, and attitudes relative to research questions. The data analysis revealed themes that emerged from the participants' answers. These themes were an important component of the research, because it highlighted the driving force that supported the dissertation topic.

#### Introduction

The purpose of the study, through qualitative analysis, was to examine Georgia high school principals' awareness of their role in addressing the requirements of NCLB. The selected five principals had served in their administrative positions prior to and after the implementation of NCLB for at least 5 to 7 years. The questions asked in this study centered on whether or not the role of the high school principal operating within the mandates of NCLB has changed over this period of time, and if it has changed, how it was changed. The fundamental research question of the study was: What are the perceptions of Georgia high school principals on how NCLB mandates affect their roles and responsibilities? Additionally, three sub-questions were designed to explore the fundamental research question:

1. What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?
2. How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates?
3. What, if any, job-related pressures/demands, do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB?

This chapter gives an analysis of the data collected through scheduled in-depth, semi-structured method with five high school principals whom were administrators selected to be interviewed for this study. The administrators were purposely selected from Richmond County, Columbia County, Jefferson County, Baldwin County, and McDuffie County. Each administrator who was interviewed was given a number to protect their identity and ensure anonymity.

A qualitative approach was used in this study to give a deeper understanding of the role awareness of these principals and to tell their stories, which are rich in experience and knowledge. The interview questions were based on themes that emerged from the review of the literature concerning if and how the role of high school principal in Georgia has been affected by such school reform efforts as NCLB. The five interviewees were chosen by purposive sampling and contacted by email and phone to arrange interview appointments. All of the principals were interviewed in the offices of the school systems where they worked.

#### Data Analysis

The research design used was qualitative and descriptive. After using the researcher's dissertation committee to review the research tool, the interview questions were finalized to include 10 questions which also contained probing sub questions. The substance of these interview questions were as follows:

1. Profile
2. Leadership Theory
3. Duties and Responsibilities
4. Duties and Responsibilities Relative to NCLB
5. Time Allotment

6. Job Expectations
7. Evolving and Ever-changing
8. Future of High School Principals
9. Standards-based Accountability and Reform
10. Negative and Positive Changes
11. Experiences and Recommendations

The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed into a word-processed format and sent to the individual respondents to ask for additional comments, clarification, and ultimately, approval. After the five interviewees were assured of their anonymity, they all granted final written permission to allow the researcher to use the data from the interviews for the present study.

The responses to the interview questions were sorted by the three research sub-questions to establish a foundation for the analysis. This established the framework for identifying the common themes, behaviors, and practices that may have contributed to the role awareness of administrators who were the focus of this study.

The researcher identified major themes after repeated readings of the transcripts.

The transcriptions were then entered into the computer using the software program *MAXQDA*, for professional text qualitative analysis to categorize and code the data to search the transcripts for recurring themes and commonalities. The findings of the readings and the *MAXQDA* were compared to formulate the data analysis.

The interview questions were organized into the three research study sub-questions in the following way:

1. What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?  
(Research sub-question 1)

- (a) Profile (Interview question P.1)
  - (b) Leadership Theory (Interview question P.1)
  - (c) Duties and Responsibilities (Interview question 1.1)
  - (d) Duties and Responsibilities Relative to NCLB (Interview question 2.1)
  - (e) Time Allotment (Interview question 2.2)
  - (f) Future of High School Principals (Interview question 3.3)
  - (g) Standards-based Accountability and Reform (Interview question 3.4)
  - (h) Negative and Positive Changes (Interview question 4.1)
2. How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates? (Research sub-question 2)
- (a) Duties and Responsibilities Relative to NCLB (Interview question 2.1)
  - (b) Time Allotment (Interview question 2.2)
  - (c) Job Expectations (Interview question 3.1)
  - (d) Experiences and Recommendations (Interview question 5.1)
3. What, if any, job-related pressures/demands, do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB? (Research sub-question 3)
- (a) Profile (Interview question P.1)
  - (b) Leadership Theory (Interview question P.1)
  - (c) Job Expectations (Interview question 3.1)
  - (d) Evolving and Ever-changing (Interview question 3.2)
  - (e) Future of High School Principals (Interview question 3.3)
  - (f) Standards-based Accountability and Reform (Interview question 3.4)

- (g) Negative and Positive Changes (Interview question 4.1)
- (h) Experiences and Recommendations (Interview question 5.1)

### Editing the Text

Each principal was considered a respondent. Each respondent was assigned a number, 1, 2, 3, etc., and the remarks of each are represented by that assigned number throughout the findings of the data analysis. In the citations for the quotes by the respondents, the respondents are designated as P.1, P.2, P.3, etc. for Principal 1, Principal 2, Principal 3, etc. The researcher edited the contents by omitting any references to actual persons, actual school districts, geographic locations in Georgia, etc., with generic terms to insure the respondents' anonymity. Passages were edited to avoid repetition or to circumvent comments that were not pertinent to the primary focus of the interview question by using ellipsis (...) instead of the actual text of the transcripts. Words or phrases were inserted in brackets [ ] in order to avoid ambiguities for the reader.

### Demographics

The findings of the study yielded answers to each of the research questions. While the researcher used the same script of interview questions for every participant, each participant was free to answer each question as they wished to express themselves. This section was divided through the use of the research sub-questions, providing interview questions, the findings, and the data analysis of these findings. The overarching question is discussed in the summary of this section.

Table 3 provided a profile of the 5 principals in Georgia who participated in this study. Each of the participants were of different ages, ranging from 47 to 65. Criteria for the high schools served by the five principals in this study were obtained from the 2001-2002 and 2008-

2009 Georgia High School Association (GHSA) directory. Two of the five principals were Caucasian males. Two of the five principals were Caucasian females. One of the five principals was an African-American male. Two of the five principals who participated in this study were from small schools that ranged in student population between 300 and 625 students. One of the five principals retired from a small high school, was a former college administrator, and is currently employed part-time in a school system's central office position in a different county. Three of the five principals had over 20-years of experience in education, and two of the five principals had 40 or more years in education. Three of the five principals were natives of their school systems. Three of the five principals plan to consider retirement during the 2008-2009 school years. One of the principals was nationally recognized as the National Association Secondary School Principal (NASSP) of 2008.

The stories of the five principals reflected similarities that helped the researcher to characterize their stability. The following responses helped to set the stage for discussion about several of the significant issues such as role awareness and role perceptions in addressing NCLB mandates. In addition to expanding upon the above noted demographics and Table 3 (Participant Profile), the images of the administrators are highlighted further. Principal 1, a high school principal for 7-years at the same high school, and the youngest of the interviewees, was the most diligent in his pursuit to become a high school principal. He knew that being a principal was what he always wanted and ultimately transferred to a different county from where he began teaching to expand his leadership opportunities. He has 1-daughter, in elementary school near his high school and he takes her to school daily. She attends many of his school's events and has even been seen resting in his office after school. His work, due to its long hours overlapped often with his family life. He is committed to both and actually looks forward to retiring before



his daughter is in high school so that he can fully enjoy that experience with her. He described being married, having a daughter, and sisters as being an experience that has helped him to be comfortable with building relationships with his faculty and staff.

Principal 2, a high school principal for 13-years at the same high school, is the National Association of Secondary School Principals award winner of 2008. As a grandparent, she considers time with her grandchildren as the ideal coping mechanism to handling the stress of her position. She is from the community she serves. Having been the director of a Psycho-Educational center in the same community, she contended that she entered the principalship atypically, however, she felt destined to help children and her background in special education was a testament to helping those with special needs and at risk issues. In being the only principal this consolidated high school has had, she expressed being pleased that it helped to unify neighboring communities. She believes that developing leaders within her school building is key to ensuring progress for the students.

Principal 3, a high school principal for 5-years, retired as a high school principal nearly 4-years ago from a school that reminded him of the one he attended as a child. He left retirement and returned to work in a different school system as a Human Resources Director. Having begun his career teaching and as an administrator in the college setting, he has returned to teaching part-time at Cambridge College in its Augusta, Georgia satellite campus. He enjoys teaching courses to aspiring administrators and helping them in their quest to become assistant principals. He contended that his experience as an African-American who was a young person during the Civil Rights era, brought a unique perspective to his evolution as an educator and as an administrator.

Principal 4, a high school principal for 15-years, spent nearly a career in the marketing and sales industry prior to entering public education at a high school in the community where he grew up, and served in business. He believed that his “salesmanship” helped him to articulate goals and vision with his staff early in his career, but contends that his greatest growth has come through the need to build relationships in order to move the school through the improvement process and serve the students. When he retires this year, he plans to campaign for a seat in the county commission and is eager to continue serving his community in new capacity.

Principal 5, a high school principal for 9-years, began her work life to become a secretary, and had spent nearly 42-years in public education. Her first position was as a Head Mistress in a private school and was nostalgic as to how much had changed in education, but believed it’s for the best. Having served in many roles in her county’s only school (which serves all students, kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade), she believed that her effectiveness was due to a great extent to her relationships with the people in her community. Many of whom she taught in some capacity through their education. Some of them, she even helped to get their General Equivalency Diploma (GED), through her volunteerism at the local center.

Table 3 represents the demographic profile of the 5 administrators in Georgia who participated in this study. The participants’ profile indicates the respondent identifier, age range of the participants, their school’s region reflecting their geographic location and general school size, their number of years in education, and the number of years they served as principal at their high school. Even though more information was asked of the 5 principals who participated in this study, it was agreed to not share any more information that was given that would identify them in any way, thereby ensuring anonymity.

TABLE 3. Participant Profile

| Respondent | Age/Race  | Region / #Students | Years in Education | Years as Principal |
|------------|-----------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| P.1        | 41-50 W/M | 4-AAAAA/1940       | 24                 | 7                  |
| P.2        | 51-60 W/F | 3-AAA /1000        | 29                 | 13                 |
| P.3        | 60+ B/M   | 7-A / 300          | 40                 | 5                  |
| P.4        | 51-60 W/M | 2-AAAAA/1500+      | 27                 | 15                 |
| P.5        | 60+ W/F   | 7-A / 625          | 42                 | 9                  |

*Profiles of Georgia High School Principals (Interview question P.1)*

*Interview question P.1.* How many years have you been a principal? How many years at your current high school? Describe your school. Share what experiences you have drawn upon, if any, as a high school principal, to provide guidance and support in leadership. Describe your leadership style.

The initial parts of the first question were designed to make the respondents comfortable and to establish rapport with them by asking them about their school and experiences. The last part of the question tailored to get the respondents to identify that which supported their leadership and defined their leadership style. These responses and autobiographical information helped set the stage for discussion and revealed some patterns of similarity that may have had an influence on their evolving roles as high school principals. The findings from these questions have been reported below. The responses were followed by an analysis of the data obtained.

*Experience as a school principal*

The responses of the administrators to the interview questions, “How many years have you been a principal? How many years at your current high school? Describe your school,” gave

the researcher insight into the types of schools led by selected Georgia high school principals.

Their responses are recorded below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 shared, “I’ve been an administrator for 12 years, and then a principal here at [this] high school for 7. It’s not a Title I school, but this year we had 1,940 students. 105 teachers, 5 administrators, 5 counselors, total staff, you know, for the whole operation is about 179 people working here. ...We’re kind of a melting pot, so to speak. Our largest is [socio-economic group] in the middle, middle class pocket.” (12-12-08, p.2)

Principal 2 revealed, “I’ve been a principal for 13 years and I’ve been all 13 years at [this] High School. We have approximately 1,000 students. And, our demographics are about 80% free or reduced lunch, we are majority minority school, we are approximately 78% African-Americans, 22% Caucasians, very small Hispanic population, less than 1%...we did make AYP [Adequate Yearly Progress] last year. We were on the list of 34 systems in the state that all the schools in the system made AYP. And, with our level of poverty, a lot of people say that that’s not supposed to happen. And it may not happen this year.” (12-12-08, p.3)

Principal 3 said, “Well, I spent 5 years as a principal and all 5 years was at that high school. That’s an easy one...It was a rural school. It was a very small school we had fewer than 300 students all total and it was in what most people would consider a very poverty-stricken area. And, it was, for the most part, a black school. And, I say “black school” because we had grades 9 through 12 but we had maybe...6 or 7 white students at the most and all of the others were black students, or Afro-Americans.” (12-15-08, p.2)

Principal 4 responded, “I ... worked in industry for about 16 years and left industry and became a teacher here at this school and was the Marketing and Education teacher for seven

years. Then became an Assistant Principal and was an Assistant Principal for five years and this is my 15<sup>th</sup> year as a Principal here...the school itself is a school that faces a number of challenges. [This] high school is sort of a medium-sized school. We have 1,500 students... The two major challenges that ... over the last 15 years when I originally became the principal here, we had a Special Ed population of about 4½-5%... that population grew to over 23%...Our current [special education] population right now is around 15%. The Free or Reduced lunch has grown from around 30% to now we're currently at about 65%." (12-15-08, p.2)

Principal 5 responded with, "I was a Head Mistress for two years in a private school many years ago. Um, I came to [our] County 29 years ago as a business teacher and [our] Superintendent, asked me to take this position. And, at first, I told her "No," because I do love the classroom. (12-15-08, p.1) [My school] is a Pre-K through 12 school. Approximately 625 students. It's probably 88% White, 12% Black or Hispanic or mixed or whatever. We have very good children. It's a rural atmosphere. Very different from the average community. (12-15-08, p.2)

*Data analysis.* In the profile of Principals 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 reported 5 to 15 years of experience in the principalship in the same high school. The schools varied in size, socio-economic population, geographic location, ethnicity, and the size of the special education population that they served. The principals conveyed an awareness of how these factors such as percentage of special education population and socio-economic impact their roles in accomplishing the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

#### *Guidance and Support in Leadership*

Each principal gave responses to the request, "Share what experiences you have drawn upon, if any, as a high school principal, to provide guidance and support in leadership". The

principals' responses helped the researcher to become more aware of how school leaders receive nurturance to empower their leadership. Their responses were recorded below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 shared, "I've had several principals...what I tried to do is look at the good and the bad and what is this person showing that I would like, that I could use or emulate and of course...Fortunately, coming here, [this] high school was my first time administrator experience, other than being an Athletic Director or team leader in other schools. So, coming here, I was very fortunate to be with a bunch of educators that were very professional, believe in themselves and believe in their students and were really proactive as to looking at what they need to do to be better . . . The community's there for support. . . also, we've had an administration at the County Office that would allow us to grow...gave us the range we respect...they let us run our schools. They've [county office] basically trusted us to do our jobs and allowed us to do them. So, that helps [guide and support my leadership]. You're trying to make the right decisions based on your situation and the ...right thing for the kids at the school and we've been able to do that. I try to....shape my leadership ... to allow people to make mistakes." (12-12-08, p.3)

Principal 2 reflected, "The experiences that I've drawn upon ... I do a lot of, I read as much as possible. I do a lot of professional prose. The real reason I got my doctorate is because that was just another part of my personal/professional development that I could go and take advantage of and so I did...and the culture of teaching. So, I draw from that. But, I really go back to my original core beliefs as a Special Educator and that's that all children can learn and there are no bad kids and that is in my favor. I truly believe that if we give rich opportunities and equity to all children and that some don't get the quality instruction, all get it, that they will, our children will rise to the occasion." (12-12-08, p.4)

Principal 3 shared, “I think all of them [experiences I’ve drawn upon]. The time that I spent as an Assistant Principal ... probably, the time I spent as a student in my own high school ...experiences with my own principal...well, I went to a school somewhat similar to the one where I was principal. It was totally black because it was the days of segregation and the principal we had was a principal who pretty much had to do everything... not a lot of resources in those days ... the principal sort of ran the school as he saw fit. So, he had to create experiences where there were none.” (12-15-08, p.3)

Principal 4 revealed, “It’s [the school] in my hometown and the community where I grew up ...this is home. So I have a vested interest in the school and the community and make every effort to make this the best place that I can be. I am retiring at the end of this year (P.4, 12-15-08, p.1). The past 15 [years] that I had in industry, certainly influenced some of the ways that I operate and some of the things that I do. I worked as a sales person and a regional sales person, and Chief Sales Manager for a number of years. My background was in Marketing and Sales. And, I think that helped. I think that helped in selling my ideas to the teachers in things that we needed to do.” (12-15-08, p.4)

Principal 5 shared, “I [taught] was in a private school and it was grades 1-12 so this was not an unusual situation for me...in a private school, you do everything, even if you are a teacher, they call on you to do all other kinds of things. So, I had learned a lot about what a principal would have to do previously. And then, when I came here, I was ...Title 1 Director, Special Ed Director, FTE Coordinator, Vocational Director. I’ve had a lot of hats to wear but I still taught... So, I’ve learned a lot about leadership through those roles, I think.” (12-15-08, p.3)

*Data analysis.* The perception of experiences which provided guidance and support in their leadership was varied and overlapping. All of the principals reported that their experiences and varied jobs in education provided them with a foundation in leadership.

Principals 1 and 3 reflected upon principals they've admired. Principals 2 and 5 reported relying extensively on professional development and reading research-based practices. Principals 3 and 4 reported that their experiences in higher education (college administration) and the sales industry impacted their leadership development as well.

### *Leadership Style*

The responses of the principals to the interview statement, "Describe your leadership style," gave the researcher a clearer perspective into their predominant leadership style. Their perspectives, as noted below, identified for the researcher styles that supported their management of staff.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded with, "I prefer to let people do their job and learn from their mistakes, with my guidance of course, to help them when they need help. I'm not a micro-manager. I expect people to carry their own weight, to be experts in their field and do what they're paid to do. I also expect them ... to be current in what's going on and ... aware of what they're doing, how they're teaching and how their students are doing on their learning... I've always felt like we work with each other. Nobody works for somebody. We work together. Even now, you know, my people say, "I work for him." and I say, "No you don't. You work *with* me,"... when one fails, we all fail." (12-12-08, p. 4-5)

Principal 2 contended, "[My leadership style is]...very collaborative. I know that, for buy-in and, especially if you're gonna be a change agent, you better be collaborative (P.2, 12-



12-08, p.4). I think that you have to do everything that you can to empower others and you do that through collaboration, through distributive leadership, and so that everyone really understands their role. It's not like I'm the Queen Bee or the Ant Queen of the anthill and everybody else is just drone workers. They've [faculty] got to be an integral part and I know we spend a lot of time trying to develop teacher leaders not just with instructions to become administrators unless that's what they decide they want to do. But, every teacher needs to realize that they are a leader in this school and in the community. And we've got roles coming from our responsibilities and our obligations. [I believe that] my leadership style is ... because of my age, I know that I have fewer years before me than I have behind me and so I have to make sure that, you know, when I walk out, I want some of what we've worked together to get established... to remain." (12-12-08, p.5)

Principal 3 revealed, "I believed more in the collaborative style of leadership perhaps than my own principal did when I was in high school, because I saw that it was necessary to get the input of everybody involved to carry the school along. Particularly in my case because the teachers, I found had been there for a number of years and they knew all the families, they had taught all the brothers and sisters and, in some cases, they had taught the mothers and fathers of the students. So, they knew the family backgrounds, they knew the families on an intimate level and could provide a lot of information about them and knew exactly the people to whom they could go to get additional information and to get information that would be crucial in terms of guidance and in terms of discipline, which I think was crucial. So, I relied on those people to a great extent, and to their knowledge of the area [community] and content." (12-15-08, p.3-4)

It was very rare that I unilaterally made any decision. I may remember one or two but it was very rare. I think that was the defining thing about, if I could point to any one thing about

my leadership style and about my principalship of the school, it would be the fact that I always included the entire faculty on any major decision. (P.3, 12-15-08, p.6)

Principal 4 indicated, “I really don’t think now that...the principal can operate effectively in an autocratic approach. I think you have to have a democratic approach or a distributive leadership approach to managing the school. The issues and the solutions to those are much more complex than probably ever before in solving the problems that we’re facing and being challenged with...particularly with the Special Needs population and economic disadvantaged group.” (12-15-08, p.2)

Principal 5 reflected, “It’s a mixture of everything I believe. I can see the teachers’ point of view. I have children of my own and I always try to look at that child as having a problem and how would I want my child treated? And I’ve had some very good principals as role models.” (12-15-08, p.3)

*Data analysis.* All of the administrators described a leadership style that was collaborative whereby input was encouraged and facilitated. Additionally, they embraced the distributive leadership model which enabled a platform to develop teacher leaders and additional support in the instructional leadership of the school.

#### *Role Perception (Research sub question 1)*

What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?

The following question was designed to determine just what role perceptions existed among the high school principals. The responses provided the researcher with insight into the lived experiences of these high school principals:

*Interview question 1.1.* Please share with me how you became principal of a high school. When did you decide to become a high school principal? What did you perceive the role(s) of a high school principal to be prior to NCLB? What specific skills and abilities enabled you to perform your role(s) you believe are necessary in successful leadership of this school? How are you able to develop those skills?

