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What Types of Support Programs Have Pennsylvania School Districts Established to Aid Principals as Building Leaders?

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WHAT TYPES OF SUPPORT PROGRAMS HAVE PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL

DISTRICTS ESTABLISHED TO AID PRINCIPALS AS BUILDING LEADERS?

by

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Abstract

The role of the building principal is a demanding responsibility. Increasing

expectations from various stakeholders make a formidable job feel overwhelming to

many. In an effort to help principals in their role as building leader, several support

programs have been acknowledged as useful aids to assist them. Over time, literature has

recognized the use of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching as primary

methods to support various positions within the education field.

In an effort to gauge the use of these programs by public school principals in

Pennsylvania, a quantitative study was conducted. Using a random sampling of the target

population, 368 principals participated in the study. Based on the response rate, results

were generalizable to building level positions and school district size. Female principals

were underrepresented in the study. Findings revealed that mentoring was the most

commonly used support program for principals. Conversely, executive coaching was the

least used program. In addition, almost one out of every three principals did not have any

support program available to them.

For principals with no support program options, they conveyed hypothetical

benefits of a support program focusing on leadership/management and social

interactions/relationships. These respondents also indicated that they had no knowledge

why programs were not offered to them and the lack of district funds was posed as the

possible reason why such support programs were not available.

Principals who had the opportunity to partake in a program generally indicated a

positive experience. Similarly, they conveyed the same attitude toward their coaches or

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mentors. Respondents felt their experiences provided a chance to build professional relationships and strengthen leadership abilities. However, the longer respondents held the title of head principal the less positively they rated the effectiveness of the support program and the quality of the mentor or coach.

Based on the study, further research should be conducted on how the various support programs impact building level leadership. More so, researchers should explore how the length of time in a position affects principals' perceptions of needed professional development.

Chapter One

Introduction

Role of the Principal

Being a public school principal can be an intimidating career choice. As stated in

Better Leaders for America's Schools: A Manifesto (2003), "They [the principals] are

more like field commanders of an army engaged in conflicts on many fronts" (Thomas B.

Fordham Institute, p. 23). Principals are paramount to both student and teacher success in

education, and they have been described as the most important factor to school

improvement (Smith, 2004). Their responsibilities include creating an environment that is

safe, maintaining a culture that promotes student-centered initiatives, and providing

instructional leadership that raises standardized test scores.

As far back as the early 1900s, the main responsibility of principals was to

manage a school. They were expected to supervise teachers, to make sure the building

was in satisfactory condition, and to discipline children. The nature of the work was

decisive and quick. In the mid 1970s, researchers began to study the daily functions of

school administrators after Mintzberg's publication of *The Nature of Managerial Work*

(1973). Mintzberg attempted to describe a day in the life of five executives including a

school superintendent. He found that the school administrator's job was fragmented with

constant interruptions. Later, Peterson (1978) investigated the daily routines of building

principals. In his observations, he noted the constant interactions and numerous decisions

principals made throughout the course of each day. Through his research, he defined the

job as being one of "brevity, variety, and fragmentation" (Peterson, 1998, p. 6). Still

today, a principal's day consists of brief, frequent exchanges lasting only a few minutes

each time (Lovely, 2004). Consequently, an administrator may unknowingly accomplish multiple tasks and make numerous decisions during the course of a school day based on the continuous interactions with teachers, parents, and students.

With the daily fast-paced demands of the work environment, principals are still responsible for the traditional duties of the position including supervising staff, controlling fiscal costs, maintaining a safe climate, developing and overseeing programs, raising achievement levels, promoting community relations, and supporting the school's mission (Peterson & Kelley, 2001). In most cases, these job demands are relegated to only a few individuals. In most elementary schools, the building principal has the sole authority and responsibility to oversee the daily operations. At the secondary level, one or more assistant principals may help with the managerial duties. The organization of the school system routinely expects a few leaders to oversee and administer operations of buildings containing several hundred to several thousand students. This structural hierarchy of principals supervising large groups of individuals requires building leaders to use much of their time and energy to personally address all issues beyond the classroom.

In an effort to alleviate some of the pressures of the job and to avoid burnout, school districts have been encouraged to incorporate support systems into their administrative teams to promote and retain qualified individuals. Peterson and Kelly (2001) indicated that districts must seek out opportunities to recruit, train, and retain principals through professional development and transition planning. In reviewing the existing research in education, three programs emerge as possible supports for principals in their various roles. For the purpose of this study, the selected articles and studies will

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define and summarize the most prominent support systems used for leaders in education and business. These systems are mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching.

