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# A Qualitative Study: Understanding the Value of Formal Leadership Preparation Programs to Novice Principals

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A QUALITATIVE STUDY: UNDERSTANDING THE VALUE OF FORMAL  
LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO NOVICE PRINCIPALS

by

MARTY KENT SIMMONS

(Under the Direction of Leon Spencer)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative research study was to understand the value of formal leadership preparation programs as described by novice principals. The study focused on the lived experiences of the eight principals and their reflection of their formal leadership preparation experiences as they transitioned into the role of principal. Through a series of semi-structured interview questions, individual responses revealed leadership preparation experiences were beneficial and highly valued by novice principals. Formal experiences such as internships, mentoring relationships, shadowing experiences and educational leadership coursework were described as building blocks for novice principals. The results of this study state that leaders must know, understand, and do what is needed to impact student achievement. The implications of this study rest in the hands of the numerous stakeholders that stand to gain future leaders who are more than adequately prepared to effectively improve our schools and learning communities.

INDEX WORDS: Administrators, Educational leadership, Formal leadership preparation programs, Instructional leader, Novice principal and Principal

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LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO NOVICE PRINCIPALS

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DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

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2012

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LEADERSHIP PREPARATION PROGRAMS TO NOVICE PRINCIPALS

by

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## DEDICATION

With gratitude beyond words, I would like thank God for the things he has done and is doing in my life. I would like to dedicate this dissertation first to my wife Angela, my mother Cheryl and my Mother-in-law Eula and Mrs. Sarah Simmons for their continued support and encouragement throughout this process. My mother has continued to encourage me since my matriculation at Morehouse College. Her help, her sacrifices and those of others made it possible for me to obtain my initial degree, and I am forever grateful. My wife and children have continuously made it possible for me to complete assignments, travel to class and spend countless hours away from them as I completed my Masters, Education Specialist and this Doctor of Education Degree.

Secondly, I dedicate this dissertation to my sisters LaDedra, Shunta, and Quiana, my children Marcus and Maya, my nephews, and my nieces who hopefully will endeavor to be lifelong learners. I love you all very much. My uncle and my brother-in-laws have helped me collectively in their own individual way, and I thank each of you.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother Rose Mary and my aunt Lottie; they have always been strong figures in my life. My grandmother has been our ever faithful matriarch. My deceased family, grandparents, Bobby and Vennie, my father, James, my aunt Vennie Lee and my brother Carmiska are gone but not forgotten.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This study seeks to understand descriptions or labels novice principals assigned to their formal leadership preparation experiences and the influence those experiences have on their role as an instructional leader. It is widely known that “best practices” of teaching have been identified and incorporated in professional learning sessions to empower teachers and the quality of instruction provided to students (Holloway, 2002; Mohn & Machell, 2005; Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). Principals most often emerge from the ranks of teachers and have had similar classroom and training experiences in addition to their leadership preparation experiences (Holloway, 2000). Young and Creighton (2002) point out groups that previously had very little interest in educational leadership issues. The Eli Broad Foundation, the American of Colleges of Teachers Education, the Gates Foundation, and the National Business Roundtable, have also increased their attention on school and system leadership. Should “best practices” for leadership preparation exist, the lived experiences of novice principals might reflect these ideological and pedagogical ideals. Understanding these practices might directly or indirectly prepare better future leaders of tomorrow.

The more we learn today regarding the intrinsic and extrinsic abilities of novice principals to meet the challenges of beginning leadership, the better off tomorrow’s schools, students, and new principals will be (Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). Young & Creighton (2002) further state, although the criticisms of educational leadership have yet to reach the level of frequency of those aimed at teacher preparation, educational

leadership and leadership preparation are no longer immune to the critical gaze of their public. The investigator of this study hopes to understand the differences and similarities of various leadership preparation components and influences through the rich stories of novice principals in Georgia.

### **Background of Study**

A consensus exists that leadership preparation is vital for principals to be successful in the buildings to which they are assigned (Elmore, 2008; Orr, 2006; Young and Creighton, 2002). Hale and Moorman (2003) believe “leadership preparation programs are not providing the training needed for today’s public school leaders” (p. 1). Archer (2005) cites Arthur Levine’s comment regarding the need for skilled education leaders more than he has ever before, and our schools of education aren’t preparing those leaders. In 2006, Orr states, that the evolution of education may require the development of a new type of administrator with a different focus or indoctrination that will continue to sustain the many needs of the educational system of the future. Wilmore (2001) further posits that contemporary educational leaders must be prepared for the demands of their roles.

In all organizations, there is a need for leadership. Some organizations have multiple leaders, while others have a centralized leadership scheme and some organizations identify a single leader as the person to whom all accolades are given and to whom all of the blame befalls (Baldwin-Nye, 2007; MacGregor & Watson, 2008; Schutte, 2003). It became necessary to have such a leader when schools began to include more students, and as the one-room school suddenly became a building with multiple

classrooms and multiple teachers. Out of this need for a leader, the role of principal emerged (Young & Creighton 2002). Schutte (2003) describes traditional education and leadership in the following manner:

Prior to 1850, in the United States, most schools, both public and private, tended to be small and staffed by only one or two teachers. Thus, there was little need for full-time principals to handle administrative matters beyond the classroom. Administrative decisions, regarding personnel, finances, and the daily operation of schools, were made by school boards. As towns grew larger, local school communities found that one and two teacher schools were inefficient, so smaller schools were combined, and as the school became larger, more and more authority was given to the head teachers. During the period of 1840 – 1870, school committees in larger cities felt the need to delegate administrative responsibility. As schools grew larger and problems became more complex, head teachers began to acquire additional duties. In addition to tasks associated with instructional leadership, they assumed managerial duties of hiring staff, maintaining the school building and handling finances. The school principalship develops into an official post as the head teacher assumed increasing responsibility for the administration of the local school. As these head teachers were relieved of their teaching responsibilities the word “principal” came into common use. By 1870, the continued growth of cities resulted in school systems that increasingly grew in size and complexity (p. 13).

As the one room school expanded, the need for a centralized leader became imminent. Polka and Guy (1997) speculate it can be demonstrated that the evolution of the North American school into a complex heterogeneous systems is occurring dynamically and exponentially. Consequently, Polka and Guy (1997) assert educational planners must be prepared to comprehensively envision the next emerging interrelated developments that may occur as the issues at this core (people, things and ideas) continuously change. Baldwin-Nye (2007) identifies additional changes in education and leadership. During the mid to late 19<sup>th</sup> century, schools followed an industrialized model that often resulted in lecture as the prevailing method of delivering instruction. Students were passive participants in the learning process. The industrial model was accepted somewhat unquestioningly until around 1983 with the U.S. Education publication of *A Nation at Risk* which suggested that American students were not being adequately prepared for competing in global economies (Baldwin-Nye, 2007).

By the 21<sup>st</sup> century, educational leaders of the new millennium had provisions of No Child Left Behind and the competitiveness of their individual districts to address (MacGregor & Watson, 2008). Expectations included orchestrating a positive influence on student achievement, closing the achievement gap and preparing future leaders as their replacement. Pounder and Crow (2005) increasingly see the role of the school administrator as being more challenging and less desirable than the job is worth.

Hall (2006) says that over time, the traditional model of administrator preparation that delivers packaged, abstract learning disconnected from the realities of the school or the district are more complex now and programs are inefficient. Normore (2004)

maintains, administrators, more than ever, must know, understand, and be prepared to meet complexities and challenging demands that administrative position entails before considering the job. Blackman & Fenwick (2000) posit the school leader is expected simultaneously to take on numerous roles, to be a servant-leader, an organizational and social architect, an educator, a moral agent, a child advocate and social worker, a community activist, and a crisis negotiator all while raising students' standardized-test performance as well as meeting district and state expectations. Expectations include maintaining and monitoring events within the school to directing the staff along the chosen curriculum paths.

As a result of rising public expectations and changing conditions in schools, educational leaders no longer are primarily supervisors and building administrators. School administrators are feeling the effects of the public's changing expectations in the push to adopt expanded administrative roles; these roles include instructional leaders, constructive political leaders, and responsible managers (Barnett 2004; Normore, 2004). Principals are leading the redesign of their schools as instructional leaders (Page, 2006).

In an era of accountability, principals face an array of challenges as they learn on the job. The learning curve is exacerbated by the contextual nature of leadership albeit no two schools are the same relative to the students served, expectations of the community, and competence of the staff (Hausman, Crow, & Sperry, 2000). Educational administrators are responsible for shaping educational organizations that are highly effective, reflective and responsive to the needs of student learners (Ambach, 2006;



Elmore 2008; Groff, 2001; MacGregor & Watson, 2008). Barnett (2004) defines the role of principals as,

“leading professional development activities, helping school councils make decisions by consensus, preparing and facilitating analysis of standardized testing results, and leading their schools in ways that demand a complete understanding of effective instructional practices” (p.121).

Once leadership preparation was introduced into the conversation of principal accountability, other factors associated with the shortage (e.g., inadequate compensation, longer working days and school years, increased job related stress, and a lack of job security) moved from the center of the national conversation to the periphery.

By having a greater understanding of the impact leadership preparation plays in shaping effective redesign efforts in schools, principals are better positioned to create such an environment within their respective learning communities. Educational leadership as described by Rhett (2004) and Walker & Carr-Stewart (2006) has evolved out of a long standing need to provide structure and support for teachers, staff and students. Principals are often faced with maintaining a semblance of order within an increasingly hostile, unpredictable and conflict-laden environment.

Bloom and Krovetz (2007) describe the role of principal in historical terms; most principals have served in the assistant principal’s role or instructional coach positions before stepping into the principalship. Self-advocacy, more than adequate mentoring, and a solid graduate program enable potential leaders who serve for a few years in other

leadership roles amass many of the skills and much of the knowledge required to succeed as a principal. Page (2006) also supports the idea of professional and experiential growth of administrators. As principals prepare for their leadership roles, most advance through the steps as teachers; they then advance to positions as they get advanced degrees (Holloway, 2002; Page, 2006).

An overview of the reasons for the diminished pool of qualified applicants is offered by Shen (2004) as, the nature of the work, the elongated administrator work-day, the relatively comparable compensation of teachers to administrators, continuous conflict, and criticisms from both internal and external stakeholders. Restraining factors also involved night responsibilities for supervising sports events and other activities, excessive hours, politics and answering to a number of publics. This is not a new problem; there seems to be agreement that school administration is evolving and that principals are having difficulty keeping up with the changes (Groff, 2003).

To encourage the selection of potentially strong leaders whose ethnicity, values or behaviors may vary from the norm, other educational professionals such as teachers, school counselors, and university professors should participate in the tapping process (Pounder & Crow, 2005, Wilmore, 2001). Teachers who aspire to become administrators in spite of the challenges want experiences that immerse them in the realities of administrative work and help them prepare for success (Burdett & Schertzer, 2005). Gerald N. Tirozzi, the executive director of the National Association of Secondary Schools Principals says, “The assistant’s job, as a gateway to the principalship, should include all the duties of the principal, organized in ways that can use a person’s strengths,

depending on each school's need" (Richard, 2000, p.5). Bloom and Krovetz (2007) assert that, most principals have served in the assistant principal or resource teacher positions for a number of years before stepping into the role of principal. However, in these days of principal shortages, we have found that many assistant principals and instructional coaches are moving into the role of principal after serving for relatively short periods of time in these preparatory roles (Bloom & Krovetz, 2007).

*Assistant principals* aid the principal in the overall administration of the school. Some assistant principals hold this position for several years to prepare for advancement to principal jobs; others are career assistant principals. They are primarily responsible for scheduling student classes, ordering textbooks and supplies, and coordinating transportation, custodial, cafeteria, and other support services. They usually handle student discipline and attendance problems, social and recreational programs, and health and safety matters. They also may counsel students on personal, educational, or vocational matters. With the advent of site-based management, assistant principals are playing a greater role in ensuring the academic success of students by helping to develop new curriculums, evaluating teachers, and dealing with school-community relations—responsibilities previously assumed solely by the principal. The number of assistant principals that a school employs may vary, depending on the number of students (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007).

While educational leadership preparation programs at colleges and universities and leadership development in school districts are developing, varied and innovative instructional strategies and organizational structures to prepare school administrators to lead schools in these challenging times, a few national studies indicate that these programs do indeed make a positive difference (Hess, 2003; Levine, 2005; Normore, 2004). Barnett (2004) states that there are big gaps between the readiness of administrators and the demands of the job; as a result, he believes that university programs must overhaul their programs through analysis and alignment.

The national standards movement in leadership preparation has developed sets of standards currently being used in many states and institutions to reform and assess preparation programs. Districts, professional associations, policy entrepreneurs and private businesses have all begun to carve off pieces of educational leadership program preparation for themselves (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). Elmore (2008) addresses the national standards movement by saying that despite the existence of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, curriculum and teaching in leadership preparation programs paints a picture relatively disconnected. The national standards movements in leadership preparation currently being used in many states to reform and assess programs are involved in collaborations between professional associations and universities (Young, et al 2005). More than 40 states have adopted standards for school leaders that were established by ISLLC. Traditional administrator preparation programs nationwide are detached from today's school environment according to Vitaska (2008). During the past decade the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education

(NCATE) and (ISLLC) has been working on joint standards for the preparation and development of school leaders (Wilmore, 2001). The Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) offers standards that school administrators must employ to meet the crucial needs of all students through a predetermined framework for the development of future school leaders as well as the professional growth of existing ones (Charlton & Kritsonis, Fall 2008).

Some states have developed academies, (Groff, 2003; Rhett 2004; Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006; Young & Creighton 2002) others have created consortiums with K-12 school districts and local universities and some districts have developed programs within their local area to address the need for effective and qualified administrators which include mentors or multiple year internships. Archer (2005) reports that states are now providing alternative routes to leadership certification. In fact, some large urban school districts (Boston, Chicago, and New York City) have initiated their own leadership preparation programs collaboratively with third party providers or through district lead initiatives (Elmore, 2008).

### **Statement of Problem**

Numerous studies have identified the need for effective leadership preparation; however, there is no consensus on the effectiveness of any particular model (Barnett, 2004; Glantz, 2007; Levine, 2005; Wilmore 2001). Elmore believes that the biggest challenge facing leadership programs is how to meaningfully reform the programs for leadership candidates (Elmore 2008).

Fewer studies have examined the various facets of the available programs to determine the success of individual scholars upon completion of the models in their role as instructional leaders and change agents. Few studies have focused on if or how preparation programs influence changes in participants' leadership practices (Crowie & Crawford, 2007). Understanding the knowledge, skills and experiences provided by principal preparation program is needed. Albeit needed, it is vital to understand what knowledge, skills and experiences make major contributions to the development of leaders. The literature fails to determine what components of leadership preparation programs contribute to the successful experiences of a principal (Archer 2005; Levine 2005; Harris, 2004). What is still unclear is how effective or ineffective the various program models currently are and how successful program graduates are in the field (Young and Creighton, 2002). Young and Creighton (2002) believe reformers cannot solve the problem of producing better leaders by attempting to produce greater numbers. According to Murphy (1998) a critical analysis of educational leadership preparation reveals that the act has become almost a cottage industry. Elmore (2008) says,

“Something is clearly afoot in the training of educational leaders. For more than a decade, academics and policymakers have been at work developing and implementing standards for the preparation of education leaders the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium. Now these standards have worked their way into the certification systems in most states.”(p.1)

## **Research Questions**

The overarching question is this: How do principals assess the value of their formal leadership preparation program?