### *Becoming a High School Principal*

The responses of principals to the interview statement, “Please share how you became a principal of a high school”, indicated to the researcher the different paths an educator may travel towards them acquiring the high school principalship.

### *Responses*

The five participants’ responses are recorded below. From these responses compelling themes emerged. Principal 1 made the following statement:

With the exception of 3½ years, I’ve always taught in a high school setting. I guess, in just about every school that I’ve worked, I’ve had some type of leadership responsibility...I’ve coached sports...[directed the] vocation program...the second year I was put in charge of the yearbook which, that was probably my biggest challenge there in addition to being in charge of the whole printing program. When I started at [the county’s] Middle School, I was made [a] team leader. (12-12-08, p.4). This was a...Industrial Arts position...I taught drafting, construction, cabinet making and graphic arts there. I was there a couple of years and became Athletic Director there, head coach of the track team and JV football. Then, when a position came open as [assistant] principal of the high school, I moved there.” (12-12-08, p.5)

Principal 2 expressed her heartfelt approach to the principalship:

I didn’t follow the typical path. I was a teacher for 14 years and, a Special Ed teacher, and then I was a director of Psycho Educational Services Center...and then, after that, I became principal here. (12-12-08, p.2)...I really never wanted to be a high school principal. (12-12-08, p.6)

Principal 3 reflected a route to the principalship through starting in higher education,

I spent a number of years on the college level. I spent 14 years at Paine College. Most of that was in administration. I spent all of it really as an Assistant Dean or as the Dean for

Academic Affairs at Paine [College]. Prior to that, I spent 2 years teaching Foreign Languages, teaching French in particular at [the county's] High School in [city], Georgia. After leaving Paine [College], I went to a neighboring county up in Augusta as the coordinator for the Gifted Program. That [coordinator] is a system-wide position...until they [the county] downsized, then I became Assistant Principal at one of the area high schools, still in [our] County and I stayed there until I transferred to [another county's high] school from which I retired. (12-15-08, p.2)

In responding to the path to the principalship, Principal 4 said,

I...worked in industry for about 16 years and left industry and became a teacher here at this school and was the Marketing and Education teacher for seven years. Then became an Assistant Principal and was an Assistant Principal for five years and this is my 15<sup>th</sup> year as a Principal here. (12-15-08, p.1). The students were very supportive. And they [students] actually campaigned on my behalf to the School Board and to the Superintendent at that time...I think by and large, most teachers here, have certainly, I feel like have been very supportive of me and the things that we're trying to do here. (12-15-08, p.3)

Principal 5 highlighted, "Originally, I did not go to school to be an educator. I had a pure degree in business. I had planned to be an Executive Secretary. (12-15-08, p.3). I've been in education 42 years. (12-15-08, p.4)

*Data analysis.* Their evolution into the role of high school principalship occurred via two paths. Principal 1, 2, and 5 followed the traditional path of classroom teacher, assumed teacher leader responsibilities (i.e., athletic director, director of PsychoEd, and assistant principal). However, Principal 3 began his career in the college setting and Principal 4 worked in the sales industry prior to entering K-12 education.

#### *Decision to Become a High School Principal*

The participants' responses to the interview question, "When did you decide to become a high school principal?" provided the researcher with insight into the motivation to become a high school principal.

## *Responses*

Principal 1 expressed their feelings about deciding to become a principal,

During that time....I was pretty sure I wanted to go into leadership so I got my Masters in Leadership and my specialist soon after that and... probably interviewed for about 10 years up there. Interviewed for... [an] administrative position...at a bad time. [Our] County was cutting back on the size of their administrator pool...so a lot of Administrators were going back into the classroom. (12-12-08, p.5)...I was Assistant Principal for 5 years here and [then] became Principal.”(12-12-08, p.6)...I decided, “You know they’re making some changes and, you know, I may apply for this and see what happens. (12-12-08, p.7)

In responding to the inspiration to become a principal, Principal 2 said,

I was the Director of the PsychoEd[ucation] Center and I drove by this construction site every day on my way to work. When I would drive by, I would say “I wonder who, how they’ll equip it. I wonder how they’re gonna staff it. I wonder who the principal will be. Will that person care as much about the children [as I would].” And, do they [students]...truly succeed?...I said, “Maybe, [principal] , you ought to do it because when I taught, I taught children from all over the county, the low incident area of Special Ed.” And I had relationships with the community and I believe that some of those communities have been short changed over the years. (P.2, 12-12-08, p.6)

Principal 2 continued, “When I rode by [where the new high school was to be built] it started pulling at me because I knew that I could take some of those risks and probably be safe where other people may not be as safe. I would be able to take those risks...And, so, I rode by one day and I said, you know, “I’ll never make up my mind when it comes time to apply for that job.” So, when I rode by, I said, “I’m just gonna visualize that these buildings are completed, the busses are running and there’s a principal in there somewhere. And, now, how do you feel about that?” And, I felt regret. And, so, if I’m going to feel regret, then I’m going to just apply for the job.” (P.2, 12-12-08, p.8)

Principal 3 mentioned unexpectedly pursuing the principalship:

I think I decided that only after I interviewed for the principalship. . .When I went to the interview, I really did not go with the intent of becoming the high school principal. I went because I was told that was what I was doing, being the Assistant Principal [was not enough]. And, I kind of thought that I would spend the rest of my time right there as

Assistant Principal of [this] High School. But when I went to the interview, I was challenged by the interview and challenged by what I thought was an opportunity to make a difference. . .in a way, I thought I could make that difference and I think I did just that...the interview both challenged me and motivated me at the same time. . .to become one [a high school principal]. That's kind of when I made up my mind. You can always see the opportunity to make a difference but I think I saw more of a need to make a difference probably than I've seen in quite a long time. (12-15-08, p.4-5)

Principal 4, reflected an initial desire to get an increase in pay:

I came back here [to this high school] as a Marketing Ed teacher and really liked the classroom and the classroom environment and teaching and interaction with the students, particularly in the work co-op piece that we were working in the community and working with the students. And, the reason I want to bring this up, I think there needs to be some adjustment in how classroom teachers are paid. What, for me, was a factor frankly was the opportunity to increase earnings by becoming an administrator as opposed to staying in the classroom. I probably enjoyed being in the classroom, certainly [the same]...if [not] more [than] being a principal frankly...except for the economics [pay raise] of it. (12-15-08, p.3)

Principal 5, on the other hand, conveyed having been an Assistant Principal here [at this high school] for many, many years. (12-15-08, p.5)

*Data analysis.* The Principals conveyed varied perspectives on when they decided to become a high school principal. Principal 1 responded that they've always wanted to go into school leadership and tried for 10-years until he finally earned their high school principalship. Principal 2 decided to pursue the high school principalship "by circumstance." The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity was presented to her to unify three communities with one consolidated high school. Principal 5 also conveyed getting into the principalship "by circumstance". Principal 3 contends that he was fine being an assistant principal, but was challenged to make a difference when he was encouraged to apply for the principalship. Principal 4 expressed that he loved teaching in the classroom and pursued leadership primarily to increase his earning potential. He was respected and encouraged by his peer teachers to become an administrator in their school.

### *Perceptions of Role Prior to NCLB*

In this interview question, the principals were asked the sub-question to share their perceptions of the role(s) of a high school principal prior to NCLB. They were given the opportunity to report significant perspectives that helped the researcher to understand their lived experiences prior to the implementation of NCLB. Their responses are reflected below.

### *Responses*

Stressing a variety of responsibilities, Principal 1 said:

I was responsible for...everything within that school...furniture, facilities, equipment, curriculum, hiring, firing, certification, I mean everything. The budget...in charge of custodians and the records. What I like most about being in administration, of course, is the variety of what goes on. There's really, no two days are alike. (12-12-08, p.6-7)

Principal 2 gave her perspective about pre-NCLB responsibilities, "I spent a great deal of my energy and time on trying to create opportunities to share that vision [of the school] that would drive those beliefs even deeper within people so that that old days of doing things, this kid succeeds, this one won't... then turn them [the students] loose, that attitude can never back." (12-12-08, p.5)

Prior to NCLB, Principal 3 felt the responsibilities were two-fold,

I always perceived the principal's role as two-fold. First and foremost was that of an instructional leader...However, when we assume that position, everybody else perceives your role to be other things first and the instructional leader last...I say that based on the people who supervise you, including the Board of Education, who...want you to do all these other things and, then, if you have time left, you can spend it on instruction...you have to make [time] for yourself to get into the classroom to deal with instructional issues. Because all the other issues come first, issues that ought to be last, athletics being, probably the top of the list. (12-15-08, p.5)

Principal 3 continued:

"At our school, discipline was at the top of the list and had been identified as the #1 problem at the school by the faculty the year before I arrived. So, all those other things had to be dealt with...discipline as the number one issue. Well, it's not something that the principal can solve by himself. So, the only way to get all of it solved is to get those

people who think it's a problem involved in it. And, since they are the teachers, they are a major part of the instruction...instructional leadership should be the priority. However, the other responsibilities from outside entities seem to take priority over the instructional responsibilities. (12-15-08, p.6).

Principal 4 reflected a different leadership style to accomplish his school's objectives,

I had a pretty autocratic approach to management of the school that...I think the teachers appreciated that sense that they had some say so in what was going on and how I was running the school and things we were doing. I hope they felt like they had the confidence in my ability to do so. The school at that time, we had some issues. We had some issues with gangs here. And, some discipline issues and I think they saw me as a strong disciplinarian we did bring those things under control. We feel like the school is certainly a safe environment and a law and orderly environment. (12-15-08, p.4)

Principal 5 added, "Before that [prior to NCLB], I did mainly discipline and isolation within the classroom. That was basically it. And, PR because I knew a lot of people in the community." (12-15-08, p.5)

*Data analysis.* Principal 1 perceived the role of a high school principal prior to NCLB to be primarily facilities and building management. Handling the day-to-day operations of the school. Although all of the principals acknowledged the responsibilities of managing the staff, building and facilities, Principals 2 and 5 saw their roles as focused on public relations as they sought to unify their community and share the vision. Principal 3 viewed their role as conveying a management style that was autocratic. Principals 3, 4, and 5 all contended that handling the discipline was a major part of their responsibilities. Principal 4 also conveyed the need to ensure a safe and orderly environment. Principals 3 and 5 both shared that classroom observations were key components to their role as a building principal.

The administrators contended that being a principal was very clear in terms of the discipline, the classroom observation, and being a public relations ambassador for the school. Prior to No Child Left Behind, the principals were not as involved with the instruction and the curriculum development.



### *Skills in School Leadership*

The principals provided the various responses to the interview question, “What specific skills and abilities enabled you to perform your role(s) you believe are necessary in successful leadership of this school?” Their below noted responses as to their skills, enabled the researcher to gain awareness about the perceived skills they used that strengthened their leadership.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 expressed their feelings about their leadership skills,

I’m just a “hands-on” type of person. Not a micro-manager, but I like to be involved a lot and like to know what’s going on...I probably spend more time here than I do at home...I feel like it’s my responsibility to be here, be available and know what’s going on. And, I think because of that, the community saw that and they recognized me (12-12-08, p.7). My [additional skills that I use] communication skills and my ability to put myself in my faculty’s shoes [supports my leadership]. (12-12-08, p.8)

Principal 2 made the following statement:

I’ve worked with the kids so long and I was known to be consistent and fair and open minded and that sort of thing. And so, I had developed some trust. So, I think with trust you can take some risks (12-12-08, p.8). I really have to be able to, um, truly use the data, to segregate the data, and show...not just where we need to grow but where we have grown. And, I think you have to show your...faculty and staff your successes and you have to celebrate those successes along the way...I think that really breeds consensus, No Child Left Behind just really saps the air out of any teacher ‘cause they get beat up. (12-12-08, p.11)

I love being in the classroom but, because the kids know I’m approachable, teachers know I’m approachable, parents want to talk, and I’m really good at helping mediate differences, and figuring out what the child really wants and supporting that child and just giving him nurturing that they need, to go on and nurture them. I could spend all day long doing that and love doing that and feel good at the end of the day. (12-12-08, p. 16)

Principal 3 reflected as integral to their leadership, “The skill of getting them [teachers] to see that the [instructional strategy] is the way that it’s going to be. And if they don’t see it that way, then they realize they have to go elsewhere. And so you help them in that process (12-15-08, p.7). Principal 4 also contended listening skills as a key element, “Well, I think it [my skill]

was I listen to what teachers are saying. I think they felt like they had a role in the management of the school and the leadership of the school. And, you know, that's sort of not the case with all the teachers . . . You know, I've come a long way along those lines. (12-15-08, p.4)

Principal 5 responded to her skill set with the following perspective, "I think because I had taught so many different subjects during my time as a teacher at the private school and even in the public schools here. You know back years ago, if you had so many hours in that course, you could teach it. And, I think that that [skilled training] gave me a good idea of what should be going on in most of those classrooms. You're supposed to know everything. I think one of the biggest things, or one of the main things I guess, is that I have taught a lot of these parents and that made my job so much easier." (12-15-08, p.6)

*Data analysis.* The skills and abilities that the Administrators conveyed reflected developing relationships as key to school leadership success. Principals 1 and 5 expressed being hands-on and involved in the school setting as conveying a commitment to the job. Principal 2 responded with the significance of being able to use data to successfully lead a school towards achievement. Principals 1, 2, 4, and 5 all indicated human relations skills and building the team concept to be important facets of their leadership. All of the Principals conveyed the necessity of effective communication skills as being integral to their skills and abilities in leading their schools.

### *Developing Skills*

In answering, "How are you able to develop those skills?", the principals shared their efforts to become skilled leaders. Their responses, as indicated below, provided the researcher with the principals' perspective on leadership skill development.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded with, “Being visible to your students. Working with them...talking to your custodians...your lunchroom staff. Just being in touch...being available when they [teachers and staff] have issues. If they just wanna fuss. If they wanna vent...while they’re in here venting, you know, you’re talking to them. You know, “What are you doing in Math?” “What are you doing in English?” (12-12-08, p.31)

Principal 2 stated, “I know there are a few key people that I try to read everything that I can [to develop my skills as a leader]. [Authors] Doug Reeves and Michael Fullan. Michael Fullan, I’m ..... *A groupie!* ... I wanted to read his fourth [book]...one of the reasons for that, he’s written so much on change and being a change agent and coming together to create this school truly took a change. We had to change the culture of learning.” (12-12-08, p.3)

Principal 3 said, “The only reason any of us [educators] would be there, is for student achievement. And, everything has to point toward that...Everything has to foster student learning and student achievement. And, if it doesn’t, it’s no longer a part of the solution, it’s a part of the problem and you do everything you can to solve the problem.” (12-15-08, p.7)

Principal 4 responded with, “I’ve seen a lot of schools [to develop my knowledge base] and a lot of things that go on in [those] schools, and...we’ve [our faculty] been more than willing to see something somewhere else and bring it home [to our school] and try to implement it and try to use it. So I think all [of] those things help you in developing your skills and how you operate and how you manage the schools and it’s just all part of it.” (12-15-08, p.8)

Principal 5 reflected, “I have had more training, I’ve got Reading Endorsement on my certificate now. When the teachers went to get that [training], I went with them. And, with the

[Georgia Performance] standards, I've gone with my teachers. I went with the Math group. I went through all the Math standards.” (12-15-08, p.6)

*Data analysis.* Consensus existed among the participants that visibility, availability and approachability was key to developing their skills. Growth through professional development was also key to developing skills as a leader. This development could occur through formal training as well as informal experiences through learning from other schools and their successful strategies.

#### *NCLB Impact on Roles (Research sub question 2)*

How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates?

*Interview question 2.1.* How would you describe a principal who meets the mandates of NCLB? How has the role in school leadership changed over your length of service? Tell me about a time when you became aware of changes in your leadership style due to NCLB reform.

This question (Interview question 2.1) was designed to determine evidence of an awareness of the principals as to the impact of NCLB on the roles of high school principals. The responses were anticipated to gain insight for the researcher into the lives of these administrators as they progressed through the high school principalship within the federal reform, NCLB.

#### *Meeting the Mandates of NCLB*

Georgia high school principals shared their perceptions of meeting the NCLB mandates in responding to this interview question, “How would you describe a principal who meets the mandates of NCLB?” Their reflection conveyed for the researcher the principals’ awareness as to the skills needed to work towards meeting the mandates of this federal initiative.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 stated, “Some of it [NCLB] really doesn’t make sense...it’s [NCLB] not practical. But, what it’s [NCLB] helped us do, a positive thing, it’s made us, it’s forced us to look at data. To look at how our students are doing. To look at how we’re teaching. How successful have we been? ... Really force us to look at differentiation (12-12-08, p.9). You know, going into the classroom and knowing what your teachers are doing. Also, being aware of what kind of students you have, where they’re coming from ... Trying to build that bond ... we’re not pointing fingers, but we’re wanting to work together so that when kids come to us from the Middle School, there’s no seam there. They roll right in [to our curriculum].” (12-12-08, p.14)

Principal 2 reported, “Now, we do work for continuous improvement [of student achievement]. And, it’s like a marathon runner...improvement in schools is like a marathon (P.2,12-12-08,p. 10). And, [it’s like the story of] the ‘hare’ [who] is looking for the quick fix. How can we institute this program’s policy, initiative to get a spike in scores? And, they may make it and then there are those [schools] where steady wins the race [like the ‘tortoise’]. Let the things that we do be best practices [research based], be practiced, [with] a strong set of core beliefs and just continue the race. You will find yourself, as we were, unexpected to make AYP but we did. We’re gonna do the things that are good for the kids and AYP will come and take care of itself. Or it won’t. 2013, 14 is going to come....I don’t think anyone makes AYP by accident.” (12-12-08, p. 14)

I think it’s even more important [to meet the mandates] than ever to build the capacity of teacher-leaders. [Due to] faculty and staff turn over... I just can’t keep doing the special learning and keep everybody on the same page and up-to-date. You could have turn-over of faculty...

three years [goes by] and all of [a] sudden you didn't have the same core beliefs of your faculty and staff [due to turnover]. (P.2, 12-12-08, p. 17)

Principal 3 stated, "No Child Left Behind forces you [principals] to look at those special populations [disaggregated data] ... not that the principals before ... would have done it, but now the principal is forced to do it whether he wants to or not. [NCLB] will force you to take strategies to increase student learning long before the numbers have any meaning in terms of making Adequate Yearly Progress. It's forced us to be...it's forced the principals to be more accountable in the instructional leadership area than it did prior to ... 2001." (12-15-08, p.9)

Principal 4 contended, "[I believe] principals are good or bad to some degree based on their school. You know, if you happen to be in a school that has, 23% Special Ed population in a subgroup, you're in a tremendous disadvantage. That's just the reality. The state does not seem to acknowledge that or accept that. But, to be honest, that is going on. Last year ...48% of the high schools made AYP out of the whole state. 52% did not. Nobody will [accomplish] AYP [100% in the year 2013/2014]. Nobody. So, is that the principal's fault or just ... the demographics of your school? I do believe that a principal can certainly have a tremendous influence on continuous improvement for the school. But I also know and believe that, if you happen to be a principal who moves around [to different administrative positions] as many do, I think there are some negative aspects of that. I think there's something to be said for staying at a school and being at a school for a long time. You know, whatever's happened here, I cannot blame it on somebody who came before me . . . I was that person. Whatever happens, it's my fault." (12-15-08, p.5)

Principal 5 indicated, "I think now you'd have to be an instructor in that field. There's no choice. You have to be in a position where you can do everything in your power to improve

what's going on in that classroom. If you find a teacher that does not have the expertise that they need, you're gonna have to be able to recognize that and get that help for them so they can do it. You've got to try to have a positive learning environment in your school system and sometimes I think that's really the hardest to do." (12-15-08, p.8)

*Data analysis.* The principals described administrators who accomplished the mandates of NCLB as being driven by the test data to effect school improvement through research-based best practices. The administrators conveyed an awareness of developing teachers in order to strengthen the instructional leadership, and that school improvement is strengthened in an environment that is stable with minimal turnover of principals and faculty.

#### *Length of Service*

The responses of the principals to, "How has the role in school leadership changed over your length of service?," provided for the researcher, ways in which the role(s) have evolved in working towards improving student achievement within the era of NCLB. Their responses are highlighted below.

#### *Responses*

Principal 1 stated, "[Role more focused on instructional leadership], how we're doing things in class? What strategies are we using? Are they working? If they're not, for this group, let's try something different...compare success from year to year or failures from year to year with teachers to show them and to help them learn to look at that and say "You know. I've got a whole different group of kids and I've still got the same failure rate or passing rate so maybe I need to do something different." I think it's really helped us [principals] to look at what we're doing to change the way we approach curriculum, to really notice that our kids really do learn

differently . [Focus on] how we test, how kids take tests, how they understand, how they process the information (12-12-08, p.10).”