Mentoring

Mentoring, is forged by the creation of a personal and trusting relationship between individuals with the goal to provide guidance and support (Ashburn, Mann, & Purdue, 1987, p. 2). Various definitions articulate the balance of the mentor/protégé relationship. However, many reiterate the relationship of a senior colleague providing knowledge, feedback, and insight to a younger less experienced person.

Mentoring has been an established practice in various professions. Business, industry, medicine, and education have all benefited from mentoring programs. With an analysis of over 300 research-based articles, Ehrich, Hansford, and Tennent (2004), concluded that the majority of mentoring programs provide positive outcomes to the mentor, protégé, and/or organizations. For example, mentors and protégés from medical and business sectors commonly cited positive results in personal growth, career satisfaction, and improved job skills and performance. Additionally, Roche (1979) conveyed the benefits of mentoring for top executives in business. Mentored executives earned 28% more than non-mentored peers and indicated a greater degree of happiness with their jobs. Mentoring programs have become more commonplace in the world of public education initially being implemented as part of most districts new teacher induction programs and eventually moving to formalized programs supported by state professional associations for new school administrators.

Mentoring is the most thoroughly researched support program that appears to create positive outcomes for organizational systems (Maxwell, 1995). Over the past thirty

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years, professional organizations and academia have devoted considerable attention to the concept (Malone, 2001). For mentors involved in the process, the relationship can help lead to greater job satisfaction, potential career advancement, and increased recognition from colleagues. For protégés, the individual being mentored, the support system has the potential to instill confidence in working ability, improve communication skills, gain insight into how the local school system operates, and foster a sense of belonging within the organization (Daresh, 2004).

Peer coaching

Peer coaching is another form of support to help principals in their positions. Like mentoring, peer coaching of principals has the potential to provide professional growth and positive outcomes in variety of ways. The benefits of becoming involved in this form of support allows for trusting bonds between colleagues, open communication, opportunities to take risks, and reflective practice (Hansen & Matthews, 2002). The critical difference between peer coaching and mentoring is the nature of the relationship. Mentoring relies on a veteran educator imparting wisdom and knowledge on a less experienced (typically younger) colleague. Conversely, peer coaching relationships are composed of colleagues of any experience level working together to improve some aspect of their professional lives.

Peer coaching allows for a variety of interactions. Hansen and Matthews (2002) divided the support system into various sub categories. First, "colleague teams" are developed between two principals who commit to spend significant time together through conferencing, planning, and possibly shadowing each other's assignments. Second, "mentoring teams" are formed around a specific need. It is different from mentoring

because the relationship is not necessarily a more experienced principal providing guidance to a novice. Third, "collaborative teams" involve several principals and are formed to work on a specific issue. Fourth, "resource teams" promote a forum for principals to share strategies with others. Like teacher leaders who attend workshops and then return to their school to share with staff, resource teams allow for administrators to gather new ideas from each other. Finally, "goal-sharing teams" are groups that plan vision and direction. These groups start with the end goal and conference with one another to determine the planning needed to accomplish the objective.

Executive Coaching

Within the past fifteen years, the term executive coaching has become a prominent expression within the fields of business and industry. Different fields and disciplines have come to welcome the role of a coach to improve or enhance the performance of an individual as well as a method to further improve the larger organization. Since the growing popularity of executive coaching has solidified itself in the business arena over the past decade, the concept is inevitably expanding into the nonprofit and government sectors (Orenstein, 2002).

Executive coaching is the most recent form of support to help school leaders but differs from mentoring and peer coaching by the relationship of the coach to the client. The coach is employed outside the system of the client and holds no supervisory role within the organization. In education, retired principals and superintendents or independent consultants hold these positions (Reeves, 2007). In this arrangement, the coach collaborates with the client to enhance learning and improve effectiveness personally and/or within the organization (Bluckert, 2005).

In education, the use of coaching can result in success for the individual and the school system. Coaching principals has the potential to increase retention rates, produce greater productivity and grow confidence (Lovely, 2004). In one study, leadership coaches were trained and assisted in developing principal induction programs throughout California. At the conclusion of the program, administrators described positive feelings about the support and indicated a more dedicated approach to instructional leadership and more confidence to dealing with school issues (Bloom, Castagna, & Warren, 2003).