The sub questions to guide the study are as follows:

1. How do novice principals assess the value of his/her leadership preparation program experiences?
2. What aspects do principals identify as the benefits/advantages of his/her leadership preparation program experiences?
3. What aspects do principals identify as drawbacks/disadvantages of his/her leadership preparation program experiences?
4. How do principals believe their leadership preparation program experiences impacts his/her role as instructional leader and successful leadership?

## **Significance of Study**

Research is needed to determine how practitioners in the field assess the value of their training from their own distinct descriptions. More research is warranted to understand how principals assess the influence, value or impact of their leadership preparation program, their role as school leaders, and their leadership style development. (Mohn & Machell, 2005) It is hoped that through greater articulation the author will understand how novice principals describe their leadership preparation experiences and the impact those experiences have on their role as an instructional leader.

It seems apparent to this investigator that leadership preparation is significant. Understanding practices that make leadership preparation effective is limited (Groff, 2003). The study cannot say what kinds of programs are more effective than others because that would imply a measure of effectiveness from the participants' descriptions. The study can look at programs and ask principals to describe whether their training prepared them for issues that they have encountered in their particular setting. Therefore, the significance of this study is to understand the value of leadership preparation programs in the continued professional growth of principals. This understanding might assist leadership preparation providers with a unique look at professional disclosure in reference to perceptions of preparedness for the role as an instructional leader. On-going professional development will sustain new leaders towards desirable school based experiences and effective management as an instructional leader (Peel & Wallace, 1996). While it is unlikely that one model of preparation will fit all or most circumstances, it is hopeful that some light be shed on which type of programs or which elements appear more effective. It is apparent that leadership takes on many personas, and the concept of leadership is extremely complex (Bloom & Krovetz 2007; Wilmore, 2001). Educational leadership is so much more than bus duty, lunch duty, extra-curricular activity duty, discipline, reading and responding to email, placing and returning phone calls, parent-teacher conferences, teacher evaluations, establishing and maintaining stakeholder relationships and public relations (Richard, 2000).



## **Research Procedures**

### **Research Design**

A qualitative research design will be employed for this study. The choice of qualitative methods was determined by the nature of the research. Creswell (2003) states, "The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role or interaction" (p.198).

Interviews will be conducted and analyzed for common themes. In this study, administrators with one or two years of experience will be sought to relate their lived experiences and reflect on the extent to which elements of their leadership preparation program impact their job effectiveness as instructional leader.

### **Participants**

The sample will consist of eight principals who have completed their first or second year of administrative experience. This population has participated in some type of leadership preparation program, possesses leadership certification and possibly a degree in leadership. They are actively engaged in day to day leadership activities which might suggest a return to theory, other types of literature and manuals that were encountered during their leadership preparation experiences. Participants with more than two years of experience may develop a leadership style very dissimilar to their original orientation. Participants may have been challenged to reconcile the theoretical and practical validity of their leadership preparation models as a result of their day-to-day experiences.

Purposeful sampling will be used to select information rich cases with respect to the study. This sample is typically small. Purposive sampling of 8 to 12 novice principals with one to two years of administrative experience within a defined Regional Educational Service Agency in Georgia will provide a representative group.

### **Instrumentation**

Interview protocols will be established to understand how individuals feel about their leadership preparation experience and its effectiveness. A semi-structured interview format will be used. “Semi-structured interviews are best conducted toward the end of the study, however, rather than at the beginning, as they tend to shape responses to the researcher’s perceptions of how things are. They are most helpful for obtaining information to test a specific hypothesis that the researcher has in mind, according to Frankel & Wallen (2000). Several types of interview questions will be asked of the population, including background and demographic, knowledge, experience or behavior, opinion or values, feeling or sensory questions. An appropriate setting will be chosen for the interview.

### **Data Collection**

The primary data source is interview. The researcher will use one data source in this study semi-structured interview. Each interview will be conducted in a space conducive to privacy and minimal interruptions. Each principal will be informed of the various recording devices used to create a record of the session. The principals will also be asked to reflect on their administrative experiences and leadership preparation courses

or modules in addition to formal leadership preparation programs. This reflection will be recorded electronically during the interview and transcribed.

***Delimitations***

- This study is restricted to administrators with a minimum of one and no more than two years of administrative experience as a principal.
- This study may not produce findings that can be generalized to a larger population.

***Limitations***

- There is limited research on the effectiveness of leadership preparation programs.
- Little research discredits educational leadership preparation and broad research insight may not be available.

***Terms***

*Administrator/Educational Leaders*- “Positions requiring a Leadership certificate are those in which an individual has the authority and/or responsibility, in a supervisory role for Board approved educational programs and/or personnel required to hold certification for their assigned job as determined by the Professional Standards Commission of Georgia” (Georgia PSC online).

*Instructional Leader* - principals that take action or delegate to others to promote growth in student learning. The instructional leader makes instructional quality the top priority of the school and attempts to bring that vision to reality.

*Novice* - a principal with only two or three years of experience as an instructional leader

*Pedagogy*- Learning approaches. Models of learning; Links between theory and practice.

*Principal* – a certificated educational leader assigned to a school as the top/head of the organizational chart

### **Summary**

Effective leadership preparation is a vital part of school reform and school improvement efforts. The recognized importance of effective leadership preparation has prompted providers to change their focus to include instructional roles, leadership roles and improving student learning in real situations. While it is not clear that a true disconnect exists between leadership preparation programs and lived experiences, this study seeks to understand the lived experiences of principals as they reflect on the value of their program models. Colleges and Universities, private organizations, states and local districts endeavor to prepare effective leaders. As principals and other potential educational leaders prepare for leadership roles, most do so by earning advanced degrees and endorsements. Preparation for leadership is necessary for individuals who aspire to fill new or vacated positions and as a means of addressing professional development as a major effort to improve schools. Ideally, determining best practices for leadership preparation for the state of Georgia would enhance the current body of knowledge already in existence. Georgia, like so many other states, will possibly face a deluge of vacant leadership positions in the very near future. This type of information has been addressed on a national scale but none as specific as this single state. Greater opportunities for involvement in instructional leadership and management of school-level change and expanded responsibility with the principal concerning all administrative functions would strengthen the competencies of new leaders. It appears that future

leaders are available and willing to answer the call to implement professional standards. A move away from the practice of isolated generic skills being presented by an expert, isolated training events, isolated skills and experiences toward job-embedded learning, individual learning coupled with organizational development and school focused activities is swiftly becoming the professional development model to use with new leaders.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **Introduction**

Principals are responsible for maintaining and managing complex organizations with a variety of challenges and often unpredictable outcomes. Principals must be able work quickly, shift gears easily and complete multiple tasks simultaneously (Lovely, 1999). By all accounts, novice principals experience intense, unrelenting stress as they try to improve their textbook understanding of leadership to the real world of practice. They have to master technical skills; learn to deal with a variety of constituents, and wrestle with doubts about personal adequacy, all in a fast paced environment that leaves little time for reflection and thoughtfulness (Lashway, 2002). If principals are to tackle the brevity, variety and fragmentation embedded in their work they will require ongoing support, comprehensive experiences and access to resources (Lovely, 1999). The foundation of support for most principals begins with coursework and class sessions. Additional components of leadership preparation might also include single or multiple internships, limited field experience, and a mentor or building supervisor. Various methods are currently used to prepare today's leaders for tomorrow's schools. Crowie and Crawford (2007) examined leadership preparation programs and state, "principal preparation is a crucial aspect of school development and progression, and that programs

of preparation should have positive outcomes for those who undertake them” (p.129).

They further reiterate:

“Educational leadership is widely recognized as complex and challenging. Educational leaders are expected to develop learning communities, build the professional capacity of teachers, take advice from parents, engage in collaborative consultative discussion making, resolve conflicts, engage in educative instructional leadership and attend respectfully, immediately, and appropriately to the needs and request of families with diverse cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Increasingly, educational leaders are faced with tremendous pressure to demonstrate that every child for whom they are responsible is achieving success” (p. 130).

In 2007, Crowie and Crawford continue to address the issues of leadership preparation by citing two imperatives that overlap. They first identify the needs of the system to consider succession planning to ensure the quality and development of schools. The other issue relates to the needs of the individual and the importance of encouraging people to want to be principals and providing opportunities which allow aspiring school principals to acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding (Crowie & Crawford, 2007). Harris (2007) supports Crowie and Crawford and describes pre-appointment as an act of faith highlighting how the introduction of accountability and standards has been viewed negatively as a controlling mechanism and as a way of limiting what heads or principals do. Leadership preparation can no longer end with a certificate, certification or

a degree, it must be on going, continuous, and supportive throughout the career of the principal. (Zellner, D. et al 2002)

### **Historical Context**

It was not until after 1920 that the principal was relieved of teaching duties. Between 1920 and 1930 (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1975) the principalship gradually shifted away from direct inspections, classroom supervision, and instructional development and assumed a more managerial function. The principal's primary duty was to offer assistance to less experienced teachers in areas such as instruction, curriculum, and classroom management (Glanz, 2007). Glatthorn & Jailall (2000) identified 1945 – 1952 curriculums as life adjustment with the theory that curriculum should help students adjust to adulthood demands, especially those related to pursuing careers; 1960 – 1970 identified structure of the curriculum by emphasizing the concepts and syntax of inquiry of the academic disciplines; 1960 – 1975 identified free curriculums that advocates claimed would bring freedom to children and youth, especially the oppressed; 1980 to present identified as computerized curriculums to describe several ways of using a computer with the curriculum; 1985 to present identified as Total Quality Education Curriculums classified as technological because they advocate a means-end orientation and emphasize using technology to achieve quality; 1985 – 1995 identified as Outcome-Based Education curriculums which was a technological model of curriculum change; 1990 to present identified as constructivist curriculums classified as having a cognitive processes orientation; 1992 to present Standards-Based curriculums addressed the



concern for content standards which clearly represent the views of those who advocate academic rationalism, even though they probably do not use the term.

Graduate programs in Educational Leadership have had a relatively brief history, compared to other professional fields and the arts and sciences disciplines. McCarthy (1999) cites preparation programs have evolved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, responding to external factors as well as the changing roles of educational leaders. Milstein and Krueger (1997) assert that universities set the stage for graduates by suggesting the importance of at least six program components: sufficient time on task, placement with mentors and mentor training, multiple and alternative internship experiences, reflective seminars, field supervision, and program coordination. Ridenour and Twale (2005) maintain, educational leadership preparation programs are implored to enable graduate students to become the leaders who will face these difficult challenges. McCarthy (1999) characterizes educational leadership programs as complacent and unresponsive to needs for reform. Pallas (2001) contends that traditional developmental models that prepare educational leaders have proven ineffective primarily because these models assume naively that adult students are passive learners and their “personal epistemologies” are irrelevant to the research processes they undertake. Preparation programs are fundamentally focused on role transformation, that is, socialization to administrative culture from teacher culture focusing on learning a new language, concepts, and skills and preparing to change from one educational orientation to another (Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001). According to Milstein and Krueger (1997), the National Commission on

Excellence in Education concluded as early as 1983 that preparation programs were marked by:

“lack of a definition of good educational leadership... lack of systemic professional development for school administrators... and a lack of sequence, modern content, and clinical experiences” (p vi-xvii).

As early as 1988 researchers called for dramatic changes to prepare school administrators if they are to lead their schools and faculties rather than just manage them (Shibles, 1988).

### **Current Leadership Preparation Context**

An additional review of the literature addressing leadership preparation yields a plethora of valuable information describing the role of today’s school administrators (Barnett,2004; Cowie & Crawford 2007; Dufour, 1999; Fink & Resnick, 2001; Hallinger & Heck, 1998; King, 2002; Lockwood, 1996; Shibles, 1988; Zeitoun, 2002) moving from the role of a manager to the role of an instructional leader. Instructional leadership differs from that of a school administrator or manager (Phillips n.d.). Lashway (2002) cites the relentless growth of standards-based accountability systems coupled with heavy pressure to provide tangible evidence of success, and have reaffirmed the importance of instructional leadership. The approximately 500 programs in the United States generally have a similar goal: provide quality pre-service leadership preparation (Berry & Beach, 2009). Orr (2006) cites an estimated 450 to 500 programs in schools and colleges of education offer leadership preparation culminating in master’s (472 institutions),

specialist (162 institutions) and doctoral (199 institutions) degrees representing a significant resource for higher education.

Butler (2008) identifies the accountability movement – culminating with the federal No Child Left Behind law in 2001- has put pressure on principals to improve student performance, resulting in school leaders' transitioning from a more administrative role becoming more heavily involved in assessment, instruction, curriculum and data analysis. Walker and Carr-Stewart (2006) cite in their study, "The more we learn today from novice principals about how to meet the challenge of beginning leadership, the better off tomorrow's schools, students, and new principals will be" (p. 29 ). They further contend that principals are often faced with maintaining a semblance of order within an increasingly hostile, unpredictable and conflict –laden environment. They have to learn the new culture while attempting to effect change within it. Principals tend to interact more with those who are similar to themselves and to utilize the same perspective as those with whom they share a similar viewpoint. Once the individual adopts a particular view, it becomes the working conception of the world, and this frame of reference is used to solve each situation encountered by the individual (Walker & Carr-Stewart, 2006). Peterson and Kelly (2001) support the premise that principals have always needed a variety of knowledge and skills to carry out the many activities they are responsible for... But recently there have been some changes in the principal's work.

Davis et al (2005) writes that today's leadership programs should focus more on ethical, social, and cultural influences on the job. Preparation for leadership is considered necessary for individuals who aspire to fill new or vacated positions and as a means of

addressing professional development as a major effort to improve schools. Today's leaders need preparation to be the instructional leaders required to improve student achievement (Barnett, 2004; Crowie & Crawford 2007; Elmore 2008; Lovely, 2007; Orr, 2006). The vitality of leadership in the present educational arena necessitates effective administrative preparation if the school leader is going to be successful. Effective leadership is necessary in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Archer, 2005).

The literature about successful planning for school improvement at the dusk of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as at the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century makes it clear that if schools are to improve, then those who lead them must improve (Reavis & Polka, 1999). Because of student achievement, “university training programs should ensure that each of their courses contain activities that encourage the development of a school culture that provides high expectation for students” (Barnett, 2004 p. 127). The consensus is clear that leadership preparation is vital (Militello, Gajda, & Bowers, 2009; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). Although various models and methods facilitate the preparation of leaders for administrative roles, the best possible preparation is the actual day-to-day work. Vann (1991) writes that no textbook on the principalship, no college course, no amount of discussion with anyone can substitute for actions under fire. At the heart of the ferment has been some debate over the effectiveness of preparation programs – and colleges and universities in which they are nested and of the preparation of leaders to manage schools in which all youngsters are well educated (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). Programs have included college or university and school district partnerships, and programs that are not affiliated with a college or university such as state-level or local

districts and private organizations. Leadership programs are experimenting with curriculum and course offerings, methods, and program coordination hoping to enhance principal practice without empirical data to inform their design (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Criticized during every phase of its history, educational administration preparation programs continue to be perceived as failing to meet the challenges of developing school leaders (Elmore, 2007; Murphy, 2006).