Principal 1 continued with, “We’ve [principals] gotta look at the data. We gotta compare not [just] kid-to-kid but year-to-year. It’s also helped our higher up administration [central office and the board of education] see that, you know, we need extra help in other places (12-12-08, p.11). You know, it’s [my leadership style since NCLB] changed somewhat. And, again, as to how I’ve changed, I’ve been, I’m a counsel person. I’ve also become, I feel like, more involved in the instruction. I’ve always had my foot in it, but I’ve really become more [evolved]. You know, being involved in what’s going on in the classroom, the observations, meeting with teachers and their subcommittees and ... helping solve issues.” (12-12-08, p.15)

Principal 2 said, “I don’t feel that my role has changed because I’ve always strived for that instructional raising of the bar.....And I tell teachers also “We do not work for AYP.” (12-12-08, p.10) AYP’s gonna take care of itself if you’re doing the right things. One of the things, the skills, that haven’t gotten fully engrained that I believe is so important, I’m trying to get all students and teachers to become reflective...And to be able to truly ask yourself those questions and so many of us go ahead and answer before we even hear the question. If we did this, then we would make it or we’re not gonna make it or, you know, ask yourself really consistently and pervasively throughout the day, inside that classroom, are you really working hard to do best practice all the time?” (12-12-08, p. 12)

Principal 2 elaborated further, “I think [my leadership has grown in] trying to bring teachers to a deeper understanding, deeper professional practice. You know, it’s not a set of, of skills that they can check off a list like strategies, ... organizers. They need to...improve our practice, let’s do it consistently and pervasively throughout the day.” (12-12-08, p. 12)



Principal 2 further stated, “School leadership has changed so much over my course of my career, 30 years, the principals that I’ve always worked for are great people and great leaders. They were very strong leaders, had high expectations, but they didn’t really communicate clearly what those expectations were for us . . . And, now, we do have to delegate and use distributive leadership. But, at the same time, that does not give us the right or the opportunity to forego any of those roles. And, so we have to know instruction. We have to be the instructional leader. You may have other instructional leaders, but, I [as principals] need to be able to discuss with a teacher accountability, assessment, affirmative assessment, how to use assessment, how to remediate, how to have an engaging class. I have to be able to do it just as well as the Assistant Principal for Instruction. So, I think that’s something that has truly changed over the years with No Child Left Behind. A principal just cannot delegate that part of the job away and not grow and be on the very front lines with instruction. You don’t have to be in the classroom.” (P. 2, 12-12-08, p. 16)

Yes. The only thing that’s changed [in my leadership style] is I know that the thing that I like to do I still have some time to find time to do, which is nurturing this relationship [with teachers and staff], that I have to be here in the trenches with the teacher in the classroom, talking the talk of teaching and learning. I ...make myself do that [get in the classroom]. If you don’t, then you could get too far where I could let the Assistant Principal give instruction and I lose touch with the instructional aspect of it and, with No Child Left Behind and this era of accountability, you can’t do that. (P.2 ,12-12-08, p. 17)

Principal 3 said, “It’s forced us to be the instructional leader that was always there.” (12-15-08, p.10)

Principal 4 responded with, “There’s a tremendous change from, as autocratic principal 20 years ago, 15 years ago. And it was directed at managing the building. Dealing with the discipline. Dealing with the parents. Those kinds of things. That role today has almost exclusively rolled over to instructional issues . . . Things that deal directly with instruction. What’s going on in the classroom. The other’s still there and you still have to do it, but the focus is clearly on instruction now and on improving instruction.” (12-15-08, p.7)

Principal 5 said, “So many children now are struggling because they don’t have a person at home, they’re raising themselves. I think that’s the problem. I think they’re raising themselves and, when they get to school, everything is dependent on us. You know, they look at us, I don’t know, children bring a lot of problems [for educators to help address]. And the school building is the one stable area in their life and I think the principal now has to basically manage them structurally as well. You’ve got to be a manager [of people] also.” (12-15-08, p.8-9)

*Data analysis.* The principals expressed several ways in which their role in school leadership changed over their length of service as high school principals. They reflected upon their increased commitment to instructional leadership as a priority driven by the test data. As a result, their instructional leadership necessitated an increased awareness of effective research-based strategies to improve achievement. They described their human relations skills as key to nurturing and building their staff as they incorporated distributive leadership to develop teacher leaders. It was also expressed that management of staff and the facilities, discipline, and supporting parents, although not a change, still an integral component to their responsibilities.

#### *Awareness of Changes in Leadership Style*

High school principals shared their experiences in answering, “Tell me about a time you became aware of changes in their leadership style due to NCLB reform”. Their responses

enlighten the researcher about specific scenarios that made change and flexibility necessary to be successful in working towards student achievement. Their responses are reflected below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 reported:

In knowing what the problems are... as a school improvement team, we've found that our 9<sup>th</sup> graders struggle the most and that's why we're meeting and working with Middle School, to try to make that transition. . .a smoother one. So, we've kind of built our whole improvement plan around dealing with 9<sup>th</sup> graders. We feel like we can get them on the right track and get them rolling, we not just gonna turn them loose and not work with them for the rest of the time they're here, but it will be easier more workable situation if we got them more on the track, we're not treating them. . .9<sup>th</sup> graders are leading in discipline issues, they're leading in failure rates, they're leading in absenteeism, so, you know, that's a good place to start (12-12-08, p.14-15). It's our responsibility as educators [through collaboration] within the school to find out in Math, where are we dropping the ball, not just with this group because when we look at two other groups that are coming up fast and furious, they're struggling in those areas, too. So, there is, first of all, let's see what they're doing with this group in this area. We're trying to of course, address this situation but also address curriculum issues. (12-12-08, p.16)

Principal 2 stated:

I think it was really, one of the reasons that, the accountability of No Child Left Behind, that...fear will creep in because, I told faculty and staff we're going to continue doing the things we're doing because there what's right for all kids...One of the first things that we did was eliminate tracking, eliminate all lower level courses...I think prior to No Child Left Behind, the idea that all children should succeed, and that we are, we should be held accountable for that is very strong...I think that's why it wasn't a big shock to us...we [may not] make AYP all the way to 2014. (12-12-08, p.9)

Are you really spending the time doing the things that are going to promote impact? Are you taking care of the people that are doing the day-to-day work in the classrooms the way you should?" And, oh, I had to start developing that, questioning myself within myself. At the same time, well, it's hard for us to question ourselves, but you have to, on the exterior be confident and there's nothing that's really not a ying or yang. I think you can do both, I think you can gain your confidence by being able to ask yourself those questions. (12-12-08, p. 13)

Principal 3 responded with:

I'd like to say my style did not need to change. In my heart it didn't need to change. But, in reality, it probably did need to change because it would make you put

forth more of an effort to make sure that what you did matched what you felt in your heart...It would mean that you would now put forth all of that effort to get done what you knew to do because you knew that, even though, I used to call that Act No Child Left Behind, [I now call it] No Teacher or Administrator Left Standing *laughing*. Because you know that everybody's gonna be looking at that data so you visit one more classroom, and you would disaggregate one more set of data to make sure that no stone was left unturned. (12-15-08, p.10)

Principal 4 noted:

No Child Left Behind [related experiences] has driven, for us, even today, we always make AYP, we would make AYP as a whole school. We do it every year. What we don't do is we don't make it [AYP] in the subgroups. And so, what it did for us is really force us to focus on the subgroups. To concern ourselves about those groups as individuals and try to address that. This past year, we missed two categories – Economically Disadvantaged in Math and Economically Disadvantaged in Language Arts. It happened to be that we have a large group of Special Ed students who happen to be economically disadvantaged who are imbedded in that group and so, they're counted in all the other categories, but they were particularly counted in the economically disadvantaged to come back and hurt us. We missed the Math portion by 2 kids and the Language Arts by 9. And, if we'd had 9 more kids to pass and that's where you get into that second guessing. What if. What if we'd done this? What if this had been different? So, it makes you go back and reflect on that. 15 years ago, you didn't do that, I didn't do that. Now you do. That drives leadership style because what I have found myself to be, coming from a Marketing background, where I would be at a tremendous disadvantage and Remedial Math is one, the... specialist in here [the high school] with Math is because I don't feel like I have the background and skills to get into a real depth of understanding the problem with Math that I can get from support. So, I guess [my leadership] style has changed [in regard to NCLB]. Now I'm much more concerned about bringing in specialists and support people [as resources] to assist us as we begin looking at problems to try to address those [instructional challenges]. (12-15-08, p.7)

Principal 5 in reflected upon their leadership:

I think the managing part of it [leadership style], you're probably leading also. But, all of these new programs that are out there and the fact that you don't have a textbook that tells you exactly how to teach school concepts. You've got to have a lot of textbooks or a lot of resources. I think that's where the managing comes in [impacts leadership]. It's trying to help the teachers find and get the resources that they need to be successful with those children in the classroom. And you've got to come up with money. You know, you can't expect...anything to be purchased at the Board office. A teacher came to me, for example, about two weeks ago and told me about this "Mountain Math" program. Well, I didn't know anything about Mountain Math so, when I got over there and found out what I could and said, "Well, I'll tell you what. Let's purchase one for one classroom as a resource and let's see how y'all like it or if you can even use it." But, we bought it and I just took it out of my general fund. It was only \$79 and it looks like a good little

program for review and remediation. So I purchased it. That's the things I'm talking about as far as managing [as a leader]. Is trying to help to get some of the resources that they need. 9-years ago...I probably would have said wait and let's see if we can even use that program and don't you have a tape for it? That would have been my comment! (12-15-08, p.9). But now, with Georgia Performance Standards and with No Child Left Behind wanting us to use research-based resources, we have to think outside the box. (12-15-08, p.10)

*Data analysis.* The principals conveyed that they became aware of changes in their leadership style due to NCLB reform by the necessity of their instructional leadership being more data driven. As such, more focus was in addressing the issues of struggling 9<sup>th</sup> graders, particularly in the area of math, language arts and reading. In accommodating research-based best practices to improve achievement, leaders had to be more inclusive of teacher input and review of resources to ensure that the school's specific needs would be able to be met. In addition, principals become more reflective of their practices and their effectiveness.

This next question, Interview question 2.2, was designed to clarify how the principal's leadership expectations and responsibilities in instruction and those areas inherent in managing the school building and its staff, are accomplished, particularly within the limits of time constraints.

*Interview question 2.2.* Please describe how you meet the instructional expectations, as well as other assigned responsibilities that are not instructional in nature. What are these responsibilities? How has the distribution of time in these responsibilities changed during your tenure as high school principal working within NCLB mandates?

#### *Expectations and Responsibilities*

In answering, "Please describe how you meet the instructional expectations, as well as other assigned responsibilities that are not instructional in nature. What are these responsibilities?", the respondents clarified for the researcher various ways in which they tried to accomplish the varied responsibilities of their job. Their responses are recorded below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded, “Well, you know, I’ve learned to, what’s the term...delegate. A lot of things you delegate are those things, you try to match ... to the skills of the person you delegate [the task] to. It’s hard to find the time to continue to do [other responsibilities], I still do deal with the custodians, the facilities and things like that. Mr. [Assistant Principal] handles Safety...but I still deal with it as things come up. You know, being a principal...all the problems come to you.” (12-12-08, p.18)

Principal 2 shared, “[From] Central Office... there are not a lot of reports and things like that. I try to do all my paperwork in the afternoon or evening, not during the school day.” (12-12-08, p. 19)

Principal 3 reflected on the following:

One year, we had, I think about 6 people, 6 or 7 people in that small...faculty, going through a graduate program where they had to do shadowing and they had to do a practicum. So, they had to do leadership type things. That was a real blessing. They were looking for things to do and I had plenty to give them! *Laughing...* Our Board was very supportive in that regard, too. They, the Board deputized about 4 or 5 teachers who could be designated as leaders on occasion if there came a time when both the Principal and the Assistant Principal were going to be out of the building. It’s [the principal’s responsibilities are] whatever else goes on in the school. Whether it’s the...the business operations, or the fundraising, facilities management as you mentioned. Of course, I guess I was really blessed in the facilities management [had a very effective custodian supervisor]...all of the juggling acts, you just delegate, [also] you stay [after school] after everybody else leaves and you just get them [the work] done. (12-15-08, p.11)

I could call on some of those people [teachers in my school] to be leaders and... they always answered the call so that was very helpful. Even though it was not a paid position for them. It was and, some of them, that convinced them beyond any doubt that they did not want to be an administrator...but they were still were willing to take on the leadership roles. (P.3, 12-15-08, p.12)

Principal 4 revealed:

If you are fortunate enough to happen to be a principal with a Math background or an English background, that’s fine. You can be the ‘know all’ specialist in that group. But you better have some support [resources] for the rest and you better be willing to bring

people [as support staff] in to help you [in addition to] have some excellent administrators. (12-15-08, p.7)

[In regard to non-instructional responsibilities] at my high school I did most of the discipline, parent, and controversial issues. [I] would only come into directing teachers when the other administrators [assistant principals]...wanted somebody to come in and say “Okay, that’s it. We’re doing it.” But what I had was I had a Math person, I had an English person, I had Science person, and I had a Social Studies person who were all experts in their field. (12-15-08, p.8)

This year, I’m even more involved in instructional issues [two of the assistant principals were promoted into principal positions] this year than ever before. But, we’re putting in, typically, [as] a [high school] principal now, I don’t know about other schools but, here, we usually get here in the mornings around, between 6:00 and 7:00 and we’re here till about 6:00 or 7:00 at night. Everyday. (12-15-08, p.9)

Principal 5 reflected, “He [our assistant principal] and I have been working on, we’ve got to go through a presentation, we’re just going through the GAC, Georgia Accrediting Commission, he [assistant principal] and I just finished all of this homework. Behavior, academic. Sometimes it’s just a home problem [for our students]. And, they [students] know I know the parent...and they come in talk...They think I’m the mama at times (12-15-08, p.12). [To meet all of the responsibilities] we have a leadership team that has leaders ... teachers from each [content] area on that team and, you know as well as I know... exactly what teachers in your building you can depend on ... and I think when a person becomes a principal, they need to figure that [teacher leaders] out quickly.” (12-15-08, p.14)

*Data analysis.* The principals described how they met instructional expectations, getting into the classes, being involved in professional learning, working with and collaborating with the middle schools as being key to meeting the instructional requirements. They indicated that since the time when they first entered high school administration, they’ve become more hands-on in the instructional leadership, even though they were more hands-on previously in the facilities and the building management areas of managing a school. The principals also contend that delegation

effectively distributes some of the leadership responsibilities to develop teachers in other areas that will help the school to succeed.

### *Time Distribution*

The response from the principals to the interview question, “How has the distribution of time with these responsibilities changed during your tenure as high school principal working within NCLB mandates?,” enlightened the researcher about the significant daily time commitment inherent in this position. Their responses are recorded below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 shared, “You know, because of the time constraints, you can’t do everything. Even though I’d like...I don’t micromanage, ...I like to know what you’re doing...I like to talk to you about it, but I’m not gonna tell you how to do it. We all get together... as a leadership team... we gonna divide this up between you all ... throughout the year, have to adjust that occasionally. But, being able to delegate, that was a big thing. That was hard to let go of things because I just like doing things.” (12-12-08, p.18)

Principal 2 said, “And, the more teachers who have that strong sense of core beliefs ... in the school, I know beyond any shadow of a doubt that they are in there doing the very best that they can [with the time that we have], whether I’m in the room [observing] or not. So, that’s one of the ways that I get away with the other assigned duties . . . is I can spend time on a problem because I have the teacher-leaders. And, they’ve got to feel the strength not just of being a peer and we’re all in this together...they’ve got to help heal [instructional challenges] and, that’s more important than ever, I think, with No Child Left Behind because ... time ...a luxury... it’s against us.” (12-12-08, p. 18)



Principal 3 stated, “There are never enough hours in the day... the teachers feel so overwhelmed by paperwork . . .and so do administrators.” (12-15-08, p.13)

Principal 5 shared:

Well, I have to work from 6:30 to 5, 5:30 every day. Very long...I feel I have a lot of things [events] in the community that I go to and we have a lot of things [events] here at school. I delegate it [some activities] to others (12-15-08, p.10). I’ll be honest with you, the Superintendent has helped a lot also. He does a lot here...normally he’s over here [helping at our school] anywhere from 2-3 hours a day. (12-15-08, p.11)

*Data analysis.* Distribution of time in these responsibilities have changed during the tenure of the high school principals working within NCLB mandates. The principals contend that they had long days, and worked many hours to accomplish the day-to-day responsibilities involved with managing a school. It became more critical to develop teachers as school leaders and to be involved in the development of instruction. As such, time management for the principals become even more critical in being able to balance planning towards student achievement and managing the other responsibilities of the principalship.

*Interview question 3.1.* What helps you to perform your roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates? This question (Interview question 3.1) was used to identify the attitudes of the principals in regard to performing within the context of NCLB. The participants’ responses strengthened the researcher’s perspective on measures that provides individual support for the administrators. Their responses are recorded below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 reflected the benefit of conferring with staff:

Having competent people there [in this school] to carry out and can get their “hands on” information...there’s no way I can keep all that data here [by myself] (12-12-08, p.20). We [administrators and teachers] also meet regularly, a lot of what we talk about is testing...I love to just sit down and brainstorm...because everybody’s got their own perception ... on any topic, and, you know, we talk about it and we’ve got the data. You

know, “what do you see?” And, “This is what I see. . .” “Here’s how I would approach it. What do you think?” “Well, I wouldn’t think that, what do you think?” “Well, what do you think?”...that’s how we come up with ideas. Then, we present that to our teammates and then we get another angle or several [options]...you know I think that’s how we come up with something [a plan] that’s gonna work. (12-12-08, p.21)

Before you make a wholesale change, you gotta involve everybody that’s gonna be touched by it...if possible...it’s hard now to bring in parents, but we do involve them in our school council and talk about what we’re doing, get their concerns and we do talk to them. So, for the most part...we try to involve as many of us [stakeholders] as possible whenever we’re making a decision about what direction we’re gonna take it and what direction we’re going in. You’re really there to help them. You know, even if you’ve got to go up to them and say, “Look. Just do this for me. Go to this training. See what you can get out of it. Find one thing that you can use and I’ll be happy.” (12-12-08, p. 21-22)

Principal 2 shared, “Having the distributive leadership be met [helps my performance], there are others doing their part. We’re very fortunate right now, what with all the budget cuts and economic crisis, but I had 2 Part-time instructional coaches and so...I know that the Assistant Principal for Instruction had some real help (12-12-08, p. 19). And so I think spreading the skills to not just be within me but to be within others in the building helps me meet the responsibilities and the roles.” (12-12-08, p. 20)

Principal 3 re-called:

Even to the point where we had re-delivery of several [trainings], some of the best professional learning activities we ever had...was the kind where we had faculty members [redeliver]...and not people brought in from the outside to do it [the training]. [Central office would] have all three schools come together for maybe half the day and then for the other half, we would divide by the level, the Elementary, the Middle and the High School. Just worked exceptionally well. So they [administration] were developing instructional leaders. (12-15-08, p.12)

I think delegation probably is the main thing that helped, is to locate the teacher leaders within the building and to, I hate to say “delegate freely” but that’s what it amountsto. (12-15-08, p.13)

[Effective] time management comes into play... there are only 24 hours in a day that you have to take about 27 [hours] and squeeze in more time somewhere to get everything done that you know you have to get done. So, it makes you much more aware of time so that you don’t waste the precious time that you do have and you get every ounce of good use out of 50 seconds or a minute. (12-15-08, p.22)

Principal 4 responded with, “It is a distributive leadership approach and it is a team approach. And, we have certified this school under three Better Seeking Teams. We have the administrators who make up one [team]. The ... Department Heads make up the second one [team] and then the Department Heads and their teachers make up the third one [team]. And, we encourage ... every department [to] meet weekly to discuss instructional issues. And I usually meet with, of course, the teacher, the department head, and their administrator.” (12-15-08, p.9)

Principal 5 asserted, “Professional learning with the teachers was really key [to effectively performing my responsibilities].” (12-15-08, p.16)

*Data analysis.* The principals conveyed collectively that what helps them to perform their roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates was providing for an environment of continued school improvement. The school improvement towards student achievement was accomplished through collaboration, understanding what the middle school was doing, developing teachers in their skill areas, and incorporating a distributive leadership style into the school setting. Both formal and informal professional learning, was key to helping principals to perform their roles and responsibilities.