Principal Support Programs

For many new principals, some support is available although limited. The usual model used is mentoring. Most teachers and administrators have accepted this support as being helpful, and available research shows how mentor programs positively affect building leaders (National Association of Elementary School Principals & The Education Alliance at Brown University, 2003; Royer & Rehmeyer, 2008). However, mentoring generally pertains to supporting a limited number of principals and most often, those in their first year of a new position.

Likewise, minimal information has been published on the use of peer coaching and executive coaching programs to support principals at various career stages. The research on coaching is narrow and primarily focused on teachers or for-profit organizations. Limited empirical information exists on how building level principals could benefit from peer coaching or executive coaching. Finally, superintendents will need to endorse any support system for building principals. Thus, it is imperative to identify how school district leaders, namely superintendents, are using mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs with their administrative teams.

Unfortunately, current research does not give an indication of superintendents' or principals' perceptions of the various support programs or their level of success with the implementation of such a system.

Purpose of the Study & Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to identify the types of support programs currently used for building principals in Pennsylvania school districts. In addition, the study will identify reasons that facilitate or deter the offering of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching programs to building principals. Thus, twelve research questions will be posed in this investigation.

1.A. To what extent do principals report that mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are offered as either required or optional programs?

1.B. Is there a significant difference regarding participation in each of the support programs as related to years as a principal?

2.A. For principals engaged in one of the programs, what do they report to be the major benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and/or executive coaching?

2.B. Is there a significant difference regarding the perceived benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

3.A. How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of their experience?

3.B. Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

4.A. How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of the mentor/coach?

4.B. Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of the mentor/coach as related to years as a principal?

5.A. What actions/district characteristics do principals report to be deterrents to the implementation of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching programs in school districts?

5.B. Is there a significant difference regarding deterrents to the implementation of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

6.A. What are the expected benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs for principals who have not had the opportunity to participate in a support program?

6.B. Is there a significant difference regarding expected benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

Definition of Terms

Principal – the head principal of the school, excluding assistant principals, and vice-principals.

Mentoring – A support program, usually designated for individuals new to a position. The model consists of a veteran administrator (mentor) providing guidance and support to a younger administrator (protégé). In most cases, the goal of the relationship is to acclimate the protégé to the position and/or organization.

Peer coaching – A support program, which two or more professionals work together to enhance, refine, or develop skills within their current positions. The combination of colleagues usually consists of staff members of similar age, job title, and/or working experience.

Executive coaching – A support program between an employee and a hired consultant. The one-on-one relationship is based on individualized goals and is restricted to a mutually agreed upon time period through a contract. The goal is to improve individual performance in a specific area and ultimately enhance the organization's effectiveness through the process.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

The review of literature details the research conducted on support programs for school principals. It will provide an in-depth account of the demands of the principalship including working in isolation, pool of certified candidates, and turnover within the position. Furthermore, the review will provide a critical analysis of the research on mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs for principals.

Increasing Demands of the Principalship

The demands of being a school principal can be daunting. Beyond the tasks that have traditionally been expected of principals, today the position has expanded to include additional responsibilities. This trend of increasing the everyday tasks of principals seems to be present throughout the country. The National Association for Secondary School Principals (NASSP) released a study describing the increased responsibilities of school administrators (2007). Principals have categorized their job description into multiple roles: manager, staff developer, disciplinarian, instructional leader, coach, supervisor, change agent, and public relations partner (Portin, Shen, & Williams, 1998). The principalship has been described as not one job but as various occupations including marriage counselor, funeral director, staff developer, and community organizer (Cash, 2001).

These increased responsibilities appear to have negatively affected the reality and perception of the principalship. Between 1980 and 1996 over 90 studies were completed to explore the causes and consequences of administrator stress and burnout (Gmelch & Gates, 1997). The study provided an extension of how burnout affects administrators.