### **Preparation Program Components**

According to Davis et al. (2005), leadership preparation programs should adhere to a strong preponderance of content that addresses professional development in the areas of leadership, management, instructional leadership as well as state licensing standards. The Wallace Foundation advocates the strong development linking leadership preparation programs and state licensing in their 2005 publication (Wallace Foundation, 2005). Program content of leadership programs are strengthened when they incorporate instructional leadership, organizational development, change management, as well as leadership skill development. School improvement and student achievement should influence more research that addresses leadership behaviors that impact students, teachers and the learning environment (Davis et al., 2005). The National Commission for the Advancement of Educational Leadership Preparation (NCAELP) aligns with characteristics categorized as the essential features of preparatory programs in all but one area. The NCAELP recommendations advocate professional development activities which promote lifelong learning activities tailored to meet individual learner's needs at various stages of their leadership career (Peterson, 2001; Wilmore, 2001; Young, 2002).

Milstein and Krueger (1997) identify successful leadership programs as those that pay attention to the key program elements that must be fostered if meaningful improvements are to be introduced and. An important component of these programs includes, readiness for program change, recruitment and selection of students, academic offerings and teachings strategies, learning in cohorts, and resource acquisition.

Orr (2006) and Davis et.al. (2005) categorize reputable leadership programs in terms of their vision, purposes, and goals, and the degree to which they are coherent. The rich description of a well-designed leadership program will link numerous learning experiences as well as encourage effective administrative practices. The series of learning activities and experiences should foster a greater degree of self-reflection and opportunities to apply new knowledge in practical every-day settings (Davis et al., 2005).

A sizeable body of research suggests most adults learn best when exposed to experiential learning situations requiring the application of acquired skills, knowledge, and problem solving strategies (Davis et al., 2005). Internship experiences are an example of experiential learning situations which are productive and beneficial which also provide opportunities for the learner to grow in a non-threatening setting with the support of a mentor (Daresh, 2001). Cohorts have become increasingly popular to encourage the development of a lasting support network for leadership program participants. The irrefutable benefits emphasize components such as shared authority for learning, opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in practice-oriented situations. The positive effects of cohorts include enhanced feelings of group affiliation and

acceptance, social and emotional support, motivation, persistence, group learning, and mutual assistance (Davis et al., 2005).

Davis et.al (2005) believes the use of mentors in leadership preparation programs has become popular. Peterson and Kelly (2001) point out the actors involved in preparing educational leaders, “ university preparation programs, district administrators, human resource managers, public agencies, private providers of professional development, policymakers and current principals” (p. 10) —are all important elements of a disjointed system that shapes the knowledge, skills and abilities of principals. A mentor’s support can be invaluable. They not only advocate for the learner but guides and directs learning experiences (Davis et al., 2005)

### **Colleges and Universities**

Barnett (2004) states while faculties in universities enjoy academic freedom, it seems obvious that university programs must ensure that their graduates are prepared for today’s challenges. Barnett (2004) believes accomplishment in part through “curriculum alignment work, requiring expected course outcomes to align with applicable national standards, working with practitioners in effective schools and putting into place on-going program assessments with strategies to improve those areas not meeting the needs of today’s educational leaders” (p. 122). Similarly, Greenlee (2009) points out that while expectations of school leadership to address issues of diversity and social justices have increased, educational leadership faculty continue to train candidates for traditional school environments.

University courses need to create an open dialogue so that colleagues can pose questions about the nature of schooling, learning, and teaching from diverse groundings and assumptions (Aitken, Bedard & Darroch, 2003). Peel, Wallace, Buckner, Wren, and Evans (2001) indicated that universities have traditionally focused on introducing potential administrators to the latest trends and theories in educational leadership while providing few practical skills for applying that knowledge to the real world. Murphy and Vriesenga (2006) addressing scholars and practitioners alike have claimed that research on educational administration is lacking... reviewers have unearthed problems in the quality and utility of research in education administration as well as with the quantity. Research on educational leadership preparation programs, faculty members, and students is needed to inform deliberations about how to better prepare school leaders (McCarthy, 1999) The venue where learning takes place for school leaders according to Mohn and Machell (2005) could be classified or labeled as either university-based administrator preparation or staff development. Barnett (2004) states that “to be relevant, university preparation programs must complete comprehensive program analysis, identify content gaps, determine instructional implications, and align the curriculum to national standards” (p.122). When program content based on national standards like NCATE and ELLC is mapped through the program of study, students receive a full spectrum of basic knowledge; authentic content, assignments and assessments not only to engage students but also to provide them with patterns of practice to replicate problem-solving experiences which will serve them later (Greenlee et al., 2009).



## **Faculty**

Educational leadership programs shifted from a long history of being white male students taught by white male faculty in the last decade or two, to a majority of students being white female (Greenlee et al., 2009). Militello, Gajda, & Bowers (2009) express a concern that professors of educational leadership look to the state administrator standards as a guide for determining the scope, sequence and content of leadership preparation programs. Educational leadership faculty holds some responsibility for developing school leaders who hold a social justice agenda and are prepared to forge democratic communities, attack inequitable treatment and champion advocacy-oriented action so success of all children can become a reality (Green et al, 2009). Barnett (2004) thinks a working knowledge of national standards and their implications for university preparations is critical. Educational leadership preparation program faculty members should use standards to develop a shared understanding about the types of programs that they need to design for those seeking a principal's license. Elements of the standards can be addressed, spiraled, and sequenced purposefully throughout the program, as opposed to courses being offered based on the individual desires of available instructors (Militello, Gajda, & Bowers, 2009).

## **Mentors**

Many university preparation programs provide students the opportunity to work with practicing administrators through the practicum experience (Barnett, 2004). Concerns related to traditional, university-based preparation programs have included a heavy reliance on theory with little connection to practical application that could lead to

improved student learning. Young (2005) says institutions often perform the function of providing degrees and preparing individuals for certification. Institutions also vary in their focus on leadership according to Young. Some are defined broadly to encompass a range of leadership from teacher to district level leadership while others may focus more narrowly on positional preparation for the principalship and/or superintendency (Young, et al 2005). Common criticisms of university-based preparation programs include a weak knowledge base, fragmented programs, and lack of attention to practice (Murphy, 1992). A major shortcoming of the university-based administrator preparation programs relates to the quality of candidates seeking entry to programs relaxed admission standards (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001; Milstein & Krueger 1997). Ranis (2003) points out "preparing tomorrow's leaders of schools for their roles as managers of complex organizations can take on many forms, but a very common training forum is the use of graduate level courses in education administration in School of Education" (p. 3). The most significant government influence has been through state licensure mandates (Jackson, 2001).

### **State/ Local and Organizational Models**

States across the country are examining ways to address the shortage of candidates for positions in school leadership. Mohn and Machell (2005) support state certification requirements drive pre-service learning activities for those seeking formal leadership positions. Often learning activities occur at the learner's work site and are facilitated by administrative practitioner colleagues. The roles of principals, superintendents, and other education leaders have expanded during the past decade to

include a larger focus on teaching and learning, professional development, data-driven decision making, and accountability (Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000).

Orr (2006) indicates most states stipulate specific degrees, majors, courses, internships, and other preparatory experiences for certifying district and building leaders and these certification requirements, in turn, influence the content and scope of graduate programs. Some states have passed legislation that allows teachers with leadership experience and master's degrees in areas other than administration to become certified as administrators. Others have passed laws that grant a waiver to people who hold master's degrees in business management or public policy and who have been hired by a school district that allows them time to complete the educational requirement for certification. Other states are looking at their certification requirements and gauging where those rules reflect what is actually needed to be a successful school leader. Still others are looking at recruiting from other states by easing the reciprocity requirements for licenses and finding ways to make retirement and benefit packages more portable (Groff, 2003). In 2003, Groff identified Florida and Michigan as states with the least stringent requirements for principals. Local districts can set their own standards. States such as Texas, Vermont and New Jersey currently have laws that allow school districts to hire people as school leaders who have a master's degree in areas such as management or public policy (Groff, 2003)

North Carolina fills in the gap in the preparation of administrators by combining formal training and on-the-job socialization. In 1987, Peterson points out that those academies are more costly in both money and time than the typical one-shot workshop;

the greatest cost is the time the superintendent or other administrators must devote to nurturing leaders during the school year. “First the academies attract teachers, incumbent assistant principals, and other district personnel before they have been shaped by the job’s role expectations and demands” (p. 47). Peterson, Marshall and Grier, (1987) further explore the academy asserting, “Second, academies influence bright, motivated teachers to consider administration and bring women and minorities in the pool of applicants” (p. 47). States have developed academies to further utilize available resources for the purpose of preparing new leaders to fill positions in various areas. Peterson (1987) also states that a district may develop an outstanding candidate for principal only to lose him or her to another district. Additionally, Peterson (1987) cites that no guarantees exist that all participants will be promoted, and tensions may develop between assertive newcomers and practicing administrators who prefer a low profile. Nonetheless, Peterson supports the academies because they deliver technical training, attract new recruits, shape a culture of effectiveness and increase the pool of qualified personnel. Other states utilize academies as shown in Table 1 Statewide Leadership Academies: A 50 State Scan. Despite the cost and risks academies can refashion our administrative workforce to be more responsive to local needs and to issues of educational quality and equity (Peterson, 1987)

An additional program in use in North Carolina is the Principal’s Executive Program, one of a series of programs that the North Carolina Center for School Leadership Development offers to support aspiring, novice, and experienced educators (Pounder and Crow, 2005). This program like many others leads to state administrator

license. A disconnect between theory and practice results in having too few field laboratories. Field assignments must be completed with complex school wide environments. In addition, because administrators are typically full-time educators working in a variety of schools while attending a preparation program in the evenings or on weekends, university faculty often work with a different K -12 schools for each candidate in the program. North Carolina also has a Fellows Program. This is a two-year fellowship program for those educators who intend to pursue the principalship. To participate in the fellows program, interested educators apply to one of North Carolina's Master's in School Administration (MSA) program. If selected, the aspiring school leaders take a 2-year leave of absence from their school in order to participate in the 2 year program. They receive scholarship/stipends during the 2 year program. The first year, fellows complete the coursework in the MSA. The second year, fellows participate in a 1-year (10 months) internship in a North Carolina public school or charter school. Of the 935 graduates of the program, 96% have obtained jobs as AP's, principals, central office executives, and superintendents. Aspiring principals who do not participate in this fellowship and internship complete the internship requirement of their preparation program.

Alabama does not require a full-year internship (each university and district sets the time limit according to the districts' needs). The state has outlined explicit criteria about the structure and content of the internships as well as a description of university and district partnerships as related to the internships. Candidates in Alabama instructional leadership preparation programs must experience an internship in which the

following occurs: Collaboration between the university and LEA that anchors internship activities in real world problems which instructional leaders' face, provides for appropriate structure and support of learning experiences, and ensures quality guidance and supervision.

Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) provides various professional development programs which culminate in ongoing, structured networking for principals who participate (Davis et al., 2005). In Georgia, the Rising Stars Leadership Preparation Program is a performance-based educational leader program. The Collaborative consists of district(s) with similar needs, the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), the local university leadership preparation program, a GLISI program director, and GLISI-trained leadership performance coaches. Together, they create custom-designed practice experiences and coursework for their aspiring leaders and/or assistant principals. Using GLISI's library of Performance-based Modules as curriculum, at least 50 percent of the program consists of practice in the actual school setting with feedback against clear criteria. Participants archive evidence of their proficiency in an electronic portfolio. The project was piloted in 2004 – 2005, and the state wants to replicate and institutionalize the program's core principles and strategic elements statewide to high-need school districts. The goal is to have 180 newly licensed school leaders prepared to quickly and positively impact student achievement in the home districts by 2008 (Isakson, 2005). The School Administration Managers (SAMs) project is dedicated to providing the necessary data that would allow the role of the principal to change from the managerial leader to the instructional leader thereby allowing more time

to be spent on improving teaching and learning in their school and district. The SAM Initiative is a process that allows principals to focus time on improving instruction and learning. As a part of SAMs, principals do not stop managing their buildings – they simply learn to delegate some of their management responsibilities -- creating more time to spend on teaching practice, student learning and school improvement. The SAM Project consists of five core elements:

- A readiness and willingness by principals and districts to commit to increasing time for instructional leadership;
- An initial Time/Task Analysis Data Collection™ of how the principals spend their time;
- Principals' engaging with a School Administration Manager (SAM) in daily meetings;
- External coaching; and
- Follow-up Time/Task Analysis Data Collection after one year to assess improvement.

The SAM Initiative helps principals assess how they are using their time so they can make continual improvements. Principals first receive baseline data from Time/Task Analysis Data Collection. Data collectors shadow principals for five days and record in five-minute increments how much time they spend on management, instructional or personal tasks. Principals use this data to create goals for the time they spend on instructional leadership. One year later, Time/Task Analysis Data Collection is completed again to assess improvement. Principals meet daily with a School

Administration Manager (SAM). The SAM may be a new staff position or an existing staff member who takes on new duties. The SAM works with the principal to analyze how time is being use, shift managerial duties to others and establish the next day's calendar. During meetings, they use a software calendar program, TimeTrack, which was developed for this purpose. The primary goal is to increase the principal's time on leading instructional improvement. Principals and SAMs meet monthly with a Time Change Coach. Coaches are retired school administrators who are selected and trained. In these meetings, the Time Change Coach helps the principal/SAM team reflect on progress and challenges, identify professional development needs, and connect with other SAMs and principals in the SAM network. The SAM Initiative helps principals use a range of data to further reflect on their practice and develop a plan to increase time spent as instructional leaders. In addition to providing principals with data on how their time is spent, the initiative also helps them analyze results from school and community surveys (Georgia Leadership).

Georgia state regulations prior to April 2008 required school leadership candidates to have three years of teaching experience as well as a leadership certification and a master's degree; therefore, school leaders could only come from the ranks of teachers. Georgia previously expected its leaders to have had at least three years of classroom experience before assuming a leadership role (Page, 2006). In April 2008, Georgia changed the rules,

recognizing the impact that leaders have on 21st century school improvement and student achievement... components such as: new



preparation program standards which include a performance-based, advanced degree requirement (PSC Rule 505-3-58); a new state content assessment (Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators – GACE); and, a new certificate structure which not only differentiates between building level and system-level leadership duties but is directly connected to the specific job held by the educational leaders. (Appendix C)

These changes will affect educators who will obtain leadership certification in the future, those already holding Georgia leadership certificates, those currently enrolled in leadership programs, and educators moving to Georgia with out-of-state leadership preparation and/or certificates. New Georgia educational leaders must possess their leadership credentials and have some leadership experience before becoming a principal. In today's public schools, the role of the principal is vital, complex, and stressful. To maintain a pool of well qualified principal candidates, school districts and universities must identify, nurture, and support these talented professionals- both male and female in equitable numbers (Holloway, 2000).