Several themes emerged throughout their responses to elaborate on performing their roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates. Specifically, Principals 2, 3, 4 and 5 conveyed the significance of learning from other places/schools. Principal 3 elaborated on time management as being key to effective performance. Distributive leadership and teacher development in instructional leadership were identified by Principals 3 and 4. Principal 1 conveyed teacher development as it relates to setting boundaries, talking to all of the staff with respect, understanding the differences that each teacher brings, and working together for the

same goal. Principal 1 further elaborated on the importance of collaboration, and the expertise teachers can share relative to brainstorming instructional solutions in working with students.

The following interview question 3.2, presented perspectives to the researcher about how the NCLB mandates in Georgia were perceived by the principals in this study.

*Interview question 3.2.* What are your thoughts about the NCLB standards-based accountability system that is in place in Georgia? How do you think it will affect education in general and the position of Georgia high school principal? What experiences have you had that caused you to believe NCLB has affected your role(s) as a high school principal.

### *Responses*

In discussing the thoughts about the NCLB standards-based accountability, Principal 1 said:

...I think it's [NCLB] really helped us in some ways but in other ways, it's hurt us...I think [it's] unrealistic, that by 2014, 100% of our students are gonna pass everything... that kind of goes against the grain into differentiation and you're gonna have a whole new group of kids here that are gonna have the same issues with home life issues. [It's] one thing ... to make 100%, but is it realistic? You know, and with that in mind, you know, I'll pit these teachers at this school and these students and these parents against any, comparison to any school in the state (12-12-08, p.24)... I guess that's the biggest thing about the AYP... it's like trying to steer a rocket and you're sitting on it...and, you know, once that thing is blasted off, it's hard to change it's destination. (12-12-08, p.28)

Principal 2 responded with a declaration as to the inherent value of NCLB:

I don't think there's a school educator I've ever met, myself included, that doesn't believe in the "real" theory behind No Child Left Behind. No child, no principal that I know...wants to neglect a group of children. They [educators] may not know how and they may give up too quickly but...the idea of No Child Left Behind they [educators] don't have a problem with. I do have a problem with educating [by] mandates...brought on by politicians who say that they are the education governor, the education whatever. Federal Government gives 5% of our budget, operating budget in [our] County is from the Federal Government. And, how much of what we do, especially under No Child Left Behind is dictated by that [federal government]? A lot more than 5%." (12-12-08, p. 20)

In elaborating about the accountability system, Principal 2 also noted, "I believe in the accountability system. I believe that we should be more accountable to our taxpayers, to our communities, to all the stakeholders. There's just those parts like

the fact that [the] child who ... who gets that Special Ed[ucation] diploma who is in a wheelchair who cannot speak, cannot walk and will receive, according to their IEP [individual education plan], a Special Ed diploma, we're saying, you know, that doesn't count for graduation rate. And, should we use that [special education] diploma to hide kids or get kids through [school] that should have gotten a regular diploma and just be satisfied with your Special Ed[ucation] diploma? Certainly not!...so I totally disagree with that. I don't like one measure, the one-shot deal in high school to pass the graduation test. It doesn't take into account that you could have a growing or improving graduation rate but we're at 80, or 79.1% graduation rate. And, when you're making AYP, we're taking a big ball of wax. . . in a neighboring county of ours has less than a 50% graduation rate." (12-12-08, p. 21)

But I believe in what Georgia, sort of what they did, but even more so, a growth model . . . an index number to say this is making adequate progress. But, you know, next year... you [as principal] shouldn't be satisfied and make it [AYP] just because we did last year. We should continue to have increased, all of us increase our goals...unfortunately, and there may be a school somewhere in the country that never would have looked at this stuff [data] if there weren't No Child Left Behind." (12-12-08, p. 22)

Principal 3 said, "I think proof of it [NCLB results] comes when we do all of the worldwide testing and we compare ourselves [United States] to other nations. We're in coverage mode. Other countries are in learning and discovery modes so that when they test their students, they do what we 'say' we do. We say we want to teach critical thinking skills. We want to teach for meaning. And we want to teach things that they can connect one subject to another subject and the great ideas, and the big ideas and the enduring understanding ...But we don't do that! Now, the other nations do. That's why they outscore us on every [standardized] test [that] they do. (12-15-08, p.14) So, I think that in this state [Georgia], accountability is not accountable." (12-15-08, p.15)

Principal 4 declared, "We don't seem, in Georgia, to focus on one thing long enough to get it done to see if it's working or not working before we move to something new. We're constantly, particularly the last 10 years, changing from one program to another. Whether it's "Reading First" or something else. We start it before it really has time to mature and determine whether it really works or not, we give it up and go to something else in just a minute. You

know, there's a budget constraint...or something goes out of favor or personnel changes...And so...a lot of those changes are unnecessary and counterproductive, I think, in developing a continuous system of school improvement (12-15-08, p.10). I think the State has structured such a situation now in this No Child Left Behind, and this deadline of 2014. Now, what's gonna happen in 2014? You think we're gonna be 100%? I don't." (12-15-08, p.12)

Principal 4 also mentioned concern about the State [Georgia Department of Education]:

...they [teachers] feel like the State [Georgia Department of Education] has completely lost touch. And those people who work for the State. The reality of what's going on out here. We're seeing kids that are coming from tremendous numbers of single family homes. Kids that are faced with tremendous economic problems or disadvantages of one kind or another. You know, we have both extremes in this school. We have kids who are wealthy and affluent. Who have all the resources in the world. We have kids who are extremely poor. Who have no resources...I see more kids who have been abandoned by their families and that are allowed to just simply almost live on the street at 15, 16, 17 years old. The State makes more allowances for the differences in schools. This school, performed at this same level, as they do a school in the most affluent section of Gwinnett County [urban county in Georgia]. They would expect Warren County [rural county in Georgia] to perform at the same level and it's just not realistic. And, when you put unrealistic expectations on teachers, then they know that. They know they're not realistic. It becomes almost foolishness to them. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.13)

Principal 5 contended, "I think No Child Left Behind is good. I don't think that it's gonna accomplish what it's supposed to accomplish because every child cannot get a high school diploma. They might can get a GED, but all of 'em won't be able to get a high school diploma even if it's for family reasons or reasons they have themselves...when I came along and my mother expected every one of us [my siblings] to graduate from high school. That was an expectation. There was no choice on quitting school...I did have two brothers that quit and joined the Service... Back then, you could do that. But, I [as principal] "fail" these children now, they really don't have an option other than you're either gonna get your diploma or you're gonna get your GED because...if you don't go further than that, then you're gonna end up living off of minimum wage and that's gonna be paycheck to paycheck and it's not gonna be a happy

life. That's a real life lesson for them. (12-15-08, p.15). Education in the United States has gone down and we've got to get it back up... We've got to restore the rigor that we had 40 years ago, or longer. (12-15-08, p.16) You've got to challenge children. We've stopped challenging them. We haven't done that for a while." (12-15-08, p.17)

*Data analysis.* The principals conveyed several perspectives about the NCLB standards-based accountability system that is in place in Georgia. Primarily, it is particularly beneficial with its focus on subgroups and being data driven can help to refine the instruction to ensure we're meeting the needs of the students in their areas of deficiency. However, the administrators contend that it is unrealistic to believe that with limited funding to provide the resources needed for the varied subgroups, that there will be 100% proficiency of all students by the year 2014. There are factors principals can't control such as students transferring to their school from other counties. Whether students come to the test having eaten breakfast, being prepared for the test, or even transferring from the school after they've failed the test, for which the school is now held accountable for the test scores of these students.

### *Education*

When presented with the interview question, "How do you think it [NCLB] will affect education in general and the position of Georgia high school principal?", the respondents provided the researcher with a personal point of view as to the [NCLB] impact on the principleshap. Their responses are recorded below.

### *Responses*

In discussing the affect NCLB, in general, had on education and the position of the Georgia high school principal, it was conveyed that there was increased stress on principals to depend too much on the teachers. Principal 1 said:

No Child Left Behind has supported you [the principal] in being more data driven and being more collaborative with the teachers (P.1, 12-12-08, p.24). So, you know, I feel the stress of having to depend on my teachers. I can meet with them and collaborate with them but they're the ones on the front lines and, you know, I just have to depend on them to do it. You know, and I have confidence in them to do it but, in the back of your mind, you're thinking, "Okay, what have we done?" And you know, there's only so much they can do in a year's time with a group. Hopefully, have we put in the corrections and changes that are gonna be effective for this group, because really all we have to work on or go by is the data we've gathered on this current group. (12-12-08, p.27).

Principal 2 further emphasized the manifestation of stress, "[NCLB] pushes all of them [principal] to a higher level. They [principals] just have to get out...a lot of principals that were eligible for retirement ...they could have coasted like in years past, they would've just stuck around until age 60 or something . . . Um, but, there are those who know that they're not gonna be able to really meet the demands of No Child Left Behind and there are many that have chosen to retire." (12-12-08, p. 22)

Principal 3 expressed concern about failing the students and the negative impact of NCLB:

Because I think we're still in coverage mode [what's required for the testing]. Or, what's applied from the textbook because I think they're [teachers are] still too tied to the textbook. . . I don't think we've got to the point where we decide on what a 4<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts student ought to know and decide that this is the curriculum for that 4<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts student and teach that. I think whatever that 4<sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts textbook says I think is what we teach. (12-15-08, p.14)

[As educators] we can't say, and be truthful to ourselves [that] what the students ought to know and what they ought to be able to do when they finish this [coursework] standard [is always happening]. Well, to use an old cliché, "We can talk the talk but we can't walk the walk." And our students are the losers. It's kind of like, you know... if you try to plant an oak tree in this little pot, the first little wind that comes along is gonna wash it away. 'Cause it's not deeply rooted. It's the same thing with our kids. They're not deeply rooted! 'Cause we don't teach them in-depth learning as the people in Europe do. As the people in Asia do. As the people in Japan do. We don't do that. (12-15-08, p.15)

Either they're [government officials] gonna throw the No Child Left Behind thing out the window...if we just do what we said we're going to do, we'd be okay, but we're not doing that. We just took the Quality Core Curriculum and made it into new [Georgia Performance] standards. We're still trying to cover the same amount of stuff. And we said that the Georgia Performance Standards would get rid of the Quality Core



curriculum and that we would do in-depth teaching. But we don't. And, part of it is just out of habit because we've been in coverage mode for so long. Even when the results show us that it's working, we still want to change it. (12-15-08, p.16)

Principal 5 also indicated a concern about not thoroughly serving the students, "If those teachers are not teaching those standards, then those children are not gonna do well on those tests and that has been hard in our school, I don't know about others, to get across to the teachers. Some of them have had to learn the hard way ...if they do not each those standards, those students are not gonna do well on those tests. You can't teach everything and they've got to start trying to feel that they can teach everything. (12-15-08, p.15) I think that we're [principals] gonna have to continue giving the teachers training. The principal is gonna have to recognize the teachers in his school that need that extra training and he's gonna have to expect them to get it and if they don't, they're gonna have to find something else to do. I mean, that's the bottom line on that. Because training is the answer." (12-15-08, p.17)

*Data analysis.* Evident themes that emerged, specifically reflected Principals 1, 2, and 5 having expressed stress on depending too much on the teachers for overall student achievement. Principal 3 conveyed a perspective that we continue to fail the students and the negative impact of teaching to the test, and not in-depth learning. Principal 1 elaborated on the sense of urgency and being unable to meet the federal deadline and it's presence as an unrealistic goal since each year the students change.

The principals believed that NCLB affected education and the position of the Georgia high school principal by causing their role of instructional leadership to be more data driven and a primary focus to ensure student achievement. Principals collaborated with teachers to ensure that their strengths are identified and that weaknesses are addressed through professional learning and other opportunities. It was anticipated that the increased accountability

will contribute to attrition in the principalship through retirement and teacher leaders not wanting to pursue positions in administration.

*Experience(s) Through NCLB Which Affected Principal's Role(s)*

Principals answered the interview question, "What experiences have you had that caused you to believe NCLB has affected your role(s) as a high school principal?" Their responses, noted below, provided the researcher with their role perceptions specific to NCLB and its mandates. Their responses are indicated below.

*Responses*

Principal 1 mentioned the difficulty in meeting achievement goals due to unrealistic standards:

The public out there looks at us [through media AYP reports] like we're a poor school and we're not...for example, in Science, when I first got to this school an assistant principal and we started looking at data, 'cause, like the rest, we actually had that impression that the school's administration, was at the forethought before we started gathering data earlier. And one of the things we gathered, we looked at, was the testing information in Science. We were, like, in the mid-70s in Science. And, this past year, 70s, like 76 or 78% of our students were passing this test. Just this past year, we were 94%. It's hard when you're fighting on two fronts, you know, and, when you're fighting...in 360 [degrees] from all directions when you've got all these subgroups. Not saying that we don't need to look at those [subgroups], you know, it just makes it, uh [overwhelming]. (12-12-08, p.25)

I've got a tough job to do...there are already issues of not making AYP. And, you know, I come to school ready to get into it, let's see how much progress we can make today or this week. You know, it's really, it's a dark cloud earlier but it really doesn't loom over me that way or depress me. Uh, it's just, you know, you get home and see you've got 80 plants to plant. You know. Oh, it's gonna be hard but, you know what, I can get it done [start planting]. So, that's the just way I look at it. We're gonna get it done. It's gonna take time. It's gonna be hard. (12-12-08, p.31)

Principal 3 also reflected upon the unrealistic standards to meet the goals,

"My brother-in-law teaches Georgia History at North Georgia Military School. His students have always done exceptionally well on that part of the test until this year. And he was forced to change [his way of teaching] based on State mandate. They [students] performed miserably. Miserably. At the end of the last year. And, now he's being faulted for their test scores. So, he's

like, “Why do you blame me? They were doing well until you forced me to do something I didn’t want to do [didn’t work with my students.” “You told me I had to change and do it your way. Now, when I do it your way, they’re not performing as well. But I did it that way because you taught me to. So, don’t blame me for it. Blame yourselves.” (12-15-08, p.17)

Principal 2 expanded on the need of distributive leadership as inherent in her role as principal:

I know one ... [high school principal] who had [the] greatest influence on my life, he would just ask me, “[Teacher]... who’s the leader...researcher in your field of education?” And, I’m like, “Whoa! I’m a second year teacher. I don’t know.” And that’s probably one of the reasons that I read and study. . . because, you know, he [my principal] let me know that that was my responsibility to know those kinds of things. But, um, and he believed in kids. That was very obvious, that he very much believed in students. He was [an African American principal]...I was in high school the year of mandatory integration (12-12-08, p. 15)

.... he was my principal in high school and I worked for him. So, a lot of things about core beliefs and what leadership is I take from him. But, I watched him and he was a very good manager of the school. And he did distributive leadership. He knew what was happening everywhere, but he had different people who were in charge of the busses, and he had some key teachers that he counted on for instruction. But, as far as being truly the overall instructional leader that we have to be today, he wasn’t.” (12-12-08, p. 15)

Everybody’s [teachers] not at the same step [in instruction] along the way. Different kids always jump higher than other kids. It’s critical that all principals have a certain core skill base ...that’s why we’ve got to develop the professional skills of leaders. And, be a change agent. And manage for all those leadership roles that exist out there. A lot of framework but I don’t see any of these people like boards of education, superintendents, governors, doing anything about development. (12-12-08, p. 25)

Principal 5 expressed concern about failing the students, unmet goals due to unrealistic standards, and the impact a principal has on others:

From the standards based classroom...and the test scores...if we don’t make AYP consistently...we fail ...and the state will take over and we won’t have a job. (12-15-08, p.17) We can’t keep on failing. I’ll be honest with you, [our school was in] needs improvement [for] 5 years. We got ready for the 6<sup>th</sup> year [of] needs improvement when we failed out, and we’ve gotta deal with it. And we got out. That was, what, 4 years ago? Something like that? And, this year [2008] we didn’t make AYP but we were not [in] needs improvement because of Safe Harbor. We did do better...and showed positive improvement. So, you know, I feel the stress [of NCLB]. I feel it. But, you

know, that part doesn't worry me as much as it worries me that a child is not learning. (12-15-08, p.18) Because that's why we're here. For the children. With No Child Left Behind and all that, we need to worry about it [NCLB]...[and] worry about the child. (12-15-08, p.19)

*Data analysis.* Themes that revealed themselves were varied. Principal 5 reflected failing the student. Principals 1, 3, and 5 revealed unmet goals due to unrealistic standards. Principal 1 conveyed a dependence on the political climate, while Principal 5 noted the impact that you [as principal] have on others. Additionally, Principal 2 expanded on distributive leadership as it relates to delegation and observing teachers.

The principals have contended that their experiences in the last 7 years support their belief that NCLB has affected their role of high school principal by being more data driven in their instructional leadership. In addition, the high school principal has to be continuously cognizant of their school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status to monitor achievement of their students and incorporated collaboration and distributive leadership to address problems. They contend that affecting the tests scores is a shared responsibility between teachers and principals.

This next question (Interview question 3.3) was designed to identify the expectations of state and local officials and the implication on the time spent by principals.

*Interview question 3.3.* Since NCLB, have the expectations of the state, superintendent, and board changed about how you should spend your time and where you should place your emphasis as a high school principal? How have they changed? Are there differences among the expectations of these three entities (state, superintendent, board)? Please give me some examples of these differences.

#### *Expectations From the State and Local Authority*

The response of the principals to the interview question, "Since NCLB, have the expectations of the state, superintendent, and board changed about how you should spend your time and where you should place your emphasis as a high school principal?", provided the

researcher with their perception of state and local officials relative to this federal mandate. The responses are reflected below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded with concern relative to unrealistic expectations, and becoming more aware of your school's needs:

...It's more or less the realization that, you know...you're preparing for a test or studying for a test or a game or for anything, preparing for a meeting. You know, you want to make sure you can answer most questions and look confident. (12-12-08, p.28)

To know where you need to put your attention...being a principal . . . you don't stay on one thing for weeks at a time for the whole time. You may spend weeks on it, you know, an hour every day, but there are other things you have to concentrate and deal with. But, you know, it's up to you to determine what's gonna take up your time. (12-12-08, p.30)

Principal 2 reflected concern about principals becoming the scapegoats within NCLB:

Well, it's like politically and right now it's probably even gonna get worse. My school [with central office support] just come into its own and we've been looking at elementary schools [standardized test scores] and reading scores and all that on a national level for a long time. [In so far as] high schools, President Bush has made great demands on high schools. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, talking about kids being prepared . . . for the future. I think high schools are the new "whipping boy" . . . I think we're going to be beaten up. I think, I'm hearing a lot of negative press on principals. . . and I think there, that that's going to be where the club falls, it's going to be on the heads of principals. . .and...it's gonna force more and more [principal] shortages and there's a lack of professional development. With this new day of accountability, has anyone provided statewide [professional learning] for high school principals? Or for any principals [to meet the NCLB mandates]? (12-12-08, p. 23)

Principal 3 noted, "I don't think they've [expectations] changed. I think they [local officials] say they've changed because I think it's politically correct for them to say so. (12-15-08, p.18)

Principal 4 elaborated on the need for principals to evolve and change with the needs of their school system:

I think it's very important [to build longevity with administrators]. I think we would be much better off. We just, for example changed superintendents. He's been here 9 days. He was let go. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.11)

Well, politics. That's another issue. A person has to be able to deal with the politics of it and the reality of it [NCLB] and that's critical. So you've got to be able to adjust to that. You've got to, you have to be able to convince them to allow you to continue doing what you believe is best for your school. I have been fortunate to be able to do that with most of 'em. I don't see how you can do that when you yourself have only been there a year or two. (12-15-08, p.12)

Principal 5 indicated the presence of professional growth, "The [instructional] methods they [teachers] are using, the skills that they [teachers] are using [are key to fulfilling the expectations] (12-15-08, p.19). They've [the board also] had to learn a lot also [about test scores]...because they did not understand test scores at all...nor data. A lot of times when we [principals] want something, it had to be data driven and ultimately they're [the board is] supposed to give it to us. (12-15-08, p.19)

*Data analysis.* Several themes emerged throughout the responses of the principals.

Principal 1 reflected unmet goals due to unrealistic standards and becoming more aware of your standards needs. Principal 3 noted that there was very little change in the expectations. Principal 4 indicated needing to change with the needs of the school system, and Principal 5 reflected upon the significance of professional growth.

The principals contend that the expectations of the state, superintendent, and board's expectations of where they should place the emphasis of their responsibilities have not really changed. It is clear that the emphasis, should and always has been on student achievement and that the principal maintains the ultimate responsibility and accountability for their school. Are we helping students to learn? It is believed that the expectations are lofty under NCLB, however, all agree that long after NCLB may be replaced by another initiative, principals and their teachers will still be working towards student success.