Using a stratified random sampling of elementary principals, middle school/junior high principals, high school principals and superintendents, the researchers studied multiple dimensions of burnout. They noted emotional exhaustion as a central element to causing stress. They cited variables including workload, hours, interruptions, conflict-mediating, and competitive behavior as contributing factors to exhaustion and stress (Gmelch & Gates, 1997). Superintendents, school boards, and state and federal legislatures have continued to assign additional tasks to principals without removing or transferring existing responsibilities. From community outreach initiatives to accountability for student achievement, today's principals are presented with greater demands to fulfill the job requirements (Peterson & Kelley, 2001). School administrators are required to have a greater understanding of how to manage political, financial, and community components of the principalship (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003, p. 17). For example, in a study of 840 Washington State principals, they believed that their job responsibilities moved from a managerial orientation within the school to one of working closely with all segments of the community (Portin, 1997). In addition, they felt that their workload increased due to standardized testing, school violence, and the expanding number of special education programs. Today, a building principal is increasingly held accountable for achievements scores while having less time and authority to perform duties. As a result of these increasing demands, qualified candidates are dissuaded from entering the field of school leadership and many current principals are looking to retire (Langer & Boris-Schater, 2003).

Isolated Environment

To add to the pressures associated with the expanded role, principals must usually confront these challenging demands in an isolated environment. As on-site managers, principals spend the majority of their time within their schools completing all of the necessary duties. This dedication and commitment to the individuals and associated tasks in the schools limit the amount of time principals can interact with peers. Conversations with fellow colleagues are usually restricted to brief phone calls or emails. Face-to-face encounters are infrequent because they are more time-consuming, and they force administrators to leave their buildings. Due to the limited routine encounters with other building supervisors, managers are left with their own knowledge and skill sets to accomplish job duties. In turn, this structured isolation commonly creates feelings of helplessness and a survivalist mentality (Wolf & Sherwood, 1981). Feelings of isolation can be devastating to principals. Piggot-Irvine (2004) has gone as far to say that the overpowering isolation of the job may be so devastating that even very good principals burnout (p. 24). An isolated environment accompanied by intensive job stresses has lead administrators to leave or retire and districts facing shortages in filling positions (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2007).

Pool of Candidates

While states have continually reported increasing numbers of candidates being granted an administrative certification, schools still lack finding quality leaders (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003). Several factors have dissuaded potential candidates from applying for administrative positions. First, both superintendents and teachers have indicated that the salary is not commensurate with the job (Keller, 1999; Whitaker, 2001). Principals earn, on average, about 75% more than a teacher's salary while comparable

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middle-level management positions in business and law make almost three times as much as employees (Thomas B. Fordham Institute, 2003, p. 23). Second, elementary principals spend over 50 hours a week on school activities while secondary principals spend 60 or more hours attending to job responsibilities (Herr, 2002). In some instances, the workweek can extend to 80 hours when including evening events (Villani, 2006). With the increased amount of total days devoted to the job, the increased number of hours worked on an annual basis, and the limited pay differential, many principals earn the same amount of money or less at an hourly rate as full-time teachers. It is not surprising that many teachers have increasingly lost interest seeking out a principalship due to the increased demands of the job (Lindle, 2004).

Similar to the national trend, fewer Pennsylvania teachers are applying for administrative positions. For example, from 2000-2005 the Pennsylvania Department of Education issued more than 4,500 principal certificates (Education Policy and Research Center [EPLC], 2006). However, even with the overwhelming number of certified teachers eligible to advance to a principalship, a shortage of qualified candidates interested in filling these vacancies continues. EPLC acknowledged several reasons for the disparity between the growing number of certified candidates and the lack of interested applicants for positions. First, some teachers use a leadership program as way to earn graduate credits and increase salary adjustments based on collective bargaining contracts. These individuals usually do not intend to move beyond the classroom and only acquire the certification as part of the graduate program. Second, other teachers have been dissuaded from pursuing a principalship due to an increased time commitment,

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lower compensation (based on a per diem rate), political nature of school boards, and decreased job security (p. 3).

In addition to a decline in certified individuals applying for principalships, the building level position faces other challenges. Most current principals are over the age of 50 (Zahorchak, 2008), and from 1998-2007 principals 55 years old and beyond grew from 22% to 33% (Aud et al, 2010). Furthermore, the Bureau of Labor and Statistics projected 8 percent growth by 2018 (2009). This expected increase in available positions and those leaving the profession may ultimately expand the potential openings within the field. Unfortunately, Grogan and Andrews affirmed the shortage of candidates accepting open positions. When administrators accept positions, almost half of those in principalships leave their positions within eight years with the highest rates of attrition occurring within the first three years of the job (2002).