Georgia again revisited the credentialing process for educational leaders in 2010. A major redesign effort focused on how the PSC certifies Georgia educational leaders and the preparation needed for that role has been ongoing for a number of years.

The new PSC Rule 505-2-.300, Educational Leadership, became effective April 15, 2008 and defines the positions to which it applies as follows: Positions

requiring a Leadership certificate are those in which an individual has the authority and/or responsibility, in a supervisory role, for Board-approved educational programs and/or personnel required to hold certification for his/her assigned job as determined by the Professional Standards Commission.” The new leadership program, which requires local school systems or RESAs to collaborate with leadership preparation institutions to create a program design that meets the needs of both the higher education institution and the local school system, replaces the old “L” certificate with a new Performance-Based “PL” certificate. (Phil Hartley)

The most frequently asked question is how the new Rule will affect educators who currently hold Georgia Clear Renewable Leadership “L” certificates or endorsements.

Local districts have sought to prepare aspiring leaders through a variety of measures within the scope of ensuring that viable candidates are prepared for leadership roles (Barnett 2004). The Calgary, Alberta Board of Education piloted a program in 1987 of professional development that complemented on-site apprenticeship training and bridged the gap between a participant’s previous role and his or her new role as an administrator (LaRose, 1987). This program was limited to 10 – 15 participants, monthly meetings, mentors, and observations. In the Capistrano Unified School District of California, candidates who already understand the culture of the schools and the school district fill administrative positions. This is done through a leadership development model consisting of four separate programs that include a teaching assistant principal module, assistant principalship, mentoring program for new principals and an outreach

program for experienced principals (Lovely, 1999). In this district, strong teachers are recruited and assigned a variety of administrative tasks and earn an annual stipend in addition to their regular salary. Assistant principals work with two principals and are often assigned to two schools. The position is designed to provide the assistant with all the experiences and responsibilities required of the principal. Ongoing training sessions and a mentoring component are also available to first year principals from veteran principals that include monthly workshops, the creation of a principal's resource binder, area planning meetings and group problem solving sessions. The New Teacher Center at University of California Santa Cruz and the Department of Educational Administration at San Jose State University sponsor a series of gatherings for brief breakfast meetings with the simple purpose of thinking about creating apprenticeships that prepare individuals for the principalship. Participants sign an agreement that commits both parties to shared outcomes and to some basic steps to be taken along the way (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001).

Montgomery County, Maryland Public Schools has a two-year training program that prepares individuals to become secondary school administrators. The first year assignment is to a middle level or high school as an assistant principal. During this time, monthly meetings and seminars are held as well as an assignment to a development team. The second year of the program the candidate completes the program at the initial assignment level and the training becomes more intense. Hirsh (2004) concluded that educators perceive staff development to be effective if it is seen as part of the school improvement process.

Crow and Matthews (1998) believe mentoring is beneficial not only because it provides administrators with specific ideas and strategies, but because it encourages them to be more reflective and analytical about their practice. This is a two-fold benefit as the mentors themselves gain insights into their craft and enthusiasm about their leadership roles. To help new principals succeed, more school districts are capitalizing on the expertise of their senior administrators by adding mentor programs to the mix of practical training programs for beginning principals (Malone, 2001). Malone (2001) identifies the task of the mentor as defining a unique relationship with his or her protégé and fulfills a need unmet by any other relationship.

Young (2005) reminds us that states and other organizations have expanded the use of national standards to further improve their impact – these include the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAEP), and the Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL). The (SREB) offers professional development activities through its State Leadership Academy Network, a University Leadership Development Network and Leader Curriculum Training Modules (Davis et al., 2005). Additionally, Young (2005) points out that some state level reforms were spurred by the State Action for Educational Leadership Preparation (SALEP) grants funded by the Wallace Foundation. The Southern Regional Education Board has identified eight core components of a quality internship that give aspiring school leaders opportunity to apply and master the skills and knowledge necessary to improving student achievement in today's schools. These core components were derived from the following sources: a review of school leadership

literature, research on critical success factors of principals who significantly improved student learning in high need schools, a review of exemplary school leader preparation/professional development programs, and lessons learned from on-going SREB University leadership Development Network (Fry, Bottoms, & O'Neill, 2005).

The eight core components of effective internships according to Fry, et.al (2005) are as follows:

1. Collaboration between the university and school district to anchor internship activities in real-world school problems.
2. Guided by explicit school-based assignments designed to provide opportunities for the application of knowledge, skills, and ways of thinking.
3. A developmental continuum of practice that progresses from observation to scaffolded practice to activities related to the core responsibilities of school leaders.
4. Opportunities to work in diverse settings with the diversity of students, parents, teachers, and communities.
5. Guided by handbooks or other handbooks that clearly outline the expectations, processes, and schedules to interns, faculty, and district personnel.
6. Ongoing supervision by faculty supervisors who provide feedback to interns for their further development and improvements in practice.

7. Mentored/coached by experienced principals who model effective leadership practices and know how to guide interns throughout educative experiences.
8. Rigorous assessments of intern's performance on clearly defined leadership standards and indicators of competency using consistent assessment procedures. (p. 2)

### **National Standards Innovations**

The most prominent standards initiative was introduced by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) followed by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Jackson (2001) describes NCATE and ISLLC standards as being assessed by outcome or performance based evidence. In 2002 leadership standards were integrated and combined to form a new set of standards, the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC). Greenlee, Brunner and Hill (2009) advocate advances of preparation programs in aligning content with national standards, providing meaningful practical experiences and researching practices to advance the educational leadership knowledge base. Program standards for evaluating leadership preparation programs for national accreditation are used as the basis for standardized leadership test (Young et al, 2005; Wilmore, 2001). ISSLC Standard Two lies at the heart of instructional leadership (Barnett, 2004 p. 123). Wilmore (2001) states that standards identified by the ELCC seek to establish educational leaders who promote the success of all students. This sentiment focuses on student achievement. These standards are of critical importance in creating, nurturing, and sustaining a culture and climate

which values the soul of the school within its political, social, economic, legal and cultural context (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2001).

“The ISLLC standards are premised on the centrality of student learning as the measure of educational success. Each standard begins with the phrase; an administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by...” (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2002).

ISLLC developed the first universal standards for the licensing of school principals in 35 states in the United States (ISLLC, 1996). The result was a model of leadership standards designed to enhance an understanding of effective leadership, to reflect the changing nature of society, and to nurture an evolving model of the learning community. More importantly, the standards signaled a shift to linking the world of school leadership to improving the learning conditions for the student (Aitken, Bedard & Darroch, 2003).

Yet another standard-defining activity NCATE (2000) was undertaken. Curriculum guidelines for school administration were developed in partnership with a variety of national level professional associations. Five general areas defining leadership are subdivided in 12 leadership standards and subsequently into many more distinct curriculum outcomes (Aitken, Bedard & Darroch, 2003). A set of new standards for the preparation of educational leaders was ratified this week by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the accrediting body for teacher education. The standards will be used in educational administrator and leadership

programs in accredited schools of education. They were developed by a working group appointed by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA), an organization of nine national professional associations founded in 1988 to upgrade preparation and licensure requirements for educational leaders. The new standards depart from previous sets of standards for educational administrators. They include 11 knowledge and skill areas integrated under five broad categories: (1) Strategic Leadership, (2) Instructional Leadership, (3) Organizational Leadership, (4) Political and Community Leadership, and (5) Internship. The standards are stated as outcomes and require evaluation of programs based on outcomes criteria. They point to leadership skills required to generate a culture for effective teaching and learning in restructured schools where teachers are viewed as professionals (NCATE, 2001). These standards are also based on the belief that all children can and should learn.

Although the implementation of leadership standards is having a positive impact on leadership preparation programs, they have critics. C. M. Achilles and William Price (2001) argue the standards do not go far enough to address a structured and formalized plan of action for educational leaders. English (2002) has leveled similar criticism concerning the NCATE standards. He also identifies a disconnect for programs, the participants they serve and a standardized leadership model. The common set of expectations supported by the standards movement directs practitioners to reflect on instructional leadership as well as other leadership components (Wallace Foundation, 2005). Boeckmann & Dickinson (2001) point out that these standards may serve as guides for school improvement. Whether or not these standards are useable by school personnel has yet to be established.



Boeckmann (1999) found that although the ISLLC standards were highly regarded by administrators, they incorporated them into their day-to-day activities at much lower levels. Other studies cited by Boeckmann (1999) indicate few studies have been conducted recently to assess the value administrators place on standards that have been developed to help define the behaviors necessary for successful school leadership. Orr (2006) cites by 2005, one-third of all institutions nationally had gained ELCC recognition for their leadership preparation programs based on the new standards. Jackson (2001) hoped that by using what may be more authentic measures of assessment, licensure will be more closely connected with effective administrative leadership as well as the possibility of determining the effectiveness of preparation programs based on principal's performance on the job.

### **Leadership Preparation Criticisms**

Berry and Beach (2009) set the stage by stating there is no accepted theory of program preparation in educational administration. Additionally, they state variation in curriculum should be encouraged, an archetypical milieu should be recognized that encompasses all quality programs and focuses on quality preparation that blends practical, professional and the academic knowledge. Jackson (2001) cites the National Commission on Excellence in Education Administration's criticism of preparation programs for the following deficiencies:

“lack of definition of good educational leadership

lack of leader recruitment programs in the schools

lack of collaboration between school districts and universities  
the discouraging lack of minorities and women in the field  
lack of systematic professional development for school administrators  
lack of quality candidates for preparation programs  
lack of preparation programs relevant to the job demands of school administrators  
lack of sequence, modern content, and clinical experience in preparation programs  
lack of licensure systems that promote excellence  
lack of a national sense of cooperation in preparing school leaders” (p.4)

There is also discussion about the ineffectiveness of the current leadership preparation models presently utilized. Universities bear a great deal of criticism for the predicted shortage of qualified school leaders (Young & Creighton, 2002). Hale and Moorman (2003) suggest “leadership preparation programs are not providing the training needed for today’s public school leaders” (p.1). Reports indicate that our current system of preparing school leaders may leave aspiring principals prepared for the traditional world of educational leadership but not for the challenges they will face in the 21st century (Militello, Gajda, & Bowers, November 2009). Hale and Moorman (2003) also suggest “leadership preparation programs are not providing the training needed for today’s public school leaders” (p.1). Archer (2005) cites criticisms espoused by Arthur Levine’s study, which charges that administrator programs have been dumbed down by low admissions criteria, irrelevant coursework, unskilled faculty members, and incoherent curricula. A key problem is a lack of focus, the report argues. Instead of a coherent curriculum designed to teach people to lead efforts to improve instruction, it

describes most programs as politely with little connection to the realities of running a school or district (Archer, 2005).

Structured leadership preparation programs are the catalyst for continued professional growth (Page, 2006). Wilmore (2001) continues to state that it is essential for professors involved in the preparation of future school leaders to be able to connect them to the philosophy and vision of the principal as steward of the school's vision. Standards define what is expected of principals. Paradigm shifts emerge as new leaders are nurtured through a leadership preparation model. The scope of various preparation models may enhance an innate ability or provide the foundation for success. Orr (2006) cites some observers have expressed serious reservations about whether institutions are capable of reengineering their leadership preparation programs to effectively educate aspiring principals and superintendents to lead high-performing schools. Leadership preparation programs are needed as agreed by numerous researchers although little data is available on the impact on participants and the districts they serve (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005). Orr (2006) cites the U. S. Department of Education's characterization of conventional programs as lacking vision, purpose and coherence and need to be more innovative and need to include intensively focused components and authentic course and fieldwork. Even though there exist a large body of research advocating leadership preparation programs, there is limited information available addressing the impact of programs and the experiences they provide (Greenlee et al., 2009).

### **Leadership Preparation Limitations**

Research on educational leadership may have had such limited impact because so little of it has actually been done (Grubbs, 2002; Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). Analyses across the decades have detected two interconnected trends. Most of the research on educational administration is done by graduate students and the dissertation in educational administration is the primary method of creating knowledge in the field (Murphy & Vriesenga, 2006). Davis (et al 2005) directs our attention to empirical support for the most popular leadership preparation components which consists of self-reported candidate perceptions and experiences. There is also a lack of evidence as to how graduates of different kinds of programs perform on the job. Murphy (1992) noted that research on the linkages between school administration and learning was conspicuous by its absence. Olson (2007) describes the link by stating, that it's widely accepted that principals are vital to school success, but few studies have closely examined how to train effective school leaders. Colleges and universities are well immersed in leadership preparation programs and have dedicated faculty resources and degree programs to ensure that aspiring leaders are knowledgeable of theoretical and pedagogical aspects of leadership (Levine 2005). The innovative work of the past 15 years in leadership preparation has taken place in all types of graduate institutions, and it has focused on student selection, curriculum, course content, pedagogical strategies, internships and field experiences (Orr, 2006). The variability in quality is what spurred efforts to improve program quality through standards setting, certification requirements

and assessment, which have strengthened many programs, closed others and fostered new programs (Young et al, 2005).

Peterson and Kelly (2001) state that though principals have not been the primary focus of recent reform efforts, they are needed to lead instructional improvement, foster effective change efforts, lead the implementation of new standards, and are central to shaping strong, professional school cultures. McCarthy (1999) points out, that research on educational leadership preparation programs, faculty members, and students are needed to inform deliberations about how to better prepare school leaders. McCarthy (1999) also states that there is meager research relating recent... innovations in preparation programs to administrative success or evaluating administrators' use of knowledge gained in preparation programs. Leadership preparation providers outside of colleges and universities have also created program content to address what they perceive as a gap in service delivery (NAESP 2001). Education thus has not developed a "core" of knowledge –"what every good scholar should know" (Schoenfield, 1999). To alleviate the job-related stress associated with the ever-expanding duties and responsibilities, national groups such as the Institute for Educational leadership and the National Staff Development Council have call for providing mentors for principals, increasing incentives, increasing professional development, and creating apprenticeship programs (Zeitoun & Newton 2002). The exceptionally sensitive nature of preparing educational leaders must be more than adequate if they are to successfully lead (Elmore, 2000; Levine, 2005; Peterson, 2002). According to Young, Peterson and Short(2001),

stakeholders often believe that what is taught in university preparation programs is not connected to what leaders actually need to do in their schools.

Olson (2007) sheds light on qualities of the best training for principals. He states, “It is widely accepted that principals are vital to school success, but few studies have closely examined how to train effective leaders”. Murphy and Vriesenga (2006) identified a tendency for studies to pick off the low-hanging fruit; inquiry around the more difficult, more complex, yet ultimately more meaningful questions are largely missing. Goldberg (2000) states, “leadership training must have two emphases. First, prospective leaders must be trained in methods that really apply in schools, such as building an agenda for renewal and getting colleagues to help pursue that agenda. Leadership programs should focus on the principalship because most school leadership and change occur at the building level. Second, Goldberg argues, if you are going to engage in a significant process of renewal, there must be a continuing mass of people who are committed to the agenda, and who are willing to spend the time”. Olson (2007) cites characteristics of programs include active recruitment of candidates, guidance from expert practitioners, a coherent blend of theory and practice, and well designed and supervised internships. Davis et al (2005) believes leadership program components include a strong research base, reflective experiences, and cohort groupings are structured to encourage collaboration.