*Changes in Expectations From the State and Local Authority*

When asked, “How have they [expectations] changed?”, the principals’ responses helped to highlight their perceptions relative to the expectations of state and local officials. Their responses are indicated below.

*Responses*

Principal 1 said, “I’m prepared to answer [the board]...but, you know, that may be 5 seconds worth of [answering] a question. The rest of the night in the Board meeting, they’re [board members] gonna be asking questions about instruction, about data. You know, what’s our graduation rate? Well, what was it 3 years ago? What changes have you seen in your special population? What are you gonna do about it? What are the things that you’ve tried that have worked? What are the things that you’ve tried. . .so, knowing [the answers] they might not ask all those questions. But, you know, I guess to answer your question, they have not, word-for-word, said, “Alright, here’s what you need to be doing now.” (12-12-08, p.29) I guarantee [if] you look in your policy book in your county, you gonna see that one of the policies in there, or procedures, is that the principal is responsible for everything in that school. (12-12-08, p.30)

Principal 2 contended very little change in the expectations:

We’re [principals] just supposed to know how to lead in this era of accountability ... ‘Cause you know you’ve gotta go figure it out...It’s too important today. I don’t think it [student achievement] can be left alone. We need the State Board of Education [to add to the] state budget, you know, we never have gotten back the Professional Learning Budget [important to school improvement]. So I’m thinking that one thing that I really differ with the Superintendent and the State Board of Education...they think that by just expecting more, they’re going to get more...because you raise the bar doesn’t mean anybody’s gonna jump higher [than they’re currently able to jump]. (12-12-08, p. 24)

*Data analysis.* The principals contend that the expectations of the state, superintendent, and board’s expectations of where they should place the emphasis of their responsibilities have not really changed. With the use of distributive leadership in the schools, that helps to build the

principal to become more familiar with the data and able to answer questions from these three entities.

It is clear that the emphasis, should and always has been on student achievement and that the principal maintains the ultimate responsibility and accountability for their school. It is believed that the expectations are lofty under NCLB, however, all agree that long after NCLB may be replaced by another initiative, principals and their teachers will still be working towards student success and overall school achievement.

### *Differences in Expectations Among Entities*

The principals were asked a follow-up question, “Are there differences among the expectations of these three entities (state, superintendent, board)?” Their response enabled the researcher to determine if directives from these entities were a new influence on the principal.

### *Responses*

In response, Principal 4 shared the following in regard to differences between states:

I went to Texas. I looked at the [school in] a school district. They wrote a book. Made a lot of money with it [their improvement initiatives]...they had written into their approach in Texas, they did not test Special Ed. Well, in Texas, in that district, over half the district were migrant workers who went back to Mexico. Sometimes during the year. So, when they got through with it, what they ended up testing in there was about 30%, 35% of the whole student body. . .who happened to be the model special living, most affluent school, frankly, white kids in school who weren't Mexicans going back and forth...and, so they had all these big numbers they could roll out and, uh, we came back, well great. That will be great. We won't test [students] and we'll do those and we won't have a deficit. (12-15-08, p.14)

A simple thing like counting a GED as a high school diploma. Most states do that. Georgia does not. I have kids get a GED, they're counted as dropouts. I go to Florida, and get a GED, a student is counted as having completed high school. So, there's been a lot of inequity in comparison. How it gets compared. And I think the State could have done a better job in rolling out a more equitable system for measuring school performance. I have no problem with accountabilities and a school being held accountable. But there should have been some guidelines, some way, and it's a wonderful thing to say, “Well, I don't care what. All I care is that we're gonna be successful.” Everybody's gonna be in college and going to Harvard, scholarships, getting those grants and all those things. And, you can say that. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.14)



Is it even realistic to say those things? I don't think so. Now, most people at the State department are not gonna wanna hear that, I don't think. And, it's just like right now. Having this new, single track diploma [in Georgia]. College prep only. Is that fair for kids? You know. It [type of diploma] can't have anything to do with kids being smart. It [should have] to do with what the personal goal of a child is. If a child happens to have a sincere interest in being a cosmetologist, so be it. If they want to be an auto mechanic, so be it. But, yet, we're [with state directives] now gonna force this kid, that had no interest in that whatsoever, to say you're gonna take Math I, II, III, IV and you're gonna take English. You're gonna get 4 [years] of those. Things are gonna be great. You're gonna get a college preparatory diploma and you'll be the only auto mechanic with a college preparatory diploma. You'll be it. You'll get a college [preparatory] grade. Be a mechanic. What we did here [for a time in Georgia], which I thought was a good solution, we made all of our children sign up for both. You've gotta be dual sealed. You've gotta be on [both] a college prep and a career tech seal both. You can't find a teacher anywhere hardly that would tell you that every single child is going to college. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.15-16)

*Data analysis.* Although it was not evidenced that there were differences between state, superintendent, and board expectations, it was noted that requirements to meet the mandates of NCLB differed between states. This difference in how states reflect their graduation rates, for example, may be an erroneous reflection of the numbers of students who've completed high school, thereby making some states or systems appear more deficient than others in accord to AYP mandates.

*Interview question 3.4.* How do you envision the changes in the roles and responsibilities of high school principals in Georgia in the next 5 to 10 years? How do you believe NCLB will impact on remaining principals? In what way(s)? This question (interview question 3.4) was designed to explore perceived changes in the roles and the NCLB future impact on principals.

#### *Changes in the Roles of Georgia High School Principals*

The principals answered the interview question, "How do you envision the changes in the roles and responsibilities of high school principals in Georgia in the next 5 to 10 years?" Their responses provided the researcher with clarity on their awareness about the evolution of the principal's role.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded with staying current on data and research, and pursuing extra training:

You know, you ask a regular teacher about No Child Left Behind and they'll groan. And, but, being an administrator, you know, I think a lot of teachers, too will see that there are good things about it [NCLB] (12-12-08, p.32).

It may have been just my perspective because, just looking at principal, you're not always, gosh, I just don't remember them working as hard as I did. You know, I don't know if there's gonna be that many changes [with NCLB]. I just feel like...principals just have to be able to change with what's going on [in education]. I'm not gonna sit here and predict that it's gonna get that much harder because I guess all that is relative. You know, and our outlook on it. And I don't think anything is impossible. So, you know, in the next 5 years, I think it's gonna be just as challenging as it is now...hopefully administrators to come will be flexible, too, and be able to move with it. (12-12-08, p.33-34)

Principal 2 said, "I really fear...what will happen...but, if you're a new principal and you're coming into a school that has, you know, made AYP, and you only have [a small amount of time], and you're in the year 2010, 2011, 2012 and you know that the end is in sight but it's too close to be your problem . . . [you think] it may be my fault [if they don't make AYP]. I'm [as a new principal] just taking this school. I think it's [NCLB] really helped launch what we were trying to do [improve achievement]." (12-12-08, p. 25-26)

Principal 3 gave their reflection of evolving and changing with the school system:

... in the next side of 10 years, the roles in regards to high school principals will change and they will change because No Child Left Behind will change. My guess is parts of it [NCLB] will be tossed out or be remade so much so that we will not quite recognize it in its current form. Because education is more like a living organism. Like an ecosystem. So it evolves. And that's the same thing that's gonna happen to principals in the next 5 – 10 years. As No Child Left Behind changes, principals will change, teachers will change. As students change, we will change and teachers will change. Um, the students are one thing, actually that have changed since I left. 5 years from now, they will have changed again. Because we evolve with everything else around us as we change. So, to that extent, high school principals and their roles and their responsibilities will change as

everything else changes around them. Exactly what it's gonna look like? I don't have a clue. (12-15-08, p.20)

Principal 4 mentioned the importance of data and research as well the short term nature of principals in their high school position:

The new principals that are coming on board are gonna really have to have a lot of skills on working with data and research based programs and being able to look at their schools and determine what best practices are going to be most effective. It's [principalship] a lot more focused on instruction and so, if I'm correct and the fear's now that most high school principals are relatively short term in their positions, with 3 or 4 years of serving a school and then they move on for one reason or another, and they're gonna be at a disadvantage because they have a relatively short time to convince a faculty to travel down that road of school improvement that they may think [its] appropriate. (12-15-08, p.10)

Principal 5 responded with insight about community involvement, "I think that that would mean more involvement by the community. Everybody on the outside's got to become more involved with what their child is doing in school and that's gonna be hard to accomplish with a lot of parents. We're gonna have to watch very closely what the teachers are doing in the classroom and they're gonna have to figure out how to reach those children that don't respond as well as others. You know, those that are at risk. We've really got to reach out to those groups." (12-15-08, p.20)

*Data analysis.* Themes that emerged through this question were reflected through Principal 1 and their emphasis on data and research, staying current, and getting extra training. Principal 3 focused on evolving and changing as needed with the school system. Principal 4 elaborated on data and research, whereas Principal 5 highlighted the changes in the roles of high school principals through community involvement and more skilled workers.

The principals expressed envisioning some changes in the roles and responsibilities of high school principals in Georgia in the next 5 to 10 years. They reflected upon the roles as continuing to evolve, encompassing more flexibility and serving as change agents as they adapt

to their students and teaching staff to accomplish student achievement.

### *NCLB Impact on Principals*

When interviewed, the principals answered the interview question, “How do you believe NCLB will impact on remaining principals? In what ways?” Their responses reflected for the researcher a perspective on the future impact of NCLB on those who choose to remain in the principalship. Their responses are recorded below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 indicated and observance of the political climate and the need to be flexible in adapting for student achievement, “In the next 5-10 years, yeah, there’s gonna have to be some changes...because, again, you know, I’m so afraid that when, you know, if we get a different President, you know, like that, that they may try to get rid of all the things that we’re doing here [as a result of NCLB] (12-12-08, p.32). It’s [principal] gotta be willing to be flexible and change and if it’s not your [original] philosophy, then ... try to look at it from that point. Maybe there is something good in that [flexibility] (12-12-08, p.33). Someone [a new principal] coming in that’s not flexible and not gonna look at it [student achievement] with open eyes, then they’ll [superintendent] replace ‘em. I mean you’ve gotta [as principal] put people in the right places [in the school] and you’ve got to know what’s going on with it [instruction] ... I think that’s like a mechanic keeping a machine running.” (P.1, 12-12-08, p.34)

Principal 2 also conveyed an awareness of the political climate:

The platform for public education right now...we’re in limbo, really, waiting for the political winds to pick us back up and decide how they’re going to pull us [along] and so I’m afraid that new principals...coming in the next year or two, or those that are even possibly here now, [whom] are just beginning their careers could feel that “it’s not my problem.” So, it takes those that have really been here since 2002, 2003 and are still going to be the ones there in 2014. . .that are going to feel the full brunt of it. Those [long-term] principals feel the sense of urgency. (12-12-08, p. 26)

Principal 3 indicated an impractical inability to meet the 2014 AYP deadline:

There are parts of [the] No Child Left Behind [Act]. . .well, let me just put it this way, you have these students that are in a particular category because you acknowledge the fact that ...they are cognitively impaired in some way. And you admit that. And you admit it as if it's a fact. On the other hand, you say, "They must perform like all other kids." There is something wrong with those two statements. They cannot coexist. So it's [NCLB] flawed from the very beginning. Are we gonna have 100% anything [all students achieve proficiency]? (12-15-08, p.19)

Principal 5 said, "I think it will have an impact on those that [new principals] are coming in. I think that colleges that are training leadership people are gonna have to address that [data analysis]. And, if they do, then those people [new principals] will be ready...ready to accept the responsibility and do what they need to do to become good leaders. Because I don't think they're gonna come in good leaders. That's a part of the learning process (12-15-08, p.20). They [new principals] need to do like the teacher [training programs]. Get the practicum [internship or job shadowing] working with the principal...nothing can take the place of experience. (P.5, 12-15-08, p.21)

*Data analysis.* The themes that emerged through this question reflected through Principal 1 the need for flexibility and the willingness to change. Principals 1 and 2 noted, the future depends on the political climate. Principal 3 indicated an inability to meet deadline imposed by NCLB, and Principal 5 conveyed the continued significance of data and research.

The findings from an analysis of the data in this question reflects that principals believed that NCLB will impact their roles and responsibilities in several ways. In an effort to accomplish AYP, the roles and responsibilities of principals will continue to evolve through serving as change agents and being more involved in the instructional leadership of their school. Principals will continue to participate in professional learning along with their teachers to ensure the development of teacher leaders and to sharpen their skills as instructional leaders. Nonetheless,

the findings also reflect that with the increased accountability and adherence to research-based practices, aspiring principals should be oriented to data analysis and differentiation instructional strategies. Additionally, many principals may pursue retirement because of achieving the NCLB mandates appearing to be a consuming process.

*Demands, Challenges, Experiences and Recommendations (Research sub question 3)*

What, if any, job-related pressures/demands, do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB? This question was designed to enlighten the researcher about the stressors related to the job that principals perceive as existing as a result of NCLB.

*Interview question 4.1.* What NCLB-related changes have had the most positive impact on your role and why? What NCLB-related changes have had the most detrimental or negative impact on your role and why?

*NCLB Positive Impact on the Principal's Role*

The responses of the principals to the interview question, “What NCLB-related changes have had the most positive impact on your role and why?”, provided for the researcher an awareness of how this mandate could make principals stronger as school leaders. Their responses are indicated below.

*Responses*

Principal 1 responded with, “More strong instructionally.”(P.1, 12-12-08, p.35)  
Principal 2, conveyed that NCLB, “Gave teachers a sense of urgency...to do a better job.” (P.2, 12-12-08, p. 27) Principal 3 contended with the focus on special populations, “The positive impact, as you’ve suggested, are those, it forces us to look at those segments of the population that we probably would have overlooked were it not for No Child Left Behind, such as the...the black male population, the socioeconomic disadvantaged population, the minority population. In

particular the Special Education population is doing a disservice to the whole country by forcing you to say on the one hand that this group needs special attention because it's cognitively impaired and in the same breath would say that they've got to perform like everybody else...Well, that's just ridiculous. Now, that is the most mind-blowing thing of all of No Child Left Behind.” (P.3, 12-15-08, p.21)

Principal 4 expanded on the issue of special populations, “The positive definitely is forcing administrators and teachers and the community, frankly, has become increasingly aware of what AYP is and how is it obtained . . . and it forces . . . everybody to go back and revisit the subgroups that are causing that to happen and it's primarily [special education] children and it's also our economically disadvantaged children. And those are community issues...So, it's making us do some positive things in the community, to address, frankly, our PR and our image in the community and also the kids who have to go to school here. We're doing some things for them we probably would not have done otherwise. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.17)

*Data analysis.* The themes that emerged through this question reflected through Principal 1, stronger instructional skills. Principal 2 highlighted the sense of urgency. Principals 3 and 4 focused on special populations. The NCLB-related changes that have had the most positive impact on the principals' roles have been reported as their having to be focused on instruction; the instructional leadership being more data driven to address the needs of the student subgroups; and, developing the teachers into the instructional leadership of the school.. In addition, it was reported that developing the instructional leadership amongst teachers have proven to be effective in maintaining the vision of the school and its mission as there are staff turnover in the classrooms. The findings also reflected the principals being more involved in

public relations to address the AYP status of their school, involved more parents and the community in school initiatives, and conveyed the accomplishments of the students and faculty.

### *NCLB Negative Impact on Principal's Role*

In answering the interview question, “What NCLB related changes have had the most detrimental or negative impact on your role and why?”, the principals provided the researcher with insight as to inhibiting factors of NCLB upon their leadership. Their responses are noted below.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 noted areas that needed improvement:

Well, you know, right in the middle of this [NCLB mandates], we [Georgia high schools] have Math I curriculum coming in [beginning this school year] (P.1, 12-12-08, p.26) Seeing the good [in instruction] as well as what needs to be improved. Um, I hate to call it “the bad things”. I like to call it “the challenging things.” (P.1, 12-12-08, p.36)

Principal 2 also highlighted things that need to improve in following AYP guidelines:

The detrimental or negative impact is, I do spend some resources and some time figuring out, “Okay, prior to a test, what’s the best way to spend some of our resources to get the best bang for our buck.” I like to say, you know, we always look at the best practice over time and don’t rule by AYP, but there are those things that we do, that still helps, pushes the mix a little. And getting the best resources I know is the standard for AYP. . .and I think that’s a negative. I do it and I’ll continue to do it *laughing*. Is it true real learning? No . . .it’s just getting you those one or two more points that you might need. And I would love to not spend any time just trying to make AYP. (P.2, 12-12-08, p. 27)

Principal 4 expressed a negative impact as the poor image in the community:

The negative [with NCLB] is that it puts a real negative impact in the community, the business community if they happen to be, as they are here in this community, in a school where the only public high school, there are 2 private schools here, which also have a negative impact on us, because of that, I think it creates an unfair image of the quality of your school that may or may not be true. Now, you may be a terrible school. You can be a great school with a good solid core academic program of your college bound and your career track kids and by virtue of one of those subgroups... you don’t make AYP. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.17)



Principal 5, however, noted, “You know, really and truly, when it comes down to it, I have not really felt any negative, I don’t see a negative impact on me. Not really. Because everything that got done has helped me on all of the training, you know, I enjoy it. You know, I learned so much.” (P.5, 12-15-08, p.22)

*Data analysis.* The principals reported NCLB related changes that have had the most detrimental or negative impact on their role as including the AYP indicator of graduation rates because it’s defined differently in various states. It was indicated that the focus on test scores and that a school can improve in an area, and not make gains in another area to provide significant pressure for principals, is detrimental to school improvement efforts. It was also reported that being able to meet the needs of each subgroup works against a school being able to make AYP. This realization has presented fears of not making AYP, which is a barrier that administrators must overcome to be successful in their roles as high school principal. It was also reported that public relations has been impacted as well, because of the difficulty in building community and parental support if the school is listed as a ‘failing’ school.

*Interview question 5.1.* In summary, what kind of professional and personal growth have you experienced as a high school principal? What professional as well as personal satisfaction do you receive in your leadership role within NCLB? What are your coping mechanisms? What recommendations would you give to aspiring high school principals? Anything we have not talked about that you would like me to know?

This question (interview question 5.1) was designed to reflect upon the administrators’ growth experiences, coping mechanisms, and recommendations that aspiring administrators can build upon. The findings from these questions have been reported below. The responses were followed by an analysis of the data obtained.

*Personal and Professional Growth*

The principals shared their perspective through answering the interview question, “What kind of professional and personal growth have you experienced as a high school principal?”

Their responses, as reflected below, conveyed to the researcher ways in which growth can occur through their leadership position.

*Responses*

Principal 1 responded with, “I like being the daddy to everyone, but, you know, I like being able to be supportive (P.1, 12-12-08, p.37). Principal 2 declared, “Personal growth. I feel for the teachers. I feel for the children. I feel for the community, for the school system and that’s just a lot of stress on the individual, on me as the principal. And, I’ve had to learn to be more patient and take some time when I have the opportunity, which is rare. I spend some time with the grandchildren. I probably pay more attention to that now, being here as busy as I am than I would have otherwise because I know I have to refill my own bucket. (P.2, 12-12-08, p. 28)

Principal 3 expressed the impact an administrator has on others, “I don’t know if they [my growth] were in the context of No Child Left Behind, but I guess, you come to the realization of those things that you can do... and those things that you can’t do that will have some impact...on ...student achievement; but also on the personal as well as the professional growth...professional growth mainly, of those people around you, primarily of the other faculty members. But you learn, too, of what impact you can have on all those around you – the students, the faculty, and other staff members. .. I think you realize before you become a principal, you realize, I guess, how wide that impact is once you become a principal.”

(P.3, 12-15-08, p.23)

Principal 4 noted, “I believe this is my little niche in life. This school. This place, this school, this job. This was just what I was meant to do . . .and, um, I enjoy it everyday. I get a kick out of [it] . . .that happens every day.” (P.4, 12-15-08, p.18)

Principal 5 reflected, “[Growing with the teachers] by participating in the professional learning helped me personally as an administrator. (P.5, 12-15-08, p.23)

*Data analysis.* The principals reported professional and personal growth that they’ve experienced as high school principals to loving what they do, and being able to nurture students and teachers and strengthen their human relations skills. They’ve also reflected continuing to grow professionally as an administrator to be personally rewarding. With a myriad of responsibilities to accomplish daily, effective time management and continuous development of their instructional leadership skills was reflected as key to being efficient at their job and attempt to accomplish the things that were needed.

#### *Professional/Personal Satisfaction*

The principals’ responses to the interview question, “What professional as well as personal satisfaction do you receive in your leadership role within NCLB?”, conveyed for the researcher their experience of fulfillment within this federal mandate. Their responses are reflected below.

#### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded with, “Well, it’s just such a variety, no two days alike...you just feel exhilarated when things, especially when they work out for the best ... but then you look around and see that you didn’t do it by yourself. Everybody pulled their weight. And, to me, that is the biggest attribute, when you look around you and you see everybody on automatic.” (12-12-08, p.39)

Principal 2 declared, “I’ve become more strategic, because time is of the essence. There is a sense of urgency. And so, I can try something that’s, try to implement a program or a

strategy or a direction that's just a trial and error. It [the program] has to be very researched-based...we spend a lot of time getting...core people to see if it's the direction we wanna go [instructionally], and we just have to be very, very deliberate. And I think that takes away from the risk-taking . . .and sometimes the magic is in the risk-taking. So, I think that that's made me very strategic (12-12-08, p. 28). So, just seeing the kids starting to understand and figure [things out], and you've gotta figure that your leadership of them as well as your faculty and staff [helped]. (12-12-08, p. 29)

*Data analysis.* The themes that emerged indicated collaboration through Principal 1. Principal 2 reflected the need to be strategic in leading a school towards improvement. The professional as well as personal satisfaction reported to be received in their leadership role involved primarily being strategic in their instructional leadership. This strategic quality, incorporated developing instructional leadership as part of developing teachers. It was also reflected that developing students' awareness of the importance of their education was also particularly satisfying.

### *Coping Mechanisms*

In answering, "What are your coping mechanisms?", the principals shared their perspectives. Their responses, indicated below, provided the researcher with identified strategies to deal with job-related stress and demands.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 responded with:

I do go home, when you talk about coping, I do go home and fuss and I have to remind my wife I'm not fussing at her, I'm just fussing...I've learned...the things I do at home working around the house [to relieve stress]. When you're at the top [as principal], there's really nobody you can . . .because, you know, you want to fuss about your higher ups [central and state administrators], but you can't do that in front of . . . your Assistant Principal, [or] others, because you've got to support them [central and state

administrators] even though you might not agree. You know if you can't convince them to change, then you've gotta go [along] with them. (12-12-08, p.37)

Principal 2 shared, "My coping mechanism...not being caught off guard. I want to stay current in what's happening on the political scene. If you stay current and you read, then you can almost predict where things are going to go. I'm pretty sure that, well if something happens, education's not gonna be a big thing on either of the candidates [agenda]." (12-12-08, p. 29)

Principal 3 reflected:

I didn't cope like most of them [peer principals] cope. I took a long walk in the woods. And, that's probably not the coping...That's not a coping mechanism that most folks would [consider]. . .the other thing [I did] was to call the leadership team together. . .And, I guess that's why I believe so strongly in collaboration. Eileen Brown, the founder of the Cambridge Scholar, said, "Not one of us knows what all of us know." (P.3, 12-15-08, p.23)

And, so by pulling everyone together and discussing the problems and possible solutions, brainstorming if you will, the answer always comes. So, I think just by mulling it over or hashing it over, talking about it with the [other] leaders, the answer will usually come. And, we practice [collaborate] fairly often so, that helped an awful lot [in coping with stress. (P.3, 12-15-08, p.24)

Principal 4 responded with, "I think the coping ... here [my school] is, um, I just like being here [at my school]. I look forward to it everyday. So, I jump up here and work quite early, works [start] here at 6:00 and I just like doing it." (P.4, 12-15-08, p.18)

Principal 5 responded with, "I don't know of any coping mechanisms. I just do it. I just suck it up and do it. I have gone to bed at 2:30 [a.m.] and gotten back up at 4:30 [a.m.] and I just do it. I would never stay at home unless I'm just about dead." (P.5, 12-15-08, p.23)

*Data analysis.* The themes that emerged were multi-faceted. Principals 1 and 3 expressed the need to decompress. Principal 2 conveyed staying current and being involved in extra training. Principal 3 also noted collaboration. The principals reported that their coping mechanisms in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities included maintaining a demeanor of

optimism, making time for their family, and enjoying physical activity to alleviate some of the day-to-day stressors. Additionally, they indicated that collaboration with their faculty and staff and continued professional development enabled them to feel prepared for the tasks at hand to ensure student achievement.

### *Aspiring Principals*

The principals shared their outlook in answering, the interview question, “What recommendations would you give to aspiring high school principals?” Their responses, as indicated below, expressed to the researcher an awareness of hopefulness and vision for aspiring principals.

### *Responses*

Principal 1 declared, “[Be] flexible and ... look at it [student achievement through NCLB] with open eyes.” (P.1, 12-12-08, p.34) Principal 2 advised, “Really know why you want to be a principal. Don’t do it for the position or the title. Do you truly want to lead a whole school? A whole community and a set of beliefs that are healthy for that community and those children? And, are you willing to sacrifice everything that it takes personally and possibly professionally to do that? Ask yourself. Be reflective from the very beginning. It [the principalship] can be very rewarding and it’s great, unless you have the wrong [point of view] or some expectations that were unrealistic to begin with. (12-12-08, p. 31)

Principal 3 suggested, “Get to know the people with whom you work...surround yourself with good people and take advice. But, now the absolute worst thing you can do is to seek the advice [from someone] if you’re not taking it [it destroys credibility]. (12-15-08, p.24)

Principal 4 contended:

I think it’s gonna be important for schools and to principals, if you wanna lead your schools, they need to work on how to develop a pretty strong base of assistant principals and teachers and department heads who are in a distributive leadership role so that, as

principals come and go ...the school is not constantly starting over and trying to redevelop the direction it's trying to move in. (12-15-08, p.10)

It seems to me then, one of your recommendations to aspiring high school principals is to enjoy what you're about to embark on? You have to enjoy it. You've got to, you've got to accept the challenge of what you're doing. You have to accept it as a challenge. You have to enjoy the challenge. You're not gonna win all the time. You're gonna get beat up a whole lot and, you know, you have to accept that part of it. You know, I've got a desk full of discipline. No matter what happens on those slips, a lot of those people aren't gonna be happy. (P.4, 12-15- 08, p.19)

And, you know, whatever decisions you make, do what you believe is right. Do what you think is fair for everybody, regardless of everything else, and stand by it. And you just gotta know that somebody's not gonna be happy about it. Whether it's a Board member or, you know, when you're gonna suspend a Board member's child for something, you know, you've gotta believe that. No matter what they say to you or how they threaten you or what they say, stay the course and smile (P.4, 12-15-08, p.19)

You've got to stand behind your teachers 100% all the time without exception. You also better be willing to step up and stand behind your students if the teacher's wrong. That's what life's about. You cannot, you have to support your teachers but if they're wrong they're wrong. You gotta deal with that too. You've gotta be able to accept that. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.19)

Principal 5 asserted, "If you were a teacher in a school system and you have the opportunities to get extra training, get it. Get it. Get all that you can. If you think one day that you might be a principal, take on some responsibilities. When they need someone to do something, volunteer. You know, I did a whole lot in my career that I never got one penny for. That wasn't what I wanted it for. It was just a reward of doing it I guess [personal satisfaction] (P.5, 12-15-08, p.24)

*Data analysis.* The themes that emerged from this question were varied. Principal 1 reflected upon humility and the ability to collaborate. Principal 2 also conveyed humility and being prepared to sacrifice. Principal 3 indicated seeking advice as the theme. Principal 4 also conveyed the themes of seeking advice, enjoying what you do, being prepared to sacrifice, and distributive leadership as guidance to aspiring principals.

Principals reported several recommendations that they would give to aspiring principals. They encouraged the administrators to enter the principalship with a clear understanding of ‘why’ they want to be a high school principal. To be aware that to fulfill this role responsibly, required your commitment, optimism, and human relation skills to build a team working towards one goal, student achievement. The findings also reflected the need to be aware that the role of high school principal is ever-evolving and required flexibility and the ability to be a change agent. Administrators contended that ongoing professional development, open collaboration, and a style of distributive leadership were key components to being effective in the high school principalship.

### *Final Insight*

In concluding the qualitative interview questions, Principals 2, 3, and 4 shared their final perception, which reiterated to the researcher the hopefulness needed in school leadership.

### *Responses*

Principal 2 noted, “Just hope and pray that the majority of the principals that are out there will look at it [achieving AYP with student achievement] to be [steady as] the tortoise and not the hare [fast and hasty]” (P.2, 12-12-08, p. 31). Principal 3 suggested, “This has nothing to do with anything [in particular] but just pray often!” (P.3, 12-15-08, p.24) Principal 4 asserted, “The kids [students] will have a better opportunity to focus on what’s really important for them to know to be successful in our society today and our world. We are a standards based school like everybody else, I guess. And we quote the [Georgia performance] standards and talk a lot about ‘em and we’re working on that and improving that. And, while we’re not certainly where we need to be [with the Georgia Performance Standards], we will make some pretty significant strides with our standard based instruction. (P.4, 12-15-08, p.10)



*Data analysis.* In sharing additional insights relative to things that we did not talk about, but that they would like me to know, it was reported that it's important to note that a sense of spirituality and optimism will buffer a principal against feeling overwhelmed. The road to continuous school improvement is successfully maneuvered through a slow and steady process rather than a speedy race in order to ensure a positive outcome with student achievement.

### *Summary*

In analyzing the results for the five interviews with the high school principals, the researcher was impressed by the dedication, work ethic, and commitment to students that these participants conveyed in both their responses and their demeanor. Striking similarities were readily evident in the perceptions offered by these administrators who had served in the position of principal of a high school in Georgia. Two of the five principals have had over 10 years of experience as a high school administrator. All of the administrators had over 20 years of experience in education, with two of them having over 40 years. The similarities began to become evident immediately with the first question, which was designed to establish rapport by asking them about their school and experiences and relative issues that guide and support their leadership. Two of the respondents were female; four were Caucasian and one was African-American. Four of the five had spent their entire tenures as principals in the same school system. The entire group of respondents talked about events which influenced their roles and responsibilities. Two of the five entered the principalship by circumstance, while the remaining three pursued high school administration deliberately.

In sharing their experiences that they drew upon to guide them in their school leadership and developing their leadership style, they implied that the type of school and its demographics may affect how a principal can best serve their population. For example, urban schools may

have to contend with issues relative to gangs and drugs and in order to help these students achieve, the principals may need to bring resources to the school to help address the violence and illegal activity that's in their lives.

The principals' leadership was nurtured and empowered primarily by skills they learned in their previous jobs. As they began to talk, the principals conveyed that their varied experiences and continued professional development in research-based practices such as differentiated instruction, continued to strengthen their leadership in being able to help teachers in their content areas. All agreed that a distributive leadership style, one that was collaborative provided for developing teacher-leaders and additional support in the instructional leadership of the school.

When asked the questions relative to how they perceived their roles as school leaders prior to NCLB, they stressed responsibilities that were primarily handling the day-to-day operations of the school such as discipline, managing the staff, building and facilities; and, public relations. The principal's management style was more autocratic. Although the principals conducted classroom observations to monitor instruction, for the most part, they allowed the instruction and curriculum development to be maintained by assistant principals or support staff that served as resources to the teachers.

The principals conveyed that their primary skills in successful school leadership included developing relationships and effective communications. They developed their communication and relationship-building skills through visibility, availability and approachability. They felt that growth through formal or informal professional development was key to developing their skills as a leader in implementing effective strategies in their schools.

In asking the principals how they perceived their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates, they all indicated that it is imperative that principals lead their school's improvement practices based on the data and that instructional strategies incorporated research-based practices. The administrators expressed awareness that their role included developing teacher-leaders in order to strengthen instruction to improve student achievement and accomplish AYP through the NCLB mandates. The principals mentioned a significant change in their role occurring through an increased commitment to instructional leadership as impacted by the test data. However, they also noted that management of staff and the facilities, discipline, and supporting parents, although not changed, was still an integral part of their responsibilities. Being reflective of their decisions, the selected research-based practices, and their program's effectiveness in accomplishing student achievement, enabled continued growth and evolution of the principal.

The five principals discussed their instructional and non-instructional expectations, responsibilities, and time distribution during their tenure as high school principals. Their stories highlighted getting into the classes, being involved in professional learning, working with and collaborating with the middle schools was integral to meeting the instructional requirements of their students' achievement. Time management for the principals, became more critical in balancing plans towards student achievement and managing the other responsibilities of the principalship. The principals mentioned that effective delegation enabled them to develop teachers as leaders in areas that would help the school to succeed. Of all of their duties, the principals had to ensure that instructional leadership remained the priority in all of their responsibilities.

In sharing what helps them to perform their roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates, the principals noted sustaining a climate of continuous school improvement as being

a key function. Formal and informal professional learning in leadership and instruction helped them in effectively performing their roles and responsibilities. The school improvement for student achievement is accomplished through collaboration, understanding what the middle school is doing in preparing students for high school, developing teachers in their content areas, and incorporating a distributive leadership style in the school setting.

In expressing their views on the NCLB standards-based accountability system that is in place in Georgia, as well as its affect on education and the position of Georgia high school principal, the principals noted that NCLB is particularly beneficial on behalf of subgroups and being data driven to help to refine the instruction and improve meeting the needs of the students in their areas of deficiency. However, the administrators assert that it is unrealistic to believe that with limited funding it will be difficult, at best, to provide the resources needed for the varied subgroups, to ensure 100% proficiency of all students by the year 2014. Several felt that the demographics of the students should be considered when setting accountability measures. Three principals reflected upon factors they couldn't control such as students' socio- economic status, family-related challenges, students transferring from other counties and the principal's high school then being held accountable for the test scores of these transient students on the school's AYP report. The principals expressed concern over the problems that the accountability had caused with teachers feeling overwhelmed with the paperwork and negative public relations of being perceived as a 'Needs Improvement' or 'Failing' school.

The principals believed that NCLB will affect education in general and the position of the Georgia high school principal by making their role of instructional leadership to be data driven and the primary focus in order to ensure student achievement. Principals indicated that collaborating with teachers ensured that instructional strengths were identified and that

weaknesses were addressed through professional learning. Two principals expressed concern that the increased accountability will decrease the numbers of available principals through retirement and teachers not wanting to pursue administration.

The expectations of the state, superintendent, and the school board have the potential to impact how principals spend their time. The principals shared that the expectations of where they should focus their time has not really changed. They contend that the emphasis has always been on student achievement and that the state and local authorities expected the principal to maintain ultimate responsibility and accountability for their school. All agree that long after NCLB is replaced by another achievement initiative, principals and their teachers will still be working towards student success. One principal did express their concern that requirements to meet the mandates of NCLB differed between states, for example, how their graduation rates are reflected thereby reflecting data manipulation.

In expressing their perceptions of changes in the roles and responsibilities of high school principals in Georgia in the next 5 to 10 years and whether they believed NCLB will have an impact on remaining principals, the participants envisioned their roles and responsibilities continuing to evolve, encompassing more flexibility and principals serving as change agents as they adapted to their changing student population and younger teaching staff working towards student achievement.

The principals reflected upon NCLB impacting their roles in several ways. In an effort to accomplish AYP, principals will continue to evolve through serving as change agents and being more “hands-on” in the instructional leadership of their school. Principals will continue to participate in professional learning along with their staff to ensure developing teacher leaders and sharpening skills as instructional leaders. Nonetheless, the principals also indicated that with

increased accountability and adherence to research-based practices, future principals should be trained in data analysis and differentiated instructional strategies. However, several principals anticipated a rise in early retirement amongst their peers because achieving the NCLB mandates can be an overwhelming and consuming process.

When asked about job-related pressures/demands, the principals discussed their experiences as a result of NCLB. The NCLB-related changes that had a positive impact on the principals' roles included being focused on instruction; the instructional leadership being more data driven to address the needs of the student subgroups and, developing the teachers into the instructional leadership of the school. All of the principals indicated that developing the instructional leadership among the teachers was an effective way to maintain the vision and mission of the school through staff turnovers. They reflected being more involved in public relations to address the AYP status of their school, involved more parents and the community in school initiatives, and conveyed the accomplishments of the students and faculty.

In discussing the negative impact of NCLB on their role, the principals included concern about the AYP indicator of graduation rates because it's defined differently in various states. The focuses on test scores with the school improving in one area, and not improve in another area, provided stress for principals. The administrators also reported that being able to address the deficiencies of their subgroups is challenging and this realization caused fear of schools not making AYP, creating an emotional barrier that principals must overcome to be successful in their roles as high school administrators. Principals reported difficulty with public relations when their school is listed as a "failing" or "needs improvement" school in their AYP status, even though in some area their students are achieving and their teachers are working hard.

In looking at their professional and personal growth, coping mechanisms, and their recommendations to aspiring high school principals, the participants were optimistic and hopeful. Several principals reflected loving what they do, using their human relations and communication skills to nurture students and strengthen teachers. They described continuing to grow professionally and personally, and that this is an ongoing process. The principals shared personal satisfaction in their leadership role by becoming more strategic in their instructional leadership. In regard to their daily responsibilities, the principals agreed that effective time management and continuous development of their instructional leadership skills were important to performing their job efficiently.

The principals reported their coping mechanisms to include optimism, making time for their family, and enjoying physical activity to alleviate some of the daily stressors. Additionally, they indicated that collaboration with their faculty and staff and continued professional development enabled them to feel prepared for the tasks at hand to ensure student achievement.

When asked about their guidance to aspiring principals, the participants had several recommendations. They encouraged the administrators to enter the principalship with a clear understanding of “why” they wanted to be a high school principal. They recommended that responsibly fulfilling their roles required dedication, optimism, and human relation skills to build a team working towards the primary goal of student achievement. They also encouraged the need to be a change agent, awareness that the roles involved in the principals were ever-evolving and required flexibility. The principals agreed that ongoing professional development, open collaboration, and a style of distributive leadership were key components to an effective high school principalship. The road to continuous school improvement is successfully maneuvered

through a slow and steady process rather than a speedy race in order to ensure a positive outcome with student achievement.



## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

There has been much attention and research given to the evolution of the principal's role (Checkley, 2000). The school principal must operate in an environment that is data driven, goal and progress oriented across the school environment. Principals must share responsibility and authority, must trust in the ability of others, and must be willing to allow teachers to take risks, even though the final outcome will reflect on the principal's leadership for the ultimate accountability regarding school performance and student achievement. As school leaders, a clear awareness, perception, and understanding of the role will have a positive impact on school improvement and student performance within the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandates on the federal, state, and local levels.

#### Introduction

Hallinger and Heck (1996) reported after synthesizing 15 years of research on how principals impacted their schools, found that principals influence school performance by shaping goals, direction, structure, and by working through organizational and social networks. The role of the successful principal includes leadership which guides the school policies, in addition to professional learning opportunities and practices that directly contribute to student learning. The Educational Research Service (ERS, 1997) concluded in its study on principals that good school principals were the keystone of good schools within reform. Without the principal's leadership, efforts to raise student achievement cannot succeed (IEL, 2000). Research concerning school leadership focused on the principal with little mention of the implications on the roles and responsibilities of the high school principal operating within context of a federal reform initiative (ERS, 1997, Hallinger and Heck, 1996, IEL, 2000).

The impact of NCLB, a federal initiative, and societal changes on the role of the school administrator has “evolved significantly. Principals constantly multi-task and shift roles at a moment’s notice” (Trail, 2000, p. 1). Not only are schools responsible for the education of all children, but educators in schools often take on many responsibilities that were previously assumed by the church, and the strong family structure. With the deterioration of these structures, societal issues are passed on to schools and ultimately to school principals. Tirozzi and Ferrandino (2000) indicated that the principal is, should be, and must be in charge of learning. They added, “the traditional responsibilities, enormous management requirements, and discipline duties are still present” (p. 1). The school principal is not only the manager of the school, but the litigator, the counselor, the mentor, the curriculum leader, and often the referee.

The researcher of the present study was a practicing high school principal in Georgia. Interested in the evolution of the high school principal’s roles and responsibilities in the context of addressing the requirements of NCLB, she determined that the most appropriate way to find out how principals perceived their roles in the reform effort was to ask them. She decided to identify high school principals in Georgia who had been in high school administration pre-NCLB (2001-2002) and post-NCLB (2008-2009) at least 7 years in an attempt to convey dimensions inherent in their roles for those who may pursue the opportunity of the high school principalship.

The purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of Georgia high school principals’ awareness and perceptions of their role in addressing the requirements of NCLB. Employing a research instrument composed of 10 questions designed to elicit responses relating to three research sub-questions, the researcher interviewed the high school principals to ascertain their perceptions of how their roles had evolved over their tenures. The study was descriptive rather

than predictive and used a qualitative approach to tell the stories and lived experiences of these high school principals.