Currently, only a select number of suitable educators are choosing to pursue principalships. These individuals, while knowing the burdensome expectations and the demands of the position, willingly decide to leave the classroom in order to accept assistant principal or head principal positions. Consequently, these leaders need professional and moral support in order to handle the increased responsibility of the position and the resulting stress and pressure. Principals feel confined and with little support especially when left to make difficult decisions (Whitaker, 2001). It is essential for those in education to see and understand how the current system affects school leaders personally and professionally. Future leadership capacity will not be maintained and thrive unless policymakers and reformers address the issue of support (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004). Therefore, superintendents, school boards, and state and national

organizations must look for ways to help support principals as they carry out their job requirements.

Mentoring

The idea of a mentor/protégé can be traced back thousands of years to Homer's *Odyssey* (Daresh, 1995). In the literary piece, Odysseus entrusted Mentor to tutor his son. This relationship of an older, wiser sage imparting wisdom to a younger, less worldly individual has become the common depiction of mentoring (p. 8). Since then, the concept has been a practice in various professions. Corporations and businesses have paired experienced executives with novice protégés for some time. In education, by the mid 1980s, professional development for principals was a critical component to sustaining effective leadership (Daresh, 2004). Mentoring became a suggested initiative to provide meaningful support to these leaders (Crow & Matthew, 1998). Today, mentoring is viewed as a critical factor in helping principals enhance and grow their skills so schools become more effective (Daresh, 2004).

Mentoring is a complex relationship between two individuals of varying experience. Mentors provide support, counseling, guidance, and feedback to a protégé (Hopkins-Thompson, 2001). In schools, mentors are typically effective principals who have a desire to assist less experienced administrators. The process and interactions between the mentor and protégés provides the opportunity for novice leaders to learn the knowledge, expectations, and values within their working environment (Crow & Matthews, 1998).

Literature has repeatedly acknowledged the benefits of mentoring principals for both the mentor and protégé (Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004). Mentors expressed satisfaction with developing new professional roles (Bowers & Eberhart, 1988),

contributing to the profession (Reyes, 2003), and greater self-reflection about one's own practices (Playko, 1995). Protégés have gained greater skills and knowledge, reduced isolation, enhanced critical thinking skills, increased self-confidence, received feedback, and developed collegial relationships (Barnett, 1995; Bush & Coleman, 1995; Prince, 2004).

However, even though there are numerous studies to support the advantages of mentoring, there can be some limitations to the program. Lack of resources, loss of focus to maintain the program, inadequate mentor training, and limited availability have been problematic to sustaining mentoring (Daresh, 2004). Hall (2008) cited further obstacles to the program including no common language, lack of time, undefined roles and responsibilities, and inadequate pairing of mentors and protégés. Also, Kram (1985) identified the preference for males and females to not work closely with members of the opposite sex. Harris & Crocker's (2008) study explored gender issues relating to mentors and protégés. By surveying male and female students enrolled in a university principal preparation program, participants identified gender preferences for selecting mentors. When given the choice, male protégés predominately selected male mentors and female protégés overwhelmingly selected female mentors. Feeling comfortable with someone from the same sex and being understanding were the two most frequent responses to why individuals preferred mentors of like gender. These limitations all have the potential to disrupt the positive benefits associated with mentoring novice administrators.

Furthermore, most mentoring programs concentrate on first-year administrators. However, mentoring can be used throughout an individual's career. Kram (1985) observed that leaders in mentoring relationships needed to stratify the concept by

experiencing different types of support at various career phases. She separated careers into early, middle, and late stages and explained that employees required different types of support based on individualistic needs. Leaders in the early stages of a career are looking to learn the intricacies of a position and well as an intention to demonstrate competence (Kram, 1983). While those in a midcareer stage involve a personal reassessment of contributions and recognize that one's career path has been established and decided. This time can be especially somber for some as leaders recognize there is no further possibility for promotion or advancement (Kram, 1983). In the late career stage, individuals begin to look ahead to retirement while reflecting on past accomplishments (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Specifically in education, Crow and Matthews (1998) categorized mentoring needs for principals at various career stages including aspiring principals, new assistant principals, new principals, and mid career principals. Yet, current programs do not necessarily address the use of mentors throughout the length of a career.