### **Summary**

Leadership preparation for principals and other administrators rests overwhelmingly in the hands of our colleges and universities. As the needs and

complexities of the school as an organization continue to evolve and the expectations of the stakeholders increase, principals continue to need professional support. There are a myriad of practices employed to prepare principals for the numerous demands placed on them as instructional leaders in their assigned buildings. However, the integrity of the preparation experiences may not prove to be sufficient thus requiring additional support while actively working as principal. The national standards movement has focused on the school as a whole with student achievement at its focus. Principals are to guide their learning communities and facilitate a safe and nurturing environment. Each effort to provide support for principals through standards pinpoints new areas that are not being addressed consistently. In addition to the standards movements, colleges and universities have examined and reexamined their programs in hopes of also providing support and meeting the needs of today's principals.

College and universities have attempted to close the disconnect between theory and practice by entering into partnerships with school districts, providing support for students to gain more experiential knowledge before assuming the role of principal and continuing to support principals in their professional growth while actively serving as an instructional leader. University programs must continue to address the needs of the leaders they train and recognize the impact on the achievement of students in school buildings. States and local organizations have attempted to prepare future principals through academies, special internship and mentor relations with veteran principals within their various districts. Pedagogy, organizational features, mentoring, planning and program delivery are focuses for leadership preparation. As states continue to work to

prepare future leaders, they must endeavor to identify those potential leaders and they are encouraged to look for a diverse representation of potential candidates. States have incorporated steps that allow persons without an educational background to enter the school as principals and instructional leaders. These provisions require advanced degrees and a commitment to obtaining the needed administrative credentials.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The study sought to understand descriptions or labels novice principals assigned to their leadership preparation experiences and the influence those experiences had on their role as an instructional leader. In an effort to understand each participant's experiences, participants were asked to respond to questions and reflect on their experiences. Data was obtained by interviewing eight Georgia principals with one or two years of experience as a principal. This chapter includes the research design, selection of the participants, instrumentation, data collection procedures, delimitations, limitations, research questions, interview questions, and a brief summary of the chapter.

#### **Research Design**

A qualitative research design was employed for this study. The choice of qualitative methods was determined by the nature of the research (Whiting, 2008). The research design allowed the investigator to probe events and situations that prompted reflection, reactions and responses of novice principal's related to their role as instructional leader. These reflections, reactions and responses focused on leadership preparation experiences. Whiting (2008) cites that the reflexive approach enables self-examination, which in turn means that the values, assumptions, prejudice and influence of the researcher must therefore be acknowledged. Frankel and Wallen (2000) identify five features that characterize qualitative research studies, although not all studies necessarily display all characteristics with equal strength.

The features are as follows:

1. The natural setting is the direct source of data, and the researcher is the key instrument in Qualitative research.
2. Qualitative data are collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers.
3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with the process as well as product.
4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
5. Qualitative researchers are specifically concerned with how people make sense out of their lives.

Creswell (2003) explains that,

“The intent of qualitative research is to understand a particular social situation, event, role or interaction. It is largely an investigative process where the researcher gradually makes sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, replicating, cataloguing and classifying the object of study.” (p.198)

To sufficiently understand a novice principal’s experiences and to allow personal articulation, a qualitative research design was used. Qualitative study allows the researcher to realize depth. Understanding the personalization of the participants’ experiences and delving into their mindset which impacts decisions in their professional roles is the aim. The design was used to understand the perceptions of novice principals as they relate their leadership preparation experiences and its impact on their role as an

instructional leader. This approach is best suited to relate and illuminate the rich stories of novice principals. According to Lester (1999), this translates into gathering deep information and perceptions through inductive methods such as interviews, and representing it from the perspective of the research participants. This research sought to essentially describe rather than explain, and to start from a perspective free from hypotheses or preconceptions

### **Participants**

The resources of First District were the first point of inquiry in an effort to identify participants for the study. First District staff was unable to provide the names of new administrators in the service area. Participants consisted of eight recruited principals only in the First District Regional Educational Service Area (RESA) who completed their first or second year of administrative experience. I next contacted the Georgia Department of Education to obtain the names of all principals in the First District area. The information provided was state-wide, and the names of administrators were listed by county. Principals were contacted individually to determine their willingness to participate in the study. Upon agreeing to participate, a copy of the informed consent was provided and signed. This sample had participated in some formal type of leadership preparation, possessed leadership certification and possibly a degree in leadership. It is thought that novice administrators will still be able to reflect on their educational leadership preparation experiences in retrospect to their role as building level leader, the development of their personal leadership style and their effectiveness as a building level instructional leader.

Purposeful sampling was used to select eight information rich cases with respect to the study at any level of education, elementary, middle or high school. This sample is typically small. The intent was to achieve an in-depth understanding of selected individuals, not to select a sample that will represent accurately a defined population. Litchman (2006) states, “Because your goal in qualitative research is to describe and interpret rather than generalize, there are no hard rules about how many participants you should study.”

Each participant completed an IRB approved letter of consent, confidentiality disclosure was assigned a code determined by the researcher. All identifying information was removed from any published report of findings as a result of participation in the study.

### **Instrumentation**

Interview protocols were designed to understand how individuals felt about their leadership preparation experience and its effectiveness. Each question was worded as concisely as possible to generate reflection, and to allow participants to tell their own story in their own terms without being forced in any direction or influenced by the interviewer’s biases. This served as the primary point of contact as no follow-up was planned. The nature of the research questions and subsequent follow-up questions generated a response that was analyzed for common themes. Common themes included the resourcefulness of an administrator’s experiences and the benefits of a particular preparation program as well as perceived benefits of a preparation program. The research questions allowed the researcher an opportunity to expand on questions and to ask

questions unique to the interviewee. Each interviewee was asked the same set of questions. At the conclusion of the interview, the interviewee was given the opportunity to share any additional information that could benefit the study or reflections that will help convey the sentiments of their experiences.

### **Data Collection**

The primary data source for this study was semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews enabled open sharing and exposure of the personal stories and interpretation of the experiences. The interviews were analyzed for common themes. The themes were not pre-conceived but were developed after the interviews were completed. In this study, administrators with two or three years of experience related their lived experiences and reflected on the extent to which elements of their leadership preparation program impact their job effectiveness, their ability to influence the school climate/culture, their ability to empower the staff and their ability to be a strong instructional leader. Several types of interview questions were asked of the population, including background and demographic, knowledge, experience or behavior, opinion or values, feeling or sensory questions. The interviews were held in the work setting or a neutral place of the interviewees' choosing and at a time that's convenient for the interviewee. Locations included the principal's office or conference room and before or after the school day. The location was mutually agreed upon.

Each interview included open ended questions including demographics, were tape-recorded in addition to field notes, transcribed verbatim and analyzed for common themes. A permanent record of the interview is important; the use of a digital recorder

will contribute to a more relaxed atmosphere and prevent the loss of any relevant information. Field notes were taken following each session, the researcher took time to reflect and make any additional notations. The notations enabled the researcher to identify patterns and themes in the study (Creswell, 1998). The interview lasted sixty to ninety minutes in length. It was necessary to establish and build rapport during the interview as the process moved through an awkward and uncertain phase to a more relaxed atmosphere according to Whiting (2006).

### **Summary**

The primary purpose of this study was to explore the lived experiences of eight to twelve novice school principals. The interview process effectively allowed the researcher an opportunity to explore the lived experiences and reflections of novice principals in their role as an instructional leader. A semi-structured interview format was used. Each interview will include open ended questions including demographics, be tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim and analyzed for common themes. Participant's stories illustrated an understanding of their role as school leaders as directly as possible and explicate the dimensions of their experiences. The participants' stories formed a basis for understanding successful leadership practices and revealed the embodied relationship between leadership preparation experiences and the role of instructional leader. The eight school-based leaders have served in a leadership role for at least one year in the position of the school principal. The results of the study will be reported in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER 4

### REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

The discoveries of Chapter II guided this researcher closer to understanding the needs and complexities of principals and their perceptions of their leadership preparation experiences. As identified in the literature review, numerous practices and leadership preparation experiences are employed by colleges and universities, states, local and national organizations. These practices and experiences seek to support educational leaders and facilitate their readiness to address the expectations of all stakeholders. To clearly understand the perceptions and lived experiences of novice principals, a qualitative research design was utilized for this study.

The primary purpose of this study is to explore the lived experiences of eight novice school principals. The study does not discount the plethora of experiences a novice principal has in his/her first or second year at the helm. The focus of the study seeks to understand in greater detail the beliefs novice principals hold relative to their leadership preparation program experiences. The reporting results of this study begin with a description of the steps taken to identify potential participants and their professional characteristics. Next, common themes related by the participant's experiences were identified as a result of the semi-structured interviews which were transcribed and coded. Finally, the findings of the participants' perceptions of their leadership preparation program and the value they assign are presented in response to the

research questions guiding the study. The findings of this research will be reported in this chapter by research questions.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching question was, “How do principals assess the value of their leadership preparation program in their administrative role of instructional leader?”

The sub questions to guide the study were these:

1. How do novice principals assess the value of their leadership preparation program experiences?
2. What aspects do principals identify as the benefits/advantages of their leadership preparation program experiences?
3. What aspects do principals identify as drawbacks/disadvantages of their leadership preparation program experiences?
4. How do principals believe their leadership preparation program experience impacts their role and successful leadership?

The four sub-questions were further refined through additional semi-structured questions designed to solicit deeper reflections from each participant during the course of the interview. (Appendix A)

### **Research Design**

A qualitative research designed was employed to conduct the study. Qualitative data were gathered from semi-structured interviews and field notes. The length of the interviews varied from sixty to ninety minutes. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, data categorized, and analyzed for common themes found in the related



experiences. The interviews revealed that there were common perceptions held by all of the principals. Each participant was given an opportunity to expound on his/her personal thoughts and beliefs throughout the course of the interview. Similarities emerged as the researcher sifted through the data seeking to understand the participants lived experiences and the value assigned to their leadership preparation program through coding.

### **Demographic questions**

1. How long have you been a principal?
2. How long have you been principal of this school?
3. Is this the only school in which you have served as principal?

### **Demographic Profile of Participants**

In an effort to ensure confidentiality, descriptive and demographic information is limited purposefully. Each participant has been assured anonymity, and selective information is released as a part of the study. The eight principals all work in the First District Regional Educational Service Area (RESA) of Southeast Georgia. Eighteen (18) school systems and their schools are served by this RESA. Each principal participant has completed one or two full years in his/her current role. The eight participants included a group of four males and four females. All principals completed a formal leadership preparation program, have at least a Master's degree in Leadership, hold at least a Level 5 (L5) leadership certificate, and have held positions in education including previous leadership roles before becoming building principals and instructional leaders. The principal participants worked at the elementary, middle and high school levels. All

principal participants in this study began their careers as classroom teachers and have served as a principal in only one school. The average amount of time involved in education is sixteen (16) years. All principals have matriculated at colleges or universities in the Southeastern United States (see Table 2).

### **Analysis**

The researcher established a pattern of analysis by going through each of the individual interviews, by listening to the recorded audio tape, and by reading the transcriptions numerous times. Phrases and key words were highlighted and assigned a sub-question number as a point of reference. This researcher sorted through the assigned numbers to determine how the categories would be labeled. Various selections of the transcripts were highlighted using color coding. Several selections were assigned more than one color. Field notes were also incorporated in the categories and assigned labels. Themes that emerged isolated a purposeful value for leadership preparation programs.

### **Findings**

The qualitative method utilized in this study to understand the perceptions of novice principals proved advantageous. The transcribed interviews of the participant responses afforded a unique presentation of common themes driven by the perceptions of the novice principals. The analysis of the data collected from the interviews and field notes by the researcher was used to attempt to understand the perceptions novice principals have regarding the value of the leadership preparation program. Common themes were identified after a review of the transcribed data including: (a) coursework is a major component of formal leadership preparation programs, (b) ambiguity exists

between role and preparation, and (c) instruction and time management are addressed minimally in formal leadership preparation programs.

The participant's respective language yielded rich data which allowed this researcher an opportunity to identify additional themes. These themes identified aspects of various experiences that supported the role of instructional leader as well as the realities of the limits of pedagogy and successful leadership application. Additional themes identified benefits and disadvantages of leadership preparation programs as a result of course work and other learning experiences.

Research Question1: How do administrators describe the value of his/her leadership preparation programs?

The first research question was responded to in the following manner by two of the participants as "an experience that I feel prepared me on so many different levels" (Participant 3) and "very realistic" (Participant 4). Other participants offered similar responses to label the value of their leadership preparation program such as "an invaluable asset" (Participant 1), "a strong foundation" (Participant 5), and "a good starting point" (Participant 6). Sub-questions that sought to better understand this experience of value yielded five participants describing their leadership preparation program as "the most helpful thing I could have been a part of to prepare for this role" (Participants 1, 2, 4, 6,& 7).

*Participant 2: I believe my leadership preparation experiences were very relevant. I value the experiences because they addressed current, practical material. I was encouraged to build on previous experiences and explore new resources that were available to me. This was a good starting point for me.*

The theme that emerged from the data indicated participants assigned an extremely high value to their leadership preparation experiences. Leadership preparation experiences are assigned a great deal of value by participants as they reflect on bits and pieces of activities or discussions reproduced during times of crisis. Participants expressed varying degrees of importance for mentoring experiences, internships and shadowing opportunities; however, the collective experiences were viewed with the highest positive regard. The researcher noted after reviewing the interviews that none of the participants expressed the sentiment that their leadership preparation experience was a waste of time or money. All participants overwhelmingly expressed sentiments at some point during their interview of the importance of their leadership preparation experience in preparing them for their role as principal. The rich descriptions confirm what is found in the research positing the need for leadership preparation programs even though individual experiences vary. The foundation established through leadership preparation program experiences afford individuals an opportunity to prepare for leadership roles and the role of the principal; however no two districts or schools are identical which would require still more preparation experiences at the local level.

Research Question 2: What aspects do administrators identify as the benefits/advantages of his/her leadership preparation program experiences?

The second research question was addressed by references to courses and course work. All of the participants were afforded an opportunity to participate in at least one course that focused on school law. One description given of a school law course was “the course on school law provided numerous opportunities to discuss the scenarios

involved in the cases” (Participant 8). Participants all agreed that school law was an invaluable course.

*Participant 1: I think the most helpful thing I learned about in my law class was about due process. Regardless of it is a major or minor situation we must understand the implications... learning the law along with what it really means and taking situations and looking at them individually can make all the difference. I never would have thought things could be so complicated. I used to feel like things were so black and white. They are not black and white and my law class helped me realize it's not all clean cut.*

One participant expressed thoughts on educational leadership theory, “I believe principals need to know theory” (Participant 2). Another expression appeared to discount the value of theory by stating, “Theory doesn’t fix everything” (Participant 7).