The criterion for selection were those principals who were in their positions prior to NCLB (2001-2002) and were serving in their administrative role (2008-2009). This researcher used the *2001-2002 and the 2008-2009 Georgia High School Association Directory*, and the *2008-2009 Georgia Association of Educational Leaders/Georgia Association of Secondary School Principals Directory* to identify and cross referenced the public high school principals in Georgia. The number of participants were limited to finding high school principals who were in their positions prior to NCLB (2000-2001) and remained until the 2008-2009 school year. The researcher, upon conferring with her dissertation committee, selected six that were representative across the state of Georgia. All six agreed to participate by telephone and email. Of the six selected, five fulfilled the selection criteria, however, one had recently retired. The researcher's dissertation committee indicated that the perspective of a retired high school principal would be valuable to this qualitative study and should be included. One of the original six principals withdrew their participation after several unsuccessful attempts to schedule a date and time convenient for the researcher and the principal. The researcher ultimately chose five administrators to interview based on their continued willingness to participate and their availability at the times she could conduct the interviews.

The data collection consisted of scheduled 1 ½ to 2 hour interviews with five principals (4 principals currently in their position, and 1 retired principal). The transcriptions were analyzed and masked for anonymity. The researcher used the *MAXQDA* software to aid in categorizing and coding the data to look for themes, commonalities, and important information within and across the transcriptions of the interviews.

In the present chapter, the researcher used the findings related to each research subquestion in order to draw conclusions and to consider the implications from the study to answer the overarching question, “What are the perceptions of Georgia high school principals on how NCLB affect their roles and responsibilities. The three research subquestions were:

1. What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?
2. How do Georgia high school principals perceive their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates?
3. What, if any, job-related pressures/demands, do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB?

### Research Findings

As our expectations for our schools have grown, expectations for the principalship have concurrently been expanded as well. The role now includes significant responsibilities for the instructional leadership of schools, insuring that all children achieved to meet high standards, and that the needs of children with disabilities were met.

The managerial tasks of principals have also expanded, as regulations and reporting requirements increased. Principals are charged with maintaining safe school environments and must anticipate and be prepared for all manner of threats to students’ safety. Principals also performed the vital tasks of organizing, budgeting, managing, and dealing with disruptions inside and outside the school. They made sure that the buses ran on time, that children were fed safe and nutritious food, and that the facilities were maintained in good repair. Maintaining a safe environment and dealing with student behavior problems were also more time consuming than they once were. Dealing with parents was an ongoing part of principals’ responsibilities.

The primary mission of schools is instruction. In fostering this mission, principals built learning communities within their schools and engaged the school community in creating and achieving a vision of improvement for their schools. Principals expected to be agents of change as schools responded to higher standards imposed by external entities. As instructional leaders, principals provided guidance and actively supported curriculum development. Principals taught and developed teachers in their schools toward improved performance. Principals participated in ongoing professional learning in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measured progress in raising student performance. Principals became increasingly aware of the latest research on teaching strategies. Principals were aware of the special needs of their students, both those who struggled and those who excelled in order to effectively monitor instruction and provide necessary resources. Principals reported increased paperwork demands as a result of responsibilities and possible increased regulatory oversight.

Principals contend with the challenges of issues such as greater expectations for community involvement, engagement, and a variety of social problems that impacted student learning. Principals found it difficult to achieve proper balance between the instructional leadership and management responsibilities. Principals reported that they lacked time to be effective instructional leaders. It is acknowledged that the top priority of the principalship must be leadership for learning.

The five principals in Georgia who were interviewed reported being dedicated to their school, students, and faculty towards student achievement. They were committed to their community. The job-related pressures and demands presented a duality in that what were

perceived as challenges, the data analysis and focusing on the subgroups, also were the issues that supported student achievement and school improvement.

The participants shared the theme of meeting the mandates of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). They reported an increased to commitment to instructional leadership by being data driven, implementing their school's improvement through research-based best practices, and developing teacher leaders. Each participant was clear as to their formal role as a high school principal.

The participants' role as high school principals evolved during their length of service, another evident theme this study. In addition, in their effort to facilitate instructional leadership, the participants conveyed improved communications and human relations skills with their staff through becoming more nurturing as they developed teacher leaders in their schools. However, even with evolved roles, the principals reported still having to facilitate operations management and maintaining discipline within their school setting in addition to the increased instructional demands. These participants expressed through the theme of time distribution, that effective time management was critical to managing their responsibilities and that it was necessary to delegate some of the operations management responsibilities in order to devote more time to their instructional leadership.

The participants reported through the theme of the NCLB system that was in place in Georgia, that the reform was beneficial in that it enabled their schools to identify subgroups, and collaborate with teachers to refine instruction to be more data-driven based on the special needs of struggling students. Some of the challenges that were noted included limited funding to provide services and resources to students and the negative public relations of contending with the community if their school was identified as being in "Needs Improvement" (NI) as a result of

not accomplishing adequate yearly progress objectives. Although the goals of NCLB were valued, the participants contend that reaching 100% of the students being proficient by 2014 was an unrealistic goal to attain with the changing student population. It was feared that the increased bureaucracy and accountability has contributed to principals retiring earlier and fewer teachers entering administration.

The participants were cognizant of adequate yearly progress (AYP) mandates and that progress with standardized test scores was a shared responsibility between teachers and administrators. Long after NCLB evolved into another reform initiative, the principals expressed that their schools would still be working towards student achievement.

Leadership style was an additional theme conveyed through this study. Participants performing their roles within NCLB, required them to use a distributive (collaborative) style of leadership to enable an environment of continued improvement through teacher leaders. Two of the principals also shared collaborating with middle school administrators and teachers to determine 8<sup>th</sup> graders' strengths and weaknesses in order to incorporate instructional strategies that would serve their needs and help to support student achievement upon their arrival in high school. Professional learning was critical for the principals' skills and to develop teachers in their content areas with data analysis and differentiated instruction strategies to meet the needs of the school's ever-changing population.

Changes in the role of Georgia high school principals, as reflected by the participants, continued to evolve and remain flexible. Participants identified with serving as change agents for their schools as they adapted to students and teachers in accomplishing student achievement. However, the participants were accepting that the expectations of the state, board of education, and superintendent had not changed because the primary focus was on achievement and that the

principal had ultimate responsibility for the instructional leadership and operations management of the school.

Just as apparent that the role of high school principal operating within a federal reform initiative impacted the participants in this study, it was also evident that the participants were committed to their respective schools. The five principals in Georgia performed, nurtured, and through their commitment, helped their schools to move forward in student achievement towards accomplishing the mandates of NCLB.

### *Discussion of Findings*

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the role awareness and perceptions of Georgia high school principals in addressing the requirements of NCLB. The qualitative approach allowed the researcher to delve into the experiences and stories shared by these veteran administrators in the interview process. The discussion of the research findings were organized by the after having explored each of the three subquestions that were analyzed in accord to the responses of the five administrators to the ten interview questions. These findings were reported in Chapter 4. In this chapter, the researcher used the findings related to the three research subquestions to discuss the findings in relation to the literature, to draw conclusions, and to consider the implications from the study.

### *Discussion for Research Sub-question 1*

*What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) as school leaders?*

Historically, the role of principal has been primarily as a manager, requiring the school principal to do things right. School reform requires the principal, as instructional leader, to do the right thing (SEDL, 2004). Lashway (2000) reported that principal accountability involved a more general approach to doing their job efficiently, developing strong teacher relationships, assuming



the role of instructional leader, and exhibiting sound budgeting practices. The impetus has moved from “a managerial model to a visionary, collegial model focused on the centrality of student learning” (Chenoweth, 2002, p. 4).

*Becoming a high school principal.* In becoming a high school principal, the administrators traveled diverse paths. Although two of the principals were career teachers, one principal was the director of a program which provided special education services, another was a college professor, and the third spent 15-years in the sales industry before entering the classroom as a teacher and becoming an administrator. However, they all valued their teaching experiences and what that experience added to their administrative leadership.

*Decision to become a high school principal.* The decision to become a high school principal was motivated, to a great extent, by their desire to make a difference in their community and the lives of their students and teachers. Although three principals indicated that they hadn't always aspired to be a high school principal, the time and the circumstances seemed right and they were given the opportunity.

*Perceptions of role prior to NCLB.* In understanding their lived experiences which influenced the perceptions of their roles prior to the implementation of NCLB, the principals expressed having primary responsibilities relative to building management and student discipline. Two of the principals noted that classroom observations were key components to their role as a building principal, however, the principals primarily handled the day-to-day operations of managing the staff, building, and facilities. All of the principals shared that prior to NCLB, they were not as involved with instruction and the development of curriculum.

*Skills in school leadership.* In sharing their skills that they perceived strengthened their leadership, the principals reflected on effective communication and human relations skills, being

involved in the school setting, and commitment to the job as encompassing the necessary skills and abilities needed in leading their schools. There was consensus amongst the principals that their visibility, availability, and approachability was integral to developing their communication and human relations skills. They shared that both formal and informal professional development experiences, helped them to hone and further develop their skills.

#### *Discussion for Research Sub-question 2*

*What do Georgia high school principals perceive as their role(s) in addressing NCLB mandates?* A significant amount of work is required by high school principals and teachers to ensure that students accomplish state performance standards. Seashore and Spillane (2002) reported the need for principals to demonstrate the ability to strategically plan, measure, monitor, organize, and manage systems and processes necessary to improve student achievement and organizational effectiveness. Weiss and Millinaro (2005) reported that distributed leadership includes democratic governance, participatory decision-making, and shared leadership with teachers within the school.

*Meeting the mandates of NCLB.* The principals shared their awareness as to the skills needed to work towards meeting the NCLB mandates. They described that their school improvement initiatives were data driven and incorporated research-based best practices into their instructional leadership. They also identified the need to maintain a stable faculty and the need to develop leadership amongst the teachers in order to strengthen the instructional program.

*Length of service.* In discussing the ways in which their role(s) have evolved in working towards improving student achievement throughout their length of service, the principals experienced an increased commitment to instructional leadership, and an increased awareness of effective research-based instructional strategies to improve student achievement. The principals

described their human relations skills as critical to empowering their staff as they used distributive leadership to develop teacher leaders and accomplish goals. The administrators expressed that their roles in management of staff and facilities, student discipline, and interfacing with parents, although not changed during this time, was still an integral part of their responsibilities within significant time constraints.

*Awareness of changes in leadership style.* The principals became aware of changes in their leadership style through scenarios that required being a change agent to work towards student achievement and organizational effectiveness. Their experiences included addressing the issues of struggling 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, particularly in the areas of math, language arts, and reading. As leaders, the principals had to become more inclusive of teacher input into their data driven instructional leadership. They became more reflective of their leadership practices and progress in achieving identified performance standards with their students.

*Expectations and responsibilities.* Goodwin, et al (2003) reported principals experiencing apprehension about the increased responsibility, limited time, changes in the principalship, and the challenges of stress. The daily demands created role change and conflict. Surveys found that principals felt conflicted between instructional leadership and the daily management chores of managing a school. The principals described meeting instructional expectations, through classroom observations, professional development, and collaborating with their feeder middle schools as being important to address the instructional planning and curriculum development requirements. They've become more involved in the instructional supervision role of their leadership. The principals in using delegation, effectively distributed some of the instructional and non-instructional leadership responsibilities in the areas of facilities management, professional learning, and instructional leadership to develop teachers in other

areas that will help the school to succeed and allow the principal to be more involved in instruction.

*Time distribution.* The principals conveyed a significant time commitment inherent in their roles. Time management for the principals became even more critical in being able to balance planning towards instruction and student achievement and managing the other organizational responsibilities of the principalship. The principals experienced perceiving that the days appeared longer to accomplish the things that needed to be done. They revealed that limited time made it more critical to develop teachers as school leaders.

*Performing roles within NCLB.* Blankstein (2004) found that the principles that guide achievement in schools involves continuous professional learning for stakeholders, developing proven instructional strategies, and encouraging collaboration. The principals shared their perspectives on measures that provided support for them to perform their roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates. The school improvement towards student achievement was accomplished through collaboration, developing teachers in their skill areas, and incorporating a distributive leadership style into the school setting. Professional learning, both formal and informal, were key to helping the principals to perform their roles and responsibilities.

*NCLB system in Georgia.* Quinn (2002) described the principalship as being burdened and that responsibilities should be shared so that the principal can allot additional time to curriculum, instruction, and school improvement. Increasing accountability pressures to improve test scores and graduation rates, and the changing demands of the job require the development of a new set of skills for principals. Bonstingl (2001) reported that the consequences for failing to meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets affect student graduation rates, district funding, and

the retention of principals. All of these consequences have placed increasing pressure on principals to collaborate with their staff to ensure that learning goals are linked to instructional strategies. The principals shared several perspectives about the NCLB standards-based accountability system that is in place in Georgia. They expressed that it is beneficial with its focus on subgroups. Being data driven helps to refine the instruction to ensure we're meeting the needs of the students in their areas of deficiency. However, the administrators contend that with limited funding for support resources to help the varied subgroups, 100% proficiency of all students by the year 2014, is unrealistic.

*Education.* The principals believed that NCLB will affect education in general and the position of the Georgia high school principal by making their role of instructional leadership more data driven and focused on ensuring student achievement. Principals will collaborate with teachers to ensure strengths are identified and that weaknesses are addressed through professional learning and other opportunities. They anticipated that the increased accountability will contribute to attrition in the principalship through retirement and teacher leaders not wanting to pursue administration.

*Experience(s) through NCLB which affected principal's role(s).* The principals shared that their experiences in the last 7 years support their belief that NCLB has affected their role of high school principal. They experienced having to be continuously cognizant of their school's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). They contend that impacting the standardized tests scores was a shared responsibility between administration and the teachers. The principals contend that the expectations of the state, superintendent, and the board as to where they should emphasize their responsibilities has not really changed during their tenure. It is clear that the emphasis, should and always has been on student achievement and that the principal maintains the ultimate

responsibility and accountability for their school and student success. The expectations are lofty under NCLB, however, all agree that long after NCLB may be replaced by another initiative, principals and their teachers will still be working towards student academic success.

*Expectations from the state and local authority.* Marks and Printy (2003) reflected in their study that distributed leadership linked teacher leadership to student achievement. Principals in high-achieving schools involve teachers in instructional decision-making, thereby, improving student achievement. With the use of distributive leadership in their schools, the principals became more familiar with the data and were able to answer questions from these three entities with input and collaboration from their teacher leaders.

*Differences in expectations among entities.* Although it was not evident amongst the principals that there were differences between state, superintendent, and board expectations, it was noted that requirements to meet the mandates of NCLB differed between states. This difference in how states reflected their graduation rates, for example, were perceived as being an erroneous depiction of the numbers of students who've completed high school, thereby making some states or systems appear more deficient than others.

*Changes in the roles of Georgia high school principals.* Boyer (1997) reported that the perceived implications of the principals' roles may also impact how efficiently they can improve student achievement in their schools. Leithwood and Riehl (2003) noted that our current environment of education reform may require principals to fulfill several roles that are attributable to accountability, sustaining a competitive school, empowering others to make decisions, providing instructional leadership, developing and executing strategic plans. The principals reflected upon their roles as continuing to evolve, encompassed more flexibility, and

required them to serve as change agents as they adapted to their students and teachers to accomplish student achievement.

*NCLB impact on principals.* The principals believed that NCLB will have a future impact on their roles and responsibilities. In an effort to accomplish AYP, the roles and responsibilities of principals continued to evolve through serving as change agents and being more involved in the instructional leadership of their school. Principals continued to participate in professional learning along with their teachers to ensure the development of teacher leaders and to sharpen their skills as instructional leaders. With the increased accountability and adherence to research-based practices, aspiring principals should be oriented to data analysis and differentiation instructional strategies. Additionally, they anticipated that many principals may pursue earlier retirement because of the consuming experience in accomplishing the NCLB mandates.

#### *Discussion for Research sub-question 3*

*What, if any, job-related pressures/demands, do Georgia high school principals perceive that they face as a result of NCLB?* Seashore and Spillane (2002) reported that principals operated as performance leaders to assist in the development of a school-wide plan for improvement by identifying realistic performance measures and aligning key indicators for goals. Farkas, Johnson, and Duffet (2003) reported that school principals indicated that insufficient funding was their biggest challenge, followed by politics and bureaucracy. Alliance for Excellent Education (2003) reported that high schools required a significant amount of work by teachers and principals to ensure that students accomplished state performance standards. The principals experienced varied demands as a result of NCLB that impacted their roles. The challenges included: (a) increased accountability relative to teacher quality and student

achievement; (b) limited funding to improve programs; (c) increased organizational and political demands; and, (d) the conflict between instructional leadership and the chores in managing a building.

*NCLB positive impact on principal's role.* The NCLB-related changes that have had the most positive impact on the principals' roles have been reported as their being more focused on instruction; the instructional leadership being more data driven to address the needs of the student subgroups; and, developing the teachers into the instructional leadership of the school. In addition, it was reported that developing the instructional leadership amongst teachers have proven to be effective in maintaining the vision of the school and its mission as there are staff turnover in the classrooms. The findings also reflected the principals being more involved in public relations to address the AYP indicators of their school, involved more parents and the community in school initiatives, and conveyed the accomplishments of the students and faculty in progress towards meeting performance objectives.

*NCLB negative impact on principal's role.* The principals concluded that the NCLB related mandates that had the most detrimental or negative impact on their role was the AYP indicator relative to graduation rates, because it's defined differently in various states. It was also shared that the focus on test scores and that a school could improve in an area, and not improve in another area, provides significant pressure for principals and can be detrimental to school improvement efforts. Principals reported that being able to meet the needs of each subgroup works against a school being able to make AYP. This realization has presented fears of not making AYP, which is a barrier that administrators must overcome to be successful in their roles as a high school principal. It was also reported that public relations has been



negatively impacted, because of the difficulty in building community and parental support if the school is listed as a ‘failing’ school in the media.

*Personal and professional growth.* Hallinger and Heck (1996) synthesized 15 years of research on how principals impact their schools and found that principals influenced school performance by shaping goals, direction, structure, and by working through organizational and social networks. The principals in this study attributed professional and personal growth that they’ve experienced as high school principals to loving what they do, and through strengthening their ability to nurture students and teachers towards a common vision and goal. With a myriad of daily responsibilities, effective time management and development of their instructional leadership skills was key to being efficient at their job and growing professionally.

*Professional/personal satisfaction.* The principals reported satisfaction in becoming more strategic in their instructional leadership through developing teachers. It was also reflected that developing students’ awareness of the importance of their education was also personally satisfying.

*Coping mechanisms.* The principals reported that their coping mechanisms in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities included maintaining optimism, making time for their family, and physical activity to alleviate some of the day-to-day stressors. They indicated that collaboration with their faculty and staff and continued professional development enabled them to feel prepared for the tasks which impact school performance.

*Aspiring principals.* The principals shared several recommendations for aspiring principals. They encouraged the administrators to enter the principalship with a clear understanding of ‘why’ they wanted to be a high school principal. To be aware that to fulfill this role responsibly, required commitment, organization, optimism, and human relation skills to

build a team working towards one goal....student achievement. The principals also shared the awareness that the role of the high school principal is ever-evolving and required flexibility and the ability to be a change agent. Ongoing professional development, open collaboration, and distributive leadership were key components to being effective in the high school principalship.

*Final insight.* The principals reiterated a sense of hopefulness and optimism needed in school leadership. The road to continuous school improvement is successfully maneuvered through a slow and steady process rather than a speedy race in order to ensure a positive outcome with student achievement.