The importance of having a mentor has been endorsed at the national level in education. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) has created PALS (Peer Assisted Leadership Services). The program trains experienced principals to be mentors. Upon completion of the training, NAESP awards these principals with a certificate acknowledging their role as a mentor (http://www.naesp.org/Content Load.do?contentId=1104). Similarly, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) offers workshops for mentors to learn about themselves and their capabilities of functioning within the structured formal

relationship (NASSP, 2011). Both of these programs authorized at the national level further promote the critical need for school leaders to support one another.

In Pennsylvania, mentoring has become an established practice in public education. Teachers are required to complete an induction program within their first several years of teaching. As part of this process, school districts typically assigned mentors to first year teachers to acclimate them to the school system. In addition, the new teacher is expected to meet regularly with the mentor, administration, and other new teachers as part of the acclimation process to the profession (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2006).

This program has now transferred to principals. As of January 1, 2008, The Pennsylvania Department of Education has endorsed the Principals' Induction Program (GROW) to assist beginning administrators through the Pennsylvania Principals Mentoring Network (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2011). Using cohorts, new administrators meet 13 days over the course of a year to learn and discuss courses on visions, goals, and results. Throughout the induction program, the cohort address the three core Pennsylvania leadership standards:

- The leader has the knowledge and skills to think and plan strategically, creating an organizational vision around personalized student success.
- The leader has an understanding of standards-based systems theory and design and the ability to transfer that knowledge to the leader's job as the architect of standards-based reform in the school.
- The leader has the ability to access and use appropriate data to inform decision-making at all levels of the system. (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2010)

Recent research has indicated promising results with the program. In 2009, Bowman's research compared participants of Pennsylvania's GROW network to those not involved with the program. He concluded that candidates within their first two years of administration expressed greater job satisfaction than those with five years of experience. Furthermore, he suggested that males had higher ratings of job satisfaction than females and that those administrating in suburban schools has increased job fulfillment than others in urban schools. The researcher found that using mentors was a practical and effective strategy in helping beginners become more acclimated to their new positions.

While researchers have sought to find how the influence of a mentor program for new principals helps them achieve job satisfaction and leadership skills (Brooks, 2003; Gettys, 2007; Palermo, 2004; Skinner, 2006), most of the empirical research on mentoring has focused on first year principals.. For example, Woolsey (2010) conducted a mixed methods study of interviews, observations, and surveys of six mentor/protégé pairs as part of a new principalship mentoring program. Her findings revealed a mutually beneficial relationship to both the mentor and the protégé. In addition, protégés, indicated an increase in knowledge, confidence, and skills. However, her study recommended a further need for mentorships to allow for more dedicated time for partnerships, additional professional development, and specific pairings based on individual needs.

Smith's (2009) work focused on new principals in Wisconsin. As part on the state's licensing regulations for administrators, all new principals are required to receive mentoring in their district of hire for one year. Based on a survey of 47 new principals, she revealed that mentoring was a viable option for professional development. Her

research indicated varying levels of mentoring experiences. Of those surveyed, individuals who consistently engaged in activities with a mentor experienced greater self-confidence. However, with a 20.8% response rate her findings were limited to the sample in her study and not generalizable to the target population.

In Pennsylvania, Bichsel (2008) conducted a quantitative study of professional development needs of 82 secondary principals residing in the western part of the state. In particular, she sought to identify principals' needs, their preferred methods to acquire professional development, and if their needs were met. Through a survey, principals indicated a desire for training in data collection and analysis, effective communication, team building, and using research to make decisions. Her findings also detailed that principals preferred coaching and mentoring as their first and second choices for acquiring professional development.

However, these studies fall short of expanding and investigating the idea of mentoring for more experienced principals. Veteran administrators are left to work in an isolated, self-monitored, self-motivated environment furthering frustration and possible burnout from the unavoidable stress factors associated with the profession. While these programs, both national and state, help acclimate newly hired principals, no support system appears in place for individuals who are principals over several years.

Peer coaching

Originally, Joyce and Showers (1980) were two of the first researchers to use the term "coach" in reference to professional development. The phrasing redirected the approach of adult learning to coincide with athletic coaching. Collegial coaching, within

the education system, sought to enhance teaching through reflective practices and professional conversations with colleagues (Garmston, 1987).