All participants completed some type of internship experience and the description assigned to this one experience was unique for each of the eight participants. Some common statements such as “I wish I could have had the opportunity to shadow more principals in day- to-day activities” (Participant 5), “I wish I had done more with curriculum modules or instructional modules” (Participant4) and “as much as we think we are prepared, there’s a huge learning curve” (Participant 1) were expressed. Still other expressions shared by participants related to internships centered on having longer or extended opportunities to “write, discuss and complete more presentations” (Participant 6), and “to observe the various theories in a realistic setting” (Participant 8).

*Participant 3: I had quite a few internship hours which I think was an invaluable asset to me. I actually had to work in a setting under a principal when time allowed. So, that was a neat experience.*

One concept mentioned as a benefit by three participants was communication. Communication was described as, “definitely a strong point of my leadership preparation program” (Participant 7), and “I learned not to be afraid to ask questions” (Participant 3).

*Participant 8: My professors were former principals and superintendents and they really helped me be more understanding of people and to really look at people in situations for whom and what they are.*

The common theme that emerged from the data intensified the understanding of the participant’s perception of their role as principal in contrast to their perception of readiness for the role as a result of their preparation experiences. Coursework is a major component of formal leadership preparation programs. The role of principal evolved as various instructional and administrative duties required time and attention. The leadership preparation experiences heightened the participant’s ability to address concerns equipped with knowledge of standards, acceptable practices, or suggestions of possible outcomes. It became apparent the various leadership preparation experiences could not have been duplicated in other settings. This research also supports the cultivation of leadership preparation program experiences designed to strengthen role transformation for successful leadership. It is essential for principals to have a broad perspective of the educational setting as compared to a narrower focus of a classroom teacher.

Internships, mentoring and shadowing experiences, were identified as a benefit for the participants. The opportunity to see or observe the rigorous activities of principals in an intimate setting fostered a greater depth of perceptiveness. These experiences

strengthened the participant's comprehension of what a principal encounters as a part of his/her role during the day. Although the insight is limited due to the very nature of the experience design, this opportunity would not be as profound if modeled in the classroom setting. Internships, mentoring and shadowing experiences, were described as having an important effect on the participants understanding of the challenges and complexities of the principal's role.

Research Question 3: What aspects do principals identify as drawbacks/disadvantages of their leadership preparation program experiences? The third research question was referenced in terms of a void by one participant.

*Participant 3: The biggest disadvantage of my leadership preparation experiences was the lack of exposure to the amount of things you are not privy to in other roles. You are now completely responsible for everything as the principal. As much as we think we are prepared, there's a learning curve that you have to expect and I have found myself asking a lot of questions.*

Other participants described their leadership preparation experience drawbacks or disadvantages by saying "I don't think anything can prepare you for this job" (Participant 4), "I don't think classes or course work can really prepare you for this role" (Participant 7), "I think the biggest misfortune is that this job is not prepared for through classes or internship experiences but through on-the-job training" (Participant 8), and "I don't think being in a classroom can prepare you for being a principal" (Participant 5). Other participants expressed concerns about the limited time they had in their leadership preparation program to fully grasp the expectations and level of accountability needed as a building principal.

*Participant 1: It (leadership preparation program experience) just didn't prepare me for this role. I think it fully prepared me to be an assistant principal. I mean without a doubt. I wish I had more practical experience. I wish I could have worked with a principal for a longer period of time. I just did not have a clue. I mean, it was an excellent program. I enjoyed it.... but I felt like I just didn't have enough.... I didn't see enough.*

Statements made by participants included, "I wish I had a local mentor to work with for a period of time, maybe a year" (Participant 2), "I needed more time to work hand-in-hand with a principal" (Participant 3), "I wish I had been provided with more resources to be able fully understand what was expected of me as a principal" (Participant 6) and "you hear all of this stuff in your classes" (Participant 4). All of the participants expressed concerns of appropriate time management. One participant described the difficulty in structuring the day in a logical or sequential manner and stated, "That's probably the biggest change I have experienced as principal when I felt I had more control of my day before assuming the role" (Participant 3).

*Participant 5: I don't think any program can truly prepare someone to be a principal, as an assistant principal if I didn't finish stuff, I would just catch it tomorrow. Well there are some things that can't be caught tomorrow and the management piece is huge in this respect.*

*Participant 7: It was nothing to be a manager on this or that as an assistant principal. In this role as principal management is so difficult. There are so many things to manage and to some extent you are taken for granted. Your time is taken for granted because you must get it done. It doesn't matter if you see your kids or that you have been at school all day. Things have to be done.*

The major shift of accountability was undeniably the largest unanticipated reality. Six of the participants commented that they had limited time to reflect on their day-to-day activities due to the rigorous demands of work environment and that their



personal perspectives had not been examined prior to the sessions. Areas that appeared to be overlooked during formal leadership preparation programs included budgeting and finance, networking, personnel management, and the critical need for documentation. Participants cited, “I found I wasn’t prepared for many of the personnel matters that have come up” (Participant 2), “nothing has prepared me for the role of principal because everything rests on your shoulders” (Participant 1).

*Participant 6: The reality of documenting problems and concerns with staff members was not addressed in a way that I readily knew how a principal has to document these instances for the development of professional development plans.*

A theme emerged from the data relative to the participants’ perception of their role as principal contrary to their perception of preparation experiences. The participants recognize that their formal leadership preparation program experiences minimally address instructional leadership and the countless amount of on-the-job adaptation required. Research supports the suggestion that it is impossible to prepare for every situation through formal leadership preparation. The expectations and level of accountability vary by school, district and state. The participants shared concerns with reference to the amount of time available for them to participate in formal experiences and still complete their day-to-day activities. Many of the participants worked in some leadership capacity before becoming a principal; however, even this did not groom them for the unknowns that went unobserved or unnoticed during formal observation experiences. The research supports a myriad of academic schemes proposed to simulate the role of the principal and thereby prepare individuals for this role. The participants

expressed opinions that even having access to active practitioners in their building and in the academic classes they were still unprepared for the role of principal and prepared even less to assume the role of instructional leader for the entire building.

Other concerns centered on the amount of time allowed processing the abundance of information from courses, coursework, internships, mentoring relationships and shadowing experiences. Time or the lack of time was the most noted disadvantage/drawback presented by the participants. The amount of time available on the job or during formal leadership preparation experiences and time for life were constant conflicts. Time management is a major component of leadership that must be addressed and personalized.

Research Question 4: How do principals believe their leadership preparation program impacts his/her role and successful leadership?

The fourth and final research question was described in terms of functions. One participant states, “We analyzed so much data, I never thought I would analyze data as much as I do” (Participant 8). Participant 6: When I was in the classroom I didn’t think the leadership was as important but the accountability measures have stepped up since I left the classroom. Still other participants stated, “I wish I knew more math and science” (Participant 3), “I wish I had more cross curriculum exposure” (Participant 5), and “I knew being a principal was a lot of work; therefore I wish I had more experience to do more as an instructional leader before assuming the position” (Participant 2). Other descriptions were expressed in terms of the formal leadership preparation program

influence on the role of instructional leader centered on “creating a framework” (Participant 6), and “strengthened as an instructional leader” (Participants 1, 5 & 8).

*Participant 8: I feel that my leadership preparation program exposed me to different aspects of instruction and its importance, the ability to convey a plan for day-to-day classroom instructional strategies were enhanced at the start of the year. Instructional plans require a constant focus and it is “a never ending cycle”.*

The most common theme that emerged from the data was the framework participants felt they were equipped to fall back on as they began their first and second years as building level principals. It is important to note that the participants overwhelmingly realize the never-ending barrage of immense and minute aspects of the day that must be addressed and re-addressed and the amount of commitment required to successfully meet those obligations. The research addresses the integrity of formal leadership preparation programs as they seek to facilitate a safe and nurturing learning environment for practitioners. The experiential knowledge gained before assuming the role of principal equips the learners with tools and skills that encourage successful leadership. The individual leadership experience is compounded by numerous preoccupations that may require the participants to personally reflect on the “successful” leadership. The formal leadership preparation experiences were described by the practitioners as helpful and supportive; however, successful leadership was described in terms of functions. The premise of successful leadership described in terms of functions addressed “what” is done daily, weekly, monthly and annually. The increased responsibility and accountably described by the participant’s reflections made it evident they felt something was still deficient in terms of their formal leadership preparation

experiences. The “learning curve” and daily encounters with stakeholders makes the participants of assessment of successful leadership a daily occurrence. Participants’ self-assessment of their formal experiences and the sizeable body of knowledge revealed through clinical and classroom experiences support the premise that each of the eight was prepared for the role of principal. The age of accountability determines successful leadership in various terms on a state and national level. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) is deemed an indicator of successful leadership. Only two of the first year participant’s schools failed to make AYP at the conclusion of the first school year. This measure of “success” is made public after states determine acceptable levels of academic growth for various subgroups that are present in a school building. In addition to other indicators failure to “make” AYP does not signify failure in leadership, although the long held sentiment is that more should be done to improve the learning environment for all students. The participants all believe the impact of leadership preparation program experiences as an attribute which strengthens the role of instructional leader. This role personifies success sometimes in small measurable areas as well as unrevealed actions that manifest later with untold dividends.

### **Summary**

A qualitative method was used to understand the lived experiences of novice principals as they related the value assigned to the leadership preparation experiences. This researcher sought to understand the data collected by coding the responses of the individual participants looking for common themes. Accolades for the structure of courses, coursework, internships, the depth of leadership exposure possible in a

classroom setting and the influence the academic arena affords prior to assuming the role of principal. Transforming into an instructional leader as a result of the formal leadership preparation experiences were beneficial sentiments expressed by the participants. Reflection of the formal leadership preparation experience allowed the participants to relate how formal leadership preparation program components are intertwined. The participants commented on perceptions and attitudes that were a direct result of their formal leadership preparation program. Formal experiences such as internships, mentoring relationships, and shadowing experiences were attributes noted as additional building blocks for participants. The formal leadership preparation programs created a strong base for the participants. The self-assessment of the impact formal leadership preparation programs experiences supported are positive and described in terms of functions. Each participant must reflect on his/her successful leadership based on internal and external factors including his/her own personal measure established for himself/herself.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Summary

This qualitative study was beneficial in understanding the perceptions of novice principals regarding their formal leadership preparation program. Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl (2002) support this researcher's claim of a need for leadership preparation and are leading proponents of the reframing of educational preparation programs. They speak of a focus on transformational leadership, moral stewardship, principal as educator/instructional leader, and principal as communicator/community builder. Henry (2010) agrees with this researcher as he notes the preparation of principals must be an integral, long-term commitment and not an add-on which is designed to meet the specific needs of a particular education reform project and then terminated when all funds have expired.

Specifically, this study sought to answer four research questions:

- 1) How do novice principals assess the value of their leadership preparation program experiences?
- 2) What aspects do principals identify as the benefits/advantages of their leadership preparation program experiences?
- 3) What aspects do principals identify as drawbacks/disadvantages of their leadership preparation program experiences?

4) How do principals believe their leadership preparation program experience impacts their role and successful leadership?

This researcher identified common themes from the responses provided and related those themes in a consistent manner. These outcomes are meaningful for leadership preparation providers and aspiring leaders in relative terms of program design and experiential structure. Novice principals said their formal leadership preparation program experiences were the closest look at reality that they could have experienced, and formal leadership preparation program experiences gave them a strong foundation to build on as a principal.

### **Discussion of Research Findings**

The purpose of this study was to understand how principals assess the value of their leadership preparation program in their administrative role of instructional leader. The overarching question was, “How do principals assess the value of their leadership preparation program in their administrative role of instructional leader?”

Changing focus from a traditional theory and skill based leadership preparation program to focuses on teaching and learning requires retooling of many university faculties. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews provided a uniform perspective of the participant’s collective value assessment of their leadership preparation program. Henry (2010) agrees with this research study findings of the importance of preparing school leaders in quality leadership preparation programs. His thoughts reveal that research studies have shown that having an effective school leader is critical to the improvement of student achievement. Chenoweth (2002) supports a more inclusive

leadership preparation experience. Instead of a series of traditional managerial courses in law, finance, and facilities, the infamous buses, budgets, and books curriculum, all taught in isolation, administrative candidates in today's exemplary programs encounter these topics in a problem-based curriculum build upon real experiences of the challenges of teaching and learning encountered in actual schools working toward improved achievement for all students. Hoyle (2005) supports the premise that leadership preparation programs need to continue to focus on instruction. A common concern among the members of the academy in educational administration is maintain the important balance between preparing aspiring school leaders to manage a school while focusing on the technical core of teaching and learning.

This researcher does assert that continued attention must be given to establishing and maintaining quality leadership preparation programs. It appears acceptable to all participants that continued professional learning experiences are necessary for individuals aspiring to leadership positions, including the role of principal and other administrative positions within the educational arena. The principal must remain apprised of all aspects of instructional strategies, curriculum resources, and professional learning support. Evaluations must be completed for faculty and staff. Assessments must be monitored and data mined to ascertain academic strengths as well as areas of the curriculum that require a more concentrated focus to show growth and greater gains. The research supports the paradigm shift required as leadership duties and responsibilities change when one becomes the principal. Henry (2010) agrees with this researcher given the extreme importance being placed on the school principal and the need to be effective. Policy



makers and significant education administrators must not leave the development of new principals to happenstance, good character, pleasant personality, or divine intervention. If leadership is to be the bridge that leads to school achievement, emphasis must be placed on the preparation of principals for their jobs. Hoyle (2005) is of the same opinion as this researcher in the limiting factors of available research on leadership preparation programs, and research proving the quality of administrator preparation is limited to student perceptions and expert observations of school principals and system administrators. What is needed is evidence of how leadership influences student learning directly and indirectly, as well as measures of how leadership preparation develops such leadership attributes (Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl, 2002; Orr, 2006). Cooner, Quinn & Dickman (2008) supports this researcher's position of the challenges faced by principal. The role of the principal has dramatically changed and the way aspiring principals are trained is being closely reviewed. Others agree with this researcher that effective leadership preparation is vital for educational leaders. Hess and Kelly (2005) assert today's school principals are asked to lead in a new world marked by unprecedented responsibilities, challenges and managerial opportunities. Hoyle (2005) further agrees with this researcher's claims of a need for leadership preparation programs, while survey and other descriptive methods to investigate the quality of preparation programs are an anathema to devoted inferential researchers, perception research can provide valuable data for monitoring program successes and weaknesses. There seems to be an emerging consensus that school administrators need to be firmly grounded in strategies that promote effective teaching and student achievement. With this focus in mind, it will be

important to link what is done in university classrooms and internships to successful administrative practice in the future (Chenoweth, 2002). In general, students tend to be routinely overlooked in leadership preparation programs (McCarthy, 1999). Chenoweth, Carr, & Ruhl (2002) support this researcher's claim that the instructional role is a vital component of leadership preparation. Over the past decade a clear consensus has developed among educators regarding the nature of leadership, and thereby leadership preparation, moving from a managerial model to a visionary collegial model focused on the centrality of student learning. Others agree with this researcher's position that educational leaders value their role as instructional leaders. Principals stress the importance of their role as an instructional leader who needs to understand children, teaching, and learning (Kochan, Spencer, & Matthews, 1999, p. 19).