### Conclusions

Conclusions drawn from the results of the study include the following:

1. The subjects of the study were five Georgia high school principals who had all served in that high school administrative position pre- and post- NCLB implementation with tenures ranging from 5 to 15 years. Two were from small rural schools with 300-625 students. One was from a rural school of approximately 1000 students. One was from an urban school of approximately 1500 students and one was from a suburban school of 1940 students. All of the principals had spent their entire principalship in the same school system. Two of them were women with five of them being Caucasian and one being African-American. One of them was informally offered the position, while the others felt that the time was right for them to become a principal at a specific high school where they felt that they could make a difference in that community. The responses to the interview questions indicated that the most common features among the participants were a strong sense of being committed to their careers, a genuine interest in working with teachers to improve student

- achievement, and strong human relations skills. It could be further concluded that the Georgia high school principals displayed a significant sense of loyalty to their schools to make continued improvements.
2. The Georgia high school principals perceived their roles as school leaders to be complex and stressful. The increased organizational and political demands had the power to diminish the instructional and strategic leadership of the secondary principal. From the responses to the interview questions, it can be concluded that prior to NCLB, the respondents felt the demands of evolving roles and experienced conflict between instructional leadership and daily management chores of managing a school. However, the opportunity to delegate the instructional and curriculum monitoring beyond classroom observations, was often deferred to an assistant principal so that the principal could attend to discipline, athletics, managing the building and public relations activities.
  3. The Georgia high school principals perceived their roles in addressing NCLB mandates as being more data driven with more of their direct involvement in the instructional leadership of the school to ensure that progress was being made in accomplishing identified performance standards. From the responses to the interview questions, it can be concluded that after the implementation of NCLB, the respondents felt the need to strategically plan, measure, monitor, organize, and manage systems necessary to school improvement, student achievement, and organizational effectiveness.
  4. Most of the respondents agreed that prior to NCLB, their leadership priorities were more involved with building management accountability than instructional

- accountability. They reported that they spent less time in their earlier years on developing curriculum and the instructional skills of their teachers because of the other duties related to managing the building that was required. From the responses to the interview questions, it could be concluded that the high school principals had experienced pressures over their extensive building and instructional responsibilities along with the additional progress monitoring relative to student data to work towards accomplishing adequate yearly progress (AYP).
5. The high school principals had seen a change in their roles and responsibilities over their tenures. They believed that the changes in principal and teacher leadership in curriculum and instruction were needed to be inclusive and to ensure student achievement. They believed that with their limited time to fulfill all of their responsibilities, delegating responsibilities to teachers enabled them to spend more time on instruction-related responsibilities. From their responses to the interview questions, it can be concluded that the respondents reflected an awareness that their roles continued to evolve and required them to serve as change agents. The principals were in agreement that developing teachers as school leaders, being inclusive, and addressing instruction and curriculum based on the needs of what their student data reflected, enabled school improvement initiatives that supported student achievement.
  6. Responses to the interview questions indicated that that the principals were aware of changes in their leadership style to be more inclusive and reflective. The consensus was that a distributive leadership style was more conducive to transform and improve the student achievement of their school brought on by the mandates of the NCLB federal reform initiative. In addition, it can be concluded that with the teacher

- leaders, the high school principals felt that being collaborative in the decision-making process of the school enabled them to perform their roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates.
7. The high school principals had experienced the NCLB accountability system in Georgia and felt that it had enabled them to be more focused on data and being aware of the needs of their subgroup population(s) to refine instruction and improve student achievement. They believed that the expectations from the state, superintendent, and the local board had not changed in that the principal still had ultimate responsibility and accountability for their school and their students' achievement. From their responses to the interview questions, it can be concluded that the principals believed that NCLB was beneficial, but provided limited resources to address critical needs within unrealistic timeframes. Several principals further contended that the increased accountability contributed to attrition in the principalship and fewer teachers entering administration.
  8. The high school principals saw themselves as being positively impacted by NCLB through becoming more focused in their instructional leadership. However, they also felt negatively impacted by the pressure they experienced from NCLB's focus on test scores for subgroups, and the different interpretation for graduation rates between states. From their responses to the interview questions, it can be concluded that the principals believed that they experienced public relations challenges with their communities when listed as a "needs improvement" or "failing" school with the focus being on test scores, when they may have also made improvements in other areas that were not part of NCLB AYP indicators.

9. The administrators regarded themselves as professionally and personally satisfied in their role as a high school principal through being more strategic in their instructional leadership, having effective human relations skills, and developing coping mechanisms to handle their day-to-day stressors. In sharing their recommendations with aspiring principals, the high school principals saw the need to be clear as to “why” you would want to become a high school principal and that the role required commitment, optimism, effective time management, and human relations skills to accomplish the instructional and non-instructional responsibilities. From their responses to the interview questions, it can be concluded that the principals believed that the role of the high school principalship operating within the context of NCLB mandates can be fulfilling, yet pressure-filled. However, a sense of hopefulness existed in order to work towards student achievement.

#### Implications

The researcher hoped that the findings of the study will add to the body of knowledge concerning the role awareness and perceptions of high school principals operating within the requirements of NCLB. Based upon the findings of the study, the following should be considered:

1. Local school boards and superintendents should assess the many responsibilities and demands on the time of high school principals and consider re-distributing responsibilities to teacher leaders so the principals’ efforts could be more directed on students accomplishing performance standards.
2. University leadership programs should develop course work that focuses on instructional and curriculum leadership that is designed to clarify the roles of principals and teachers in

the school improvement process towards student achievement according to AYP indicators.

3. University teacher education programs should include information on the role principals play in coordinating activities and services for teachers to improve their instruction and leadership.
4. The Georgia Department of Education should be made aware of the perceptions of limited funding to provide resources to address deficiencies evidenced in the subgroup population(s).

#### *Dissemination*

The results of the study should be reviewed by both practicing and prospective high school principals. The high school principals who were interviewed for the study provided a great deal of insight on school leadership while operating within a federal school reform initiative. Their stories are valuable resources for anyone aspiring to the high school principal's position or already in that role. To be available to a larger audience, the researcher planned to present the findings in the newsletter of the Georgia Association of Educational Leaders (GAEL). She had the study bound and published for reference purposes in the library of the Georgia Southern University.

#### *Recommendations*

The research findings suggest the following recommendations for fellow researchers on the position of the Georgia high school principal performing their roles within the context of a federal school reform initiative live NCLB:

1. Replicate the study in 2014 to determine changes in the perceptions of the Georgia high school principal's role.

2. Use the same qualitative format to interview long-term (more than 15 years) term and retired principals who were in their positions for the entire duration of the NCLB initiative.
3. Employ a quantitative instrument to compare the perceptions of all high school principals in Georgia on what the principal's role should be in reform efforts.
4. Conduct a combined quantitative and qualitative, mixed-method study to determine the relationship between high school leadership and student achievement relative to NCLB mandates for high schools.

### *Concluding Thoughts*

The purpose of the study was to describe the role awareness and perceptions of Georgia high school principals, thereby providing information about how a federal mandate such as NCLB, may affect their roles and responsibilities. The qualitative study was designed to relate the stories of five high school principals in Georgia who had been in high school administration pre- and post-NCLB at least 5 years. The researcher conducted in-depth interviews with the high school principals to determine their perceptions of how their roles had evolved over their tenures operating within the context of NCLB. The study was of particular interest to the researcher who was serving as a high school principal in Georgia during the research. Through the study, the researcher attempted to capture the commitment demonstrated in the careers of the high school principals and to express the sense of dedication of those who served in secondary leadership positions in Georgia.



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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) CERTIFICATION

Georgia Southern University  
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

**Institutional Review Board (IRB)**

Phone: 912-478-0843

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P.O. Box 8005

Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Ja'net Bishop  
503 Adams Mill Lane  
Evans, GA 30809

CC: Charles K Patterson  
Associate Vice President for Research

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs  
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees  
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Date: December 8, 2008

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered: H09121 and titled "Role Perceptions of Georgia High School Principals In Light of requirements of No Child Left Behind: A qualitative Profile of Experiences", it appears that (1) the research subjects are at minimal risk, (2) appropriate safeguards are planned, and (3) the research activities involve only procedures which are allowable.

*Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research.*

**This IRB approval is in effect for one year from the date of this letter.** If at the end of that time, there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period for an additional year. In the interim, please provide the IRB with any information concerning any significant adverse event, **whether or not it is believed to be related to the study**, within five working days of the event. In addition, if a change or modification of the approved methodology becomes necessary, you must notify the IRB Coordinator **prior** to initiating any such changes or modifications. At that time, an amended application for IRB approval may be submitted. Upon completion of your data collection, you are required to complete a *Research Study Termination* form to notify the IRB Coordinator, so your file may be closed.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Haynes  
Compliance Officer

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

Subject: Permission to Conduct a Doctoral Study with \_\_\_\_\_, High School Principal

Hello Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_,

My name is Ja'net Bishop and I am a doctoral candidate at Georgia Southern University. I am working on a dissertation entitled "*Role Perceptions of Georgia High School Principals in Light of Requirements of No Child Left Behind*". I was fortunate to work in Columbia County School system for 12 years prior to my current position at Warren County High School.

I would like to secure permission to conduct my study with your high school principal, \_\_\_\_\_. I recently spoke with him and he is willing to participate. If you agree, I will contact you again to submit an email to the Oversight Committee at Georgia Southern. I will also follow up with a formal letter of informed consent.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thanks for all that you do,

Ja'net Bishop  
Principal  
Warren County High School  
1253 Atlanta Hwy  
Warrenton, GA 30828

706.465.3742 (Work)  
706.860.3222 (Home)  
jbishop@warren.k12.ga.us

APPENDIX C

COVER LETTER TO HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal \_\_\_\_\_:

**Role Perceptions of Georgia High School Principals In Light of Requirements of No Child Left Behind: A Qualitative Profile of Experiences**

I am a doctoral student conducting research for my dissertation in the College of Education at Georgia Southern University. I am also the principal of Warren County High School. My research focuses on the perceptions of roles in light of the No Child Left Behind Act requirements by public high school principals in Georgia. I believe this qualitative study will contribute valuable information about administrators who have managed high school principalships within the NCLB federal reform.

As you know, and as research indicates, there is an increasing demand for principal accountability and student achievement with the mandates of *No Child Left Behind*. The principalship is facing challenges unlike before in history. Principals are expected to be instructional leaders on top of their full plate of managerial tasks, as such, the challenges of working conditions, principal shortages, professional preparation, and professional development will impact on filling principal vacancies. The policy implications of NCLB have created debates and initiatives affecting principal preparation and certification policies.

The primary purpose of my study is to gain insight into the role perceptions held by high school principals who work in public schools in Georgia in light of requirements of NCLB. Information will be gathered through qualitative interviews on perceptions held by principals who were in their position prior to (2001-2002) and after the implementation of NCLB regarding: their role(s) in general, their role(s) in addressing NCLB, perceived changes in their role(s) due to NCLB, and job-related pressures as a result of NCLB.

I would like to include you as a veteran high school principal (5 to 14 principals total) in my research. Your participation is important, appreciated, and valuable to this body of research and will be confidential! The participants will be given pseudonyms when the study's findings are reported. I will also send you and your superintendent a more in-depth letter that further explains my research and the contributions that I would like to make in this area.

As we all speed through Fall '08 for the school year, I would like to thank you in advance for your consideration to be interviewed. If you have any questions, please call or email me as indicated below. Thanks again and I look forward to hearing from you!!!

Sincerely,

Ja'net Bishop, Doctoral Candidate  
College of Education, Georgia Southern University

Principal, Warren County High School  
1253 Atlanta Hwy  
Warrenton, GA 30828  
Phone-706-465-3742, ext. 12  
jbishop@warren.k12.ga.us

APPENDIX D  
INFORMED CONSENT

## COLLEGE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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### DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP, TECHNOLOGY & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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## INFORMED CONSENT

### Informant

My name is Ja'net Bishop and I am a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University in Statesboro, Georgia. I am completing this study to fulfill partial requirements for the degree of *Doctor of Education*. I am conducting a study entitled "*Role Perceptions of Georgia High School Principals In Light of Requirements of No Child Left Behind: A Qualitative Profile of Experiences*". I would greatly appreciate your participation in this research as your story may assist aspiring high school principals in an era of No Child Left Behind, in their journey to become an educational leader. The research hopes to give "voice" to high school principals in their position pre-NCLB (2001-2002) and post-NCLB (2008-2009) by presenting a portrait of their perceived roles as impacted by NCLB.

Participation in this research will include completion of an in-depth interview that will last approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours at a time and location that is convenient to you. All interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. Each informant will receive a copy of the transcript from their interview. A copy of the interview questions will be provided to each informant prior to the interview. Follow-up interviews will be scheduled only as needed. There may be a total of 5-10 informants in this study. There are minimal discomforts and risks involved in this study and every effort will be made to make each informant as comfortable as possible.

Potential benefits for participation in this study are as follows. This study provides each informant with an opportunity to give an accurate, information-rich accounting of their high school principalship roles and the impact of NCLB. This valuable insight is critical to increase the knowledge base about the evolving roles of high school principals in addressing the requirements of NCLB. The benefits to society are that your stories are essential to accurately reflecting change and evolution in the profession and gaining understanding regarding the NCLB requirements' impact on the roles and responsibilities of high school principals.

The duration of this study is approximately three months. Data collection will begin in October 2008 and will be completed by December 2008. The information gathered will be kept strictly confidential. The names of each informant, school, and school district will be assigned a pseudonym on the transcriptions and in the research report. Only the researcher, informant, and faculty advisor will have access to the data. You have a right to ask questions and have those questions answered. If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me or my faculty advisor, whose contact information is located at the end of this informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-478-0843.



Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may end participation at any time by notifying me via email or telephone of your decision without penalty or retribution. During the interview, you also do not have to answer any questions on the instrument that you do not wish to. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please sign your name and indicate the date below.

You will be given a copy of this consent form to keep for your records.

**Title of Project:** *“Role Perceptions of Georgia High School Principals In Light of Requirements of No Child Left Behind: A Qualitative Profile of Experiences.”*

**Principal Investigator:** (Ja’net Bishop; 503 Adams Mill Lane, Evans, GA 30809;  
706.860.3222 (home); 706.465.3742 (work)  
email address: jbishop@warren.k12.ga.us

**Faculty Advisor:** (Dr. Brenda L.H. Marina; Georgia Southern University, P.O. Box 8124,  
Statesboro, GA 30460;  
email address: bmarina@georgiasouthern.edu)

Participant’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I, the undersigned, verify that the above informed consent procedure has been followed.

Investigator’s Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX E  
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

## Interview Protocol

**Informant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Place:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Time of Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Introductory Comments:** I would like to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. The purpose of this interview is to unfold the story of roles and changes in your role as a high school principal as impacted by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). This interview will last approximately 1 ½ hours to 2 hours and will be tape recorded to insure the accuracy of your story. Your participation is voluntary and you may stop the interview at any time. All of your responses will remain confidential as will your identity and school district. Please elaborate on specific details during the course of the interview. Please be honest, candid, and accurate as you respond to the questions. Are there any questions regarding the conditions of this interview?

### Profile

P.1 How many years have you been a principal; how many years at your current high school?

-Describe your school?

-Share what experiences you have drawn upon, if any, as a high school principal, to provide guidance and support in leadership.

-Describe your leadership style.

### 1. Role Perception

1.1 Please share with me how you became principal of a high school.

-When did you decide to become a high school principal.

-What did you perceive the role(s) of a high school principal to be prior to NCLB?

-What specific skills and abilities enabled you to perform your role(s) you believe are necessary in successful leadership of this school?

-How are you able to develop those skills?

### 2. Role(s) and NCLB Mandates

2.1 How would you describe a principal who meets the mandates of NCLB?

-How has the role in school leadership changed over your length of service?

-Tell me about a time when you became aware of changes in your leadership style due to NCLB reform.

2.2 Please describe how you meet the instructional expectations, as well as other assigned Responsibilities that are not instructional in nature. What are these responsibilities?

-How has this distribution of time in these responsibilities changed during your tenure as high school principal working within NCLB mandates?

### 3. NCLB Impact

- 3.1 What helps you to perform your roles and responsibilities within the NCLB mandates?
- 3.2 What are your thoughts about the NCLB standards-based accountability system that is in place in Georgia?  
 -How do you think it will affect education in general and the position of Georgia high school principal?  
 -What experiences have you had that caused you to believe NCLB has affected your role(s) as a high school principal.
- 3.3 Since NCLB, have the expectations of the state, superintendent, and board changed about how you should spend your time and where you should place your emphasis as a high school principal?  
 -How have they changed? Are there differences among the expectations of these three entities (state, superintendent, board)?  
 -Please give me some examples of these differences.
- 3.4 How do you envision the changes in the roles and responsibilities of high school principals in Georgia in the next 5 to 10 years?  
 -How do you believe NCLB will impact on remaining principals?  
 -In what way(s)?

### 4. Demands and Challenges

- 4.1 What NCLB-related changes have had the most positive impact on your role and why?  
 -What NCLB related changes have had the most detrimental or negative impact on your role and why?

### 5. Experiences and Recommendations

- 5.1 In summary, what kind of professional and personal growth have you experienced as a high school principal?  
 -What professional as well as personal satisfaction do you receive in your leadership role within NCLB?  
 -What are your coping mechanisms?  
 -What recommendations would you give to aspiring high school principals?  
 -Anything we have not talked about that you would like me to know?

### **Concluding Comments:**

I would like to thank you for sharing your experiences with me. I will be transcribing the interview and providing you with a copy for your review. I will also contact you via telephone should we need to schedule follow-up interviews.

Thank you.

APPENDIX F

PRE-NCLB (2001-2002) AND POST-NCLB (2008-2009)

GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

|     | <u>High School</u>      | <u>Region</u> | <u>Principal</u>      |
|-----|-------------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1.  | Appling Co.             | 2 AAA         | Phil Murphy           |
| 2.  | Baldwin                 | 2 AAAAA       | Lyn Chandler          |
| 3.  | Ben Franklin Acad.      | 5 A           | Dr. Wood Smethurst    |
| 4.  | Blessed Trinity         | 5 AAA         | Frank Moore           |
| 5.  | Brenen                  | 6 A           | Duane J. McManus      |
| 6.  | Cairo                   | 1 AAA         | Tim Helms             |
| 7.  | Central Gwinnett        | 8 AAAAA       | Valerie Clark         |
| 8.  | Columbus                | 2 AAA         | Susan Bryant          |
| 9.  | Commerce                | 8 A           | Donnie Drew           |
| 10. | Cross Creek             | 3 AAA         | Lyn Warren            |
| 11. | Dacula                  | 8 AAAAA       | Donald Nutt           |
| 12. | Dooly Co.               | 4 AAA         | Randolph Ford         |
| 13. | Dougherty               | 1 AAA         | Horace Reid, Jr.      |
| 14. | Evans                   | 4 AAAAA       | Donald Brigdon        |
| 15. | Fayette Co.             | 4 AAAAA       | Charles Warren        |
| 16. | Glascok                 | 7 A           | Sally Garrett         |
| 17. | Glenn Hills             | 3 AAA         | Jessie Chambers       |
| 18. | Grady                   | 5 AA          | Vincent Murray        |
| 19. | Greenforest Christian   | 5 A           | Leonard Fritz         |
| 20. | Harris Co.              | 4 AAA         | Roger Couch           |
| 21. | Harrison                | 5 AAAAA       | Donnie Griggers       |
| 22. | Henry Co.               | 4 AAAAA       | Andy Giddens          |
| 23. | Heritage                | 4 AAAAA       | Greg Fowler           |
| 24. | Jefferson Co.           | 3 AAA         | Dr. Molly Howard      |
| 25. | Kendrick                | 2 AAAAA       | Edward Barnwell       |
| 26. | Liberty Co.             | 3 AAA         | Paula Scott           |
| 27. | Lovett                  | 5 AAA         | William Dunkell       |
| 28. | Milton                  | 6 AAAAA       | Ron Tesch             |
| 29. | Model                   | 6 AA          | Glenn White           |
| 30. | Monroe                  | 1 AAAAA       | Deloris J. Spears     |
| 31. | North Gwinnett          | 8 AAAAA       | John Green            |
| 32. | North Hall              | 7 AAA         | Gary Brown            |
| 33. | Oconee Co.              | 8 AAAAA       | Mark Chanell          |
| 34. | Pace Academy            | 5 AA          | Lolly Hand            |
| 35. | Paideia                 | 5 AA          | Paul F. Bianchi       |
| 36. | Pelham Co.              | 1 A           | Larry Maffitt         |
| 37. | Pierce Co.              | 2 AAA         | Anthony Smith         |
| 38. | Pope                    | 6 AAAAA       | Charlotte Stowers     |
| 39. | Rabun Co.               | 8 AA          | Mark Earnest          |
| 40. | Rabun Gap               | 8 A           | Robert Brigham        |
| 41. | Richmond Hill           | 2 AAA         | Charles Spam          |
| 42. | Salem                   | 8 AAAAA       | Robert Creswell       |
| 43. | Sandy Creek             | 4 AAAAA       | Roy Rabold            |
| 44. | Schley Co.              | 2 A           | Larry Stubbs          |
| 45. | Southwest Atl.Christian | 5 A           | Geraldine A. Thompson |

|     |                     |   |       |                           |
|-----|---------------------|---|-------|---------------------------|
| 46. | St. Pius X          | 6 | AAAA  | Steve Spellman            |
| 47. | St. Vincent's Acad. | 3 | AAAAA | Sis. Helen Marie Buttimer |
| 48. | Terrell Co.         | 2 | A     | Douglas Bell              |
| 49. | Thomas Co. Central  | 1 | AAAA  | Frank Delaney             |
| 50. | Walker              | 6 | A     | Bob Murphy                |
| 51. | Walton              | 6 | AAAAA | Dr. Tom Higgins           |
| 52. | Ware Co. Magnet     | 1 | A     | Dr. Darlene Tanner        |
| 53. | Westover            | 1 | AAA   | Gene Melvin               |
| 54. | Wheeler Co.         | 2 | A     | William N. Black          |
| 55. | Winder-Barrow       | 8 | AAA   | Rob Johnson               |