Even though peer coaching has become common jargon in education, researchers are concerned about how it is defined. In several studies, researchers have substituted peer coaching for mentoring or they have combined the terms to form "mentor-peer relationships" or "collegial coaching" (Brooks, 2003; Garmston, 1987; Riveria, 2000). The subtle changes when referencing peer coaching has created an ambiguous connotation of the term. Peer coaching has been defined as:

> A confidential process through which two or more professional colleagues work together to reflect on current practices; expand, refine, and build new skills; share ideas; teach one another; conduct classroom research; or solve problems in the workplace. (Robbins, 1991, p. 1)

Parker, Hall, and Kram's explanation further delineates peer coaching as a helping relationship with reciprocal learning. In career fields, peers can provide emotional and psychological support to enhance potential and individualized learning (2008).

The use of peer coaching for teachers has produced favorable results. Researchers have studied the effects of teachers using peer coaching as a support program. Teachers who observed one another and shared feedback were more likely to transfer the newly learned skills into their own classroom thus enhancing professional development (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Sparks and Bruder indicated teachers were more willing to experiment with new teaching methods after peer coaching (1987). In their study, 41 high school teachers collaborated on new pedagogical skills. The majority reported that peer coaching enabled them to reach more instructional goals. With pre-service teachers,

Bowman and McCormick's research of undergraduate elementary majors found those participating in peer coaching increased pedagogical skills more than those not involved in peer coaching (2000).

With the majority of the early research on the topic focused on classroom teachers, the principal's role in peer coaching was confined to providing administrative assistance and scheduling time within a professional development framework to assist educators as they explored ways to provide support to one another (Brandt, 1987; Capobianco, 1999). However, over time, some individuals in the field have recognized the need to explore the use of peer coaching for administrators. For principals, creating a networking system in which peers can discuss issues is a fundamental component to a support system (Brooks, 2003). For example, Far West Laboratory in San Francisco created the Peer-Assisted Leadership (PAL) program. This formal peer coaching program coordinated relationships between principals to help reduce isolation and improve leadership abilities (Barnett, 1989). PAL emphasized interviewing opportunities and shadowing experiences. A further study of PAL with Canadian educational leaders revealed similar findings. Using a pre and post questionnaire for 41 participants of the program, researchers indicated positive collegial interactions and a reduction in the feeling of isolation for principals (Dussault & Barnett, 1996). The participation in a social support network decreased principals' feelings of isolation and increased longevity within a current position (Riggins, 2001).

Peer coaching potentially offers the same fundamental benefits as mentoring including counseling, friendship, acceptance, exposure, and support (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Within organizations, peer coaching relationships are developed and nurtured

through common workplace settings due to the sheer numbers of potential candidates (Bryant, 2005). Therefore, this opportunistic form of professional development may be a viable option to traditional mentoring and present school leaders with a more realistic possibility of conveying and gaining critical skills.

Executive Coaching

In the United States more than 10,000 professionals from corporate, non-profit, and government sectors partake in executive coaching (Orenstein, 2006). Where the concept executive coaching originated and when coaching transcended traditional consulting is unclear. Tobias (1996) speculated that the term began to appear in business terminology in the late 1980s. Moreover, he believed that organizations and business leaders accepted the word coaching because of the positive connotations associated with it. Coaching was seen as focusing on the individual. Rather than attend a workshop or seminar on a general topic, coaching was viewed as an ongoing training used to address a person's current needs. (Tobias, 1996). This individualized, custom approach to professional enhancement allowed for a positive reception to clients looking to enhance personal goals (Grant & Zackon, 2004).

Although researchers and practitioners have defined executive coaching differently, several key elements accompany each meaning. First, the literature describes executive coaching as a collaborative relationship between the client and coach. Second, the purpose of this relationship is to improve or enhance an identified performance goal or behavior – either personal or organizational. Third, the coach uses a variety of techniques to assess the client's current performance and designs a program to help him/her reach attainable goals (Frisch, 2001; Kilberg, 1996; Peterson, 1996; Redshaw,

2000; Storey, 2003; Witherspoon & White, 1996). For the purposes of this research, executive coaching is defined as:

> A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (Kilburg, 1996, p. 142)

Just as the literature has continuously redefined the definition of executive coaching, the coaching role has changed in practice to reflect the specific needs of individual clients. For example, executives used to hire coaches to help upper-level managers who were in trouble or had a difficult time working with colleagues. Because of this approach, business executives had developed a negative view of coaching because CEOs hired coaches to "fix" a problem (Giglio, Diamante, & Urban, 1998). In an effort to address individual goals, executives have retained coaches for a variety of reasons. Some hire coaches when they assume a new position (Niemes, 2002) while others seek out coaches who will help them solve problems (Wolf & Sherwood, 1981) or develop interpersonal skills (Filipczak, 1998). Diedrich (1996) further expanded the reasons for a person to acquire a coach. While some senior personnel work with coaches to change unsatisfactory job performance, many corporate America executives have used coaches to develop, enhance or change leadership capabilities for self, team, and organizational

performance. Still others have secured a coach to adapt through the change process or to monitor individual growth needs (p. 62).