Leadership preparation programs as described by participants in this study have all been similar in structure and organization. Leadership preparation is valuable. Experiential learning is also valuable and more than often on-the-job training is the norm rather than the rule. Individuals with an internship experience are statistically better at the critical tasks related to the principal's role: supervision, evaluation, team building, and resource allocation (Chenoweth, 2002). Hoyle (2005) supports the value and importance of the internship; the field experiences are more powerful when linked with the knowledge base and professional standards in the study of educational administration. Brown-Ferrubgno and Muth (2001) also supports this researchers assertion that opportunities to work with and observe and work with aspiring principals during internships is essential. Districts and universities must build field-based programs

collaboratively (Chenoweth, 2002). Kochan (1999) supports the inclusion of training for principals dealing with a primary issue of managing their work and their time, dealing with the stresses, task, and responsibilities of the job. The different knowledge and skills needed by 21st century principals will be as leaders of curricular change, data-driven decision-making, innovative and diversified instructional strategies, and the use of accountability models for staff and students. It will be necessary for institutions of higher education to revamp their principal preparation programs (Cooner, 2008). Hoyle (2005) believes that proof of the value of leadership preparation programs is missing, especially in leading journals. However, survey research blended with qualitative interview data seeking perceptions of the impact of these leadership preparation programs are extremely valuable in conducting formative evaluation and taking corrective action in program improvement. Eckman (2004) agrees that the increased time demands are a concern for principals. The time demands imposed by the role of high school principalship, such as long days, supervision of extracurricular activities, attendance at numerous evening meetings, and weekend work are just a few examples.

In responding to the litany of criticisms launched against education leadership preparation programs, some would say that restructuring efforts have gone too far by over emphasizing relevance at the expense of sound theoretical constructs. The participants of this study were not critical of their leadership preparation program. Many of the thoughts expressed by the participants contradict the literature. Ideally, theory and practice should inform one another (Chenoweth, 2002). Other comments support the assertion by this researcher that the time has come for university faculty to take an active role in the

national conversation regarding leadership preparation. Leadership preparation programs can be profitable and thereby present a certain allure to for-profit organizations that seek to provide services comparable to those offered by colleges and universities. Kerrins (2001) supports this researcher's position and states:

*The view taken here is that a steady drumbeat discrediting university programs and fabricating the shortage notion, serves the interests of non- university groups to garner resources which were going to universities for their own coffers. By pressuring legislatures with erroneous information, these groups intend to lift administrator preparation and training from the universities to themselves. (p. 1)*

Chenoweth (2002) identifies with this researchers claims of the changes internalized in leadership preparation programs. Over the past twenty-five years there has been increasing concern among educational administrators and related professional organizations about the lack of relevance, or disconnect, between what is taught in administrative preparation programs and actual administrator practice in schools. In the current study, however, no mention of the lack of preparation for the demands of time, multicultural leadership, public relations, social climate impact or harsh realities of district politics emerged as common themes. While much of the literature reports a need for leadership preparation programs, some believe like Hoyle (2005) the programs have never been better. Hoyle further supports the position that leadership preparation programs are responding to the increasing needs of practitioners. Leadership preparation in America's college and universities has made significant progress in the past decade and can respond with convincing evidence to critics demeaning current preparation programs.

Gardiner & Enomoto (2004) further support this researcher's assertion that more variety is needed in formal leadership preparation programs as they shared in their research of four nationally accredited programs. The four preparation programs examined employed teaching strategies in the coursework that included presentation, small and large group discussions, and individual reflective assignments. All of the participants in the study completed some formal leadership preparation program. They offer a variety of suggestions about what else they need in their leadership preparation programs.

### **Conclusions**

This study has added to the existing body of knowledge about leadership preparation and perceptions held by novice principals. The researcher has concluded from the study that leadership preparation programs are vitally important in preparing future principals and other school leaders. It is feasible to also conclude that leadership preparation providers are attempting to explore and address the need for improvement. The socialization of the principalship may change as novice principals remain on the job. The various formal leadership preparation programs address theory, standard organizational models and experiences. Internships are beneficial but are limited by time, scope, availability and personal outcome. The challenges of addressing pedagogy and aspirational goals will continue to inhibit reform efforts. Aspiring leaders would benefit from a fully immersed preparation program that affords a barrage of opportunities for an extended period of time for coursework, reflection and practical field experience. It appears that novice principals are experiencing their role as instructional leader void of a great degree of reflection on the leadership preparation program. It is imperative that

future leaders know, understand, and do what is needed to impact student achievement. Leadership programs may be training prospective school administrators who are significantly more knowledgeable about teaching and student learning and more savvy about school-based problems or dilemmas, but they still cannot assure that students will leave leadership programs with the knowledge and skills to go forth and make the kinds of changes in school that lead to higher student achievement- especially for students who have not fared well in elementary and secondary schools in America.

### **Recommendations of further study**

More study is needed on the impact district politics has on novice principals. More research is needed on alternative designs for leadership preparation as well as program outcomes. More longitudinal research is needed to determine the perception of principals at various intervals of the administrative career to evaluate their paradigm shifts related to their foundational leadership preparation experiences. A greater look into the interpersonal side of leadership may help to promote a deeper understanding of the need for personal time as well as the continuous need by others to share and personalize their relationship with the principal. Also, more research is warranted to answer the question of whether course requirements, standards-based courses and internship requirements have changed as a result of increased accountability measures. Despite statements regarding benefits and disadvantages of a formal program, the participants failed to present concerns of influences from the business community, parent groups, or persons with their own political agenda. More research is warranted on the perception of principals in other areas of their leadership preparation and their personal

experiences. This researcher is concerned that little credence is given to investing in children by building their character and respect for themselves, their learning community and their physical community. These important missions are rarely mentioned in the literature or statements made by the participants.

### **Implications**

The purpose of this study was to understand how principals describe the value of their leadership preparation program in their administrative role of instructional leader. The related perceptions of the participants may only begin to scratch the surface. Novice principals have only had a limited time in their role and may reflect on their personal experiences differently as more time passes. The implications of this study rest in the hands of the numerous stakeholders that stand to gain if future leaders are more than adequately prepared to effectively improve our schools and learning communities of the future.

- This study can be used to examine the intricate experiences leadership preparation programs afford principals and other school leaders. In addition to the experiences afforded principals, a closer examination of the numerous components that leadership preparation program graduates express they internalize a need for during their first year as a principal.

- College faculty and university programs are two common elements of leadership preparation. College faculty members assigned to impart their knowledge and wisdom must determine the social milieu of education and thereby provide an integrated

presentation of course content and practical applications to the aspiring leaders they serve.

- University programs must look closely at the course sequence and course offerings made available to students in their leadership preparation programs.
- As states change their policies related to certification and licensure, state and national standards and professional development needs, colleges and universities must become more responsive in adapting their programing and thereby must also become more responsive.
- Leadership preparation program providers must also examine why some principals succeed, and others fail.

### **Dissemination**

This researcher plans to share the results of this study in the First District RESA of Georgia and to submit the findings for peer review. The results may also prove valuable to colleges and universities and their leadership departments as they seek to improve their program experiences for future students. This researcher hopes that this information provides a valid viewpoint of the perceptions of novice principals. Information provided is intended to support the accelerated movement to support the formal leadership preparation efforts within the state of Georgia, the United States and beyond.



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## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH QUESTION/INTERVIEW QUESTION CHART

Interview Question	Research Question
1. Describe your formal leadership preparation program.	1
2. How have your feelings changed about being a principal from the time you completed your leadership preparation program?	1,4
3. What type of assistance did your leadership preparation programming provide for your role as instructional leader?	1,2,3,4
4. Can you give an example of a situation in which you feel your leadership preparation programming prepared you to serve as an instructional leader?	1,2,4
5. How has your leadership preparation programming impacted your role as principal?	4
6. What parts of your leadership preparation programming afforded you opportunities to strengthen your personal talents as a principal?	1,2,4
7. How are instructional decisions derived in your school as a result of your leadership preparation?	2,3
8. How has your leadership preparation inhibited your performance as an instructional leader?	4

9. How has your leadership preparation enhanced your performance as an instructional leader?	2
10. What was the most helpful thing you learned in your formal leadership preparation programming?	1,2,4
11. What training or knowledge do you wish that you had gotten in your formal leadership preparation program that you did not?	3
12. How realistic was your leadership preparation program to you in becoming an effective principal?	1,4
13. Is there anything else that you wish I had asked you about but failed to do so that you want to share with me?	



**APPENDIX B**  
**IRB Approval Letter**

Georgia Southern University  
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs  
Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
Phone: 912-478-0843  
Veazey Hall 2021  
P.O. Box 8005  
Fax: 912-478-0719  
IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu  
Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Marty Simmons  
Leon Spencer  
Department of Education

CC: ~ CHARLES E. PATTERSON VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH AND DEAN  
OF THE GRADUATE COLLEGE

From: OFFICE OF RESEARCH SERVICES AND SPONSORED PROGRAMS  
ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT OFFICE FOR RESEARCH OVERSIGHT  
CONUNITTEES  
(LACUC/IBC/IRB)

Initial Approval Date: MARCH 10, 2011  
Expiration Date: FEBRUARY 28, 2012  
Subject: STATUS OF APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL TO UTILIZE HUMAN SUBJECTS IN  
RESEARCH

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **HI1205** and titled "**A Qualitative Study: Understanding the Value of Formal Leadership Preparation Programs to Novice Principals,**" 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. You are authorized to enroll up to a maximum of **12** subjects.

*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.*

If at the end of this approval period there have been no changes to the research protocol; you may request an extension of the approval period. Total project approval on this application may not exceed 36 months. If additional time is required, a new application may be submitted for continuing work. 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 C

### CHANGES IN GEORGIA EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PREPARATION AND CERTIFICATION: THE LEGAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES

This document was prepared for the Georgia School Superintendents Association by Phil Hartley of Harben, Hartley, and Hawkins LLP. The author acknowledges the significant contributions to the preparation of the document by Marvene Brooks, Educational Consultant with Harben, Hartley, and Hawkins.

The latest educational reform and accountability movement, culminating in the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, has focused attention on the instructional role of educational leadership. Some critics have contended that leadership preparation programs are ineffective and in need of a major redesign to ensure that leadership candidates are adequately prepared to deal with the increasing complexity of educational leadership roles. Under close public scrutiny, school superintendents and principals face intense pressure to secure and retain highly qualified teachers whose teaching results in high achievement from all students. The increased demands on administrators and accompanying high stress levels have had a chilling effect on teachers' aspirations to move into formal leadership roles. Those with a keen eye for fiscal responsibility have further criticized Georgia's salary schedule in which educators are paid on their highest degree, resulting in many classroom teachers being paid higher salaries because they hold leadership certificates, although they have no desire to seek leadership positions within their schools or systems. These factors and others prompted the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC) and other stakeholders to initiate significant changes in the certification process for educational leaders, requiring similar changes in educational leadership preparation programs in Georgia.

This document is intended for superintendents and school system administrators charged with implementing these changes within the public school systems of the State. It will present a brief overview of the new leadership certification and preparation program, but anyone looking for specific answers related to the details of the new certification requirements should consult the PSC's website, [www.gapsc.com](http://www.gapsc.com), and all of the material available there about the new Rule. Primarily, this document will attempt to address at least some of the legal and practical issues that may be faced by those charged with making the new Rule work in the field, that is, in the schools and central offices of the State.

#### I. Summary of the Rule

A major redesign effort focused on how the PSC certifies Georgia educational leaders and the preparation needed for that role has been ongoing for a number of years. The new PSC Rule 505-2-.300, Educational Leadership, became effective April 15, 2008 and defines the positions to which it applies as follows: "Positions requiring a Leadership certificate are those in which an individual has the authority and/or responsibility, in a supervisory role, for Board-approved educational programs and/or personnel required to hold certification for their assigned job as determined by the Professional Standards Commission." The new leadership program, which requires local school systems or RESAs to collaborate with leadership preparation institutions to create a program design that meets the needs of both the higher education institution and the local school system, replaces the old "L" certificate with a new Performance-Based "PL" certificate.

The most frequently asked question is how the new Rule will affect educators who currently hold Georgia Clear Renewable Leadership "L" certificates or endorsements. Individuals with "L" certificates at Level 5, 6, or 7 issued prior to September 30, 2009 will be "grandfathered" under the old rules and remain eligible to be hired or serve in positions requiring a leadership certification. Similarly, Leadership endorsements for the positions of Director of Media Centers, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Director of Special Education, Director of Technical/Career Education and Instructional Supervision already issued prior to that date will remain in effect, subject to existing renewal requirements. Effective September 30, 2009, no new endorsements in those fields will be issued and personnel assigned to those positions without the old endorsement must hold a valid certificate in the field of Educational Leadership.

The new certification process begins with an initial pool of pre-service leadership candidates at the master's degree level or higher who will be eligible for employment in leadership positions upon completion of performance-based programs and issuance of a "PL" certificate at the building or system level. Building level programs will emphasize instructional leadership skills focused on student achievement, while the system level programs will emphasize management of resources to facilitate student learning. Educators wanting to become eligible for employment in leadership positions must first complete a Master's degree (in any field) from an accredited institution and pass the Georgia Assessment for the Certification of Educators (GACE) Leadership Assessment, at which time they will be eligible to apply for a five-year Non-Renewable Leadership (NL-5) certificate. For the Level 5 leadership preparation programs, a college or university can still accept applications for admission without input from a local school system. The NL-5 will be valid for 5 years and identifies the educator as a "Pre-Service Leadership Candidate," who is eligible to be offered a job in a leadership position. According to the PSC's website, "For the purposes of accepting candidates into PSC-approved Level 6 or Level 7 Leadership Programs, leadership candidates will be determined by the local school system in partnership with their college/university provider." Upon leadership employment, the educator will be issued a new "NPL-5" certificate and will have five years to complete a PSC-approved, performance based PL-6 or PL-7 program specified for the building level or system level, depending on the educator's specific job assignment. Superintendents and individuals assigned to concurrent job responsibilities are required to hold both certificates. Upon completion of the program, the educator will be issued a PL-6 or PL-7 certificate at either the building level or system level, which will make those individuals eligible for employment in leadership positions.

Once candidates are hired in an educational leadership position, it is the school system's responsibility to provide these candidates with opportunities to carry out performance-based assignments and program requirements while enrolled in programs offered by the PSC-approved leadership preparation provider with which the school system or RESA is collaborating. As part of the performance-based leadership program, building or system administrators must work with beginning leader candidates to develop an individualized induction plan that will define the responsibilities for the beginning leader candidate's residency program. Guidelines for the Leadership Supervised Residency require the plan to be agreed upon at the beginning of the residency. It must provide the beginning leader candidate with "substantial responsibility that increases over time and complexity and involves direct interaction with appropriate staff, students, parents and community leaders."

## II. Legal and Practical Considerations

It is the new role of the school system in the process of selecting leadership candidates and working directly with its teacher preparation institution partner to provide the training and evaluation of each candidate's program of work that raises legal and practical concerns. While complaining about the pool of leadership applicants available and the lack of experience of newly certified administrators required little investment by local officials, the new process places substantial responsibility on school systems and their existing leadership to identify and develop the leaders of the future. The Rule is intentionally flexible in defining how this responsibility is to be carried out.

For example, while certain positions will require a leadership certificate issued by the PSC, the number of "leadership positions" in which a system may place someone enrolled in a program seeking a "PL" certificate and/or a leadership degree may be much larger than the number of positions requiring a leadership certificate. Many teachers assume leadership roles within a school fulfilling duties as department chairs, grade-level chairs, accreditation review committee chairs or similar functions that provide opportunities for leadership, but do not require a specific certificate. The list is not intended to be remotely exhaustive nor to suggest that a school system would have to fill such positions only with those participating in a leadership certification training program. This example demonstrates both the flexibility and the potential difficulties for school systems.

### A. Federal Issues

While obvious to all existing superintendents and human resources directors, it cannot be overemphasized that the recruitment and selection of leaders and candidates must be conducted so as to ensure nondiscrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, age, religion or disability. Every candidate not allowed to participate in a leadership certification training program although holding what the candidate perceives to be a "leadership position," and every candidate not assigned to a "leadership position" even though the candidate wants to participate

in a training program (and thus cannot), will be inclined to blame the decision on some illegal motivation. Such contentions arise in public school employment on a daily basis, and experienced administrators realize that they must be prepared to explain to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or to a court the legitimate, nondiscriminatory motive that is the real reason for the decision. In the past, superintendents might face such a challenge in filling a specific position, but now such challenges may arise over the decision to allow a candidate the opportunity to be trained to be a “leader.”

Similar discrimination claims could arise with regard to the selection of individuals who serve as “coaches,” especially when these individuals might be experienced administrators still employed by the school system. The rule seems to place the primary responsibility for the procurement and contracting of coaches with the higher education institution, although, as in all endeavors under the rule, the school system is to cooperate. The process clearly will involve a substantial amount of time by both the certificate candidates and the coaches involved. Therefore, superintendents will have an additional interest in which employees are chosen to fill both roles.

#### B. State Issues

In addition to legal considerations under federal law, the implications of Georgia law must also be considered in implementing the process. First and foremost, superintendents and boards of education must be careful to separate issues relating to certification from those involving the employment contract and the evaluation process. Separately considering and analyzing the issues does not mean they may not overlap and it is the overlap which will often require individualized consideration.

For example, the rule clearly contemplates that a school system may choose to hire a “preservice leadership candidate” with an NL-5 certificate to assume a position such as assistant principal requiring, under PSC rules, a leadership certificate. This candidate will have five years under the rule to complete a program and obtain a PL-6 or PL-7 certificate. During this time, the candidate will be employed under yearly contracts with the local board of education (while it is legally possible for a board of education to enter into a multiyear contract with an administrator, this is rarely the practice in Georgia for assistant principals). Each year, that contract must be renewed, although these individuals cannot obtain any of the “tenure” protections of the Fair Dismissal Act. It is crucial that in agreeing to allow the candidate/employee to participate in the certification program, the school system not create documentation stating, or even implying, an agreement to employ the candidate on a multiyear basis. However, given the investment of resources being made by the school system in the candidate’s training program, the school system has a very real interest in insuring that the candidate is actively engaged in the promptest possible completion of the program to obtain performance based certification. Under the Fair Dismissal Act, “failure to secure and maintain educational training” is a cause which would justify the termination of a contract and certainly is a legitimate reason not to renew the employment of a non-tenured administrator. School systems which are accustomed to mass production of form contracts and evaluations will find it necessary to carefully draft language setting forth contract expectations, performance expectations for evaluation purposes, and certification expectations applicable to the candidate’s program with the training institution. No magic language exists to satisfy each individual circumstance, but an awareness of the issues is essential.

On the other hand, the school system may choose to allow a leadership certificate candidate to participate in a program where the leadership opportunity provided within the system does not require a leadership certificate under PSC rules (see examples of department chair, etc. above). Once again, a distinction must be made between the contract relationship, the evaluation process and the certification process, but this time the considerations are different. As a teacher, the employee can acquire and likely already has the “tenure” protection of the Fair Dismissal Act. While the leadership responsibilities assigned are crucial for the certification process, incorporating those responsibilities into a contract, especially if they are accompanied with a supplement or increase in pay, may lead to an argument that the removal of those duties and the transfer back to solely classroom responsibilities is a demotion under the terms of Georgia law (a transfer from one position to another having less “responsibility, prestige and salary.”) While the Fair Dismissal Act currently specifies that it is not intended to vest tenure rights on department head or chairperson positions, any language in the contract must be carefully reviewed to make sure the distinction is maintained.

While the school system time and resources devoted to the training program of these individuals by the system is certainly equivalent to that devoted to an employee placed in an assistant principal position requiring a leadership certificate, the employee’s failure to make progress

toward full certification is not as clearly tied to the employment relationship. The employee is, after all, a teacher with a teaching certificate, and the lack of progress toward a leadership certificate may not justify termination or even non-renewal. Where a system desires this connection, careful drafting of a contract addendum or, better yet, evaluation expectations is essential.

#### C. The Individual Induction Plan

One of the key components in the new training process is the development of an individual induction plan for each candidate. Given the issues outlined above, it should be obvious that this plan may become a key component in the school system's annual evaluation of the employee's performance. Where the job responsibilities for employment purposes are different from the leadership expectations for certificate purposes, both the IIP and the evaluation documents need to make this clear.

#### D. Future hiring criteria

Other legal issues and considerations may arise in the future, especially as the pool of performance based certificate holders increases. School systems could, and may choose to, give preference to the holders of such certificates or even the holders of such certificates who have participated in training programs sponsored by the school system in cooperation with its institutional partner. In doing so, vacancy announcements will have to be carefully drafted and consideration will have to be given to the available pool given the limitations put forth in the vacancy announcement. As always, considerations of potential discrimination claims and diversity needs of the district will be key in making these decisions.

#### E. Contract with Provider

Any contractual relationship entered into between a school district and another entity has potential legal ramifications. This is certainly true of the agreement between the district and its higher education partners or providers in the certification process. It is likely and advisable that the initial contracts track the language of the rule and provide as much flexibility and discretion to the school district as possible. School systems are used to working with colleges and universities with student teachers and other intern programs which should provide models for these agreements. Specificity is probably better left to the IIP's of each candidate.

#### F. Certification of the Superintendent

Finally, of personal interest to superintendents is the language in the proposed rule requiring superintendents to have performance based certification at both the school and system level. Of course, current superintendents are grandfathered in under the terms of the rule. Of more interest will be the extent to which superintendents and their boards, at least in the interim, turn to the permit rule of the PSC, Rule 505-2-.10, authorized by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-101(b). Under that code section, the superintendent may be employed if he or she "possesses acceptable business or management experience as specified by the Professional Standards Commission." As performance based leadership certification becomes the norm, most boards of education will clearly look for their chief educational officer to possess proven leadership skills at both the school and system level and the certification process outlined by the new rule provides that opportunity.

If superintendents and school system leaders have learned anything in their experience, it is that the unexpected can be expected and that all new laws and administrative rules have legal and practical consequences, some of which cannot possibly be anticipated. The basic legal concepts identified in this document form the framework for the consideration of any issue likely to arise and at this early stage of the implementation of a most ambitious new program, that is all that can be accomplished.

Table 1

**Statewide Leadership Academics: A 50 State Scan**

<b>STATE</b>	<b>Is there a statewide leadership academy?</b>	<b>What does the academy focus on?</b>
Alabama	No	
Alaska	Yes	The Alaska Staff Development Network provides training and professional development to school staff working collaboratively with education organizations throughout Alaska, including the Alaska Department of Education. They offer several academy experiences, including ones relating to instructional leadership issues.
Arizona	Yes	The Arizona K-12 Center will provide professional development for principals and superintendents through the Leadership Institutes for Technology. Arizona has received a grant from the Gates Foundation to support this work.
Arkansas	Yes	Arkansas has two statewide programs called the Arkansas Leadership Academy and the Arkansas Administrators Institute. Arkansas also received a grant from the Gates Foundation (\$1.6M) to integrate technology into instructional leadership practices and provide leaders with activities to develop this capacity within their leadership academy.
California	Yes	The California School Leadership Academy (CSLA) is a statewide program that helps practicing administrators and teachers in leadership positions strengthen their instructional leadership skills. CSLA is funded by the California legislature through the California Department of Education.
Colorado	Yes	Sponsored by a grant from the Gates Foundation (\$1.6M) the Technology Leadership Academies focuses on understanding technology's role in improving student learning. These academies are for principals, teachers and administrators.
Connecticut	No	
Delaware	No	
Florida	Yes	Florida Leaders.net is a statewide educational leadership initiative of the Florida Department of Education designed to provide school leaders with support in incorporating school wide technology planning into the school improvement process. Florida has received \$5.5 million from the Gates Foundation.

STATE	Is there a statewide leadership academy?	What does the academy focus on?
Georgia	Yes	The Georgia Leadership Academy provides relevant leadership development programs that enable Georgia school instructional/administrative personnel and teachers to develop, update and expand knowledge and skills required for creating optimal teaching and learning communities. It is funded through the Georgia Department of Education.
Hawaii	No	
Idaho	Yes	The Idaho Administrators Technology Academy, funded by the Gates Foundation at \$750,000 is aimed to help school administrators become instructional leaders for their teachers in the area of technology.
Illinois	Yes	The School Administrators Development Institute at Illinois State University is for superintendents and principals to develop leadership in schools for productive use of institutional and administrative technologies. Partially funded by the Gates Foundation at \$2.25 million.
Iowa	No	
Indiana	Yes	For public and private school principal and superintendents. Indiana also receive a Gates grant (\$1.8M) to add technological competency to its programs.
Kansas	Yes	The Principal Leadership Institute is an approximately 10-day training for principals to improve leadership skills, sharpen the focus on instruction and learning, examine strategic change options, and learn about the collection and analysis of data for decision making. The institute is jointly sponsored by the Kansas Department of Education and United School Administrators.
Kentucky	Yes	The Kentucky Leadership Academy builds the leadership capacity of instructional leaders to improve student performance through focused research-based strategies and key components for school improvement as modeled by the Highly Skilled Educators (HSE's). Sponsored by the Kentucky Department of Education and Kentucky Association of School Administrators.
Louisiana	Yes	The Louisiana LEADTech initiative is funded through the Gates Foundation at \$1.2 million. It will prepare school principals and district superintendents with an in-depth understanding of the role of instructional technology as it relates to school improvement.

STATE	Is there a statewide leadership academy?	What does the academy focus on?
Maine	Yes	The "Leading to Change" academy funded by the Gates Foundation at \$1.3 million provides administrators with program experiences to understanding the use of technology as a tool to help all students achieve high standards.
Maryland	No	
Massachusetts	Yes	The Gates Foundation has funded the Technology Leadership Consortium at \$3.3 million. The Consortium provides district leaders with professional development activities to help them establish the "essential conditions" for the effective use of technology in their schools and districts.
Michigan	No	
Minnesota	No	
Mississippi	Yes	The Technology Academy for School Leaders is funded by the Gates Foundation at \$1.1 million. The Academy is meant to facilitate the integration of technology in the total district/school environment and enhance principal's and superintendent's technology leadership skills in support of teaching, learning and data-driven decision making.
Missouri	Yes	The Missouri Leadership Academy is a part of the Missouri Department of Education and seeks to develop leaders beyond the principal and superintendent to include teachers, parents, students and community stakeholders in the attributes of leadership that support school improvement.
Montana	No	
Nebraska	No	
Nevada	No	
New Hampshire	No	
New Jersey	Yes	The New Jersey Education Leadership Institutes for Technology in Education (ELITE) is for superintendents and principals and focuses leadership development on whole-systems change and technological integration. Funded by the Gates Foundation at \$5.1 million.



STATE	Is there a statewide leadership academy?	What does the academy focus on?
New Mexico	No	
New York	No	
North Carolina	Yes	The Principal's Executive Program (PEP) in North Carolina is an organization of the University of North Carolina. It conducts professional development programs for principals, assistant principals and other leadership personnel on North Carolina's public schools. It was established in 1984 by the North Carolina General Assembly. PEP also has recently received a grant from the Gates Foundation at \$2.95 million to develop principals as technology leaders through the PEP program.
North Dakota	No	
Ohio	Yes	The Ohio Principal's Leadership Academy (OPLA) is a two-year program grounded in the day-to-day experiences of practicing principals. OPLA is a partnership between Ohio's education, business, community and public leaders that aims to benefit students, schools and communities through the behaviors of principals and staff teams.
Oklahoma	No	The Oklahoma State Department of Education does sponsor an annual two-day leadership conference.
Oregon	No	
Pennsylvania	Yes	The Principals Leadership Academy offers 20 hours of professional development at four sites across the state during four days in the summer and fall, and is jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, the Pennsylvania Educational Leadership Foundation and the Pennsylvania Department of Education.
Rhode Island	Yes	The Leadership Initiative for Principals and Superintendents has received a Gates Foundation grant of \$780,000 to develop school and district leaders for their emerging role in technology. This grant application was submitted by the Rhode Island Foundation.
South Carolina	No	
South Dakota	Yes	The Technology Leadership Program for School Administrators is a program funded by the Gates Foundation at \$675,000 to support activities that prepare school leaders, superintendents and

		principals for their emerging role in technology. The focus is on whole-systems technology integration.
<b>STATE</b>	<b>Is there a statewide leadership academy?</b>	<b>What does the academy focus on?</b>
Tennessee	No	
Texas	Yes	Technology Leadership Academy for Superintendents and Principals is a collaborative effort headed by the University of North Texas, with partners including the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The academy recently obtained more funding by the Gates Foundation of \$6.3 million.
Utah	No	
Vermont	No	
Virginia	No	
Washington	Yes	Smart Tools Academy funded by the Gates Foundation at \$2.0 million to ensure that all Washington principals and superintendents share a vision and an understanding of the ways that technology can support and improve student learning.
West Virginia	Yes	Learning Educational Administration from a Distance (LEAD) Academy is funded by the Gates Foundation at \$1.2 million to prepare superintendents and principals for their emerging role in technology.
Wisconsin	No	
Wyoming	No	

**Table 2***Demographics of Participants*

Participant Identification	Years as Principal	Years in Education	Certification Level	Grade Level	School Population	Leadership Program	Gender
1	1	11	L6	Middle	850	Traditional	Female
2	1	12	L6	High	300	Traditional	Female
3	1	10	L5	Middle	1100	Traditional	Male
4	2	28	L7	High	400	Traditional	Male
5	2	20	L7	Middle	800	Traditional	Male
6	1	11	L6	Middle	600	Traditional	Female
7	2	22	L7	Elementary	400	Traditional	Female
8	2	17	L6	High	600	Traditional	Male