Although corporations still use coaches to help senior management as a last resort before dismissal, the growing trend is for top-level executives to embrace coaching in a proactive way to improve already good levels of performance. The presence of a coach is now seen as a sign that an executive is on the track for a promotion. Having an assigned coach is an obvious sign that the company has a sincere interest in the employee and is willing to invest money and time into furthering that person's career (Filipczak, 1998).

As experts in the field have worked to establish a definition of coaching, they have also taken measures to delineate the differences between consulting, mentoring, and coaching. In a purely consultative approach, the goal is to focus on the entire organization, which is thought to benefit when individuals change positively (Dutton, 1997; Tobias, 1996). Although mentoring is a one-on-one relationship with frequent interactions between the two parties, mentors do not need to focus on specific skills or behaviors as a coach would be expected to do (Frisch, 2001). In short, coaching is an action-based, goal oriented process focused on an individual. Although these three models may overlap with one another, distinct differences define coaching, in particular, executive coaching, as a separate field based on the nature of the relationship between the parties involved and the goals of the scheduled interactions.

In 2003, a comprehensive search on coaching excluding mentoring and peer coaching revealed only 128 peer-reviewed articles since 1937. Fifty-five of the studies included empirical evidence and the majority were doctoral dissertations (Grant & Cavanaugh, 2004). Furthermore, in 2009, database searches on coaching in educational

settings uncovered more than 2,000 citations (Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010).

However, the overwhelming themes encountered during the search focused on teachers

coaching students or teachers receiving coaching, while minimal research referenced

executive or leadership coaching in relation to education (Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt,

2010).

Within the research, some have indicated how this approach could be developed

and used in other fields. Kampa –Kokesch and Anderson (2001) highlighted the rationale

for high-ranking professionals in other fields to partake into executive coaching. In

business and industry, it is not only the CEO that benefits from having a coach. A client

can be anyone from middle management up to the high-powered executive expecting to

become the CEO (Smith, 1993). Therefore, it is reasonable for school districts to

subscribe to the notion that principals are just as suitable candidates to receive coaching

as superintendents are. More importantly, since the building level principal has the most

significant impact on school improvement, it is logical to conclude that districts should

invest in strategies that enable principals to be successful. Using an executive coach has

the advantage of making principals successful in their positions, and, ultimately,

contributing in a manner that creates greater achievement for the larger organization of

the school district.

Based on this belief, executive coaching is a logical consideration to support

superintendents, assistant superintendents, and building principals. Their participation in

a program may lead to personal and organizational benefits. Recently, researchers

conducted several studies involving superintendents' leadership and professional

development. Eldemire (2004) suggested that superintendents can further enhance

leadership capabilities by customizing training and development opportunities including executive coaching. However, the researcher grouped coaching with a list of several other options and gave minimal attention to whether coaching is comparatively a better method than others. In addition, the study focused solely on superintendents and not building level leaders.

Bowmaster (2007) explored the professional development of superintendents. From the research, superintendents acknowledged the use of executive coaching as a method to continue their own professional development but, again, provided minimal insight into the use of the service. As with the previous study, Bowmaster's research focused on superintendents and failed to address principals.

Further research by Contreras (2008) described a positive association with coaching administrators. She surveyed 60 principals and their coaches to determine effectiveness of leadership coaching. Both groups reported principals improved their ability to lead schools after participating in a coaching program. Recently, Wyatt (2010) explored the relationship between female superintendents and the use of executive coaching. She concluded prior mentoring experiences produced significantly higher levels of self-fulfillment. Unfortunately, only a small number from her sample actually participated in any form of coaching. As a result, she recommended all superintendents participate in a formal coaching program.

The literature presented challenges currently experienced by school systems. With principals facing daunting expectations and the limited pool of interested candidates, districts and state organizations need to develop and sustain support programs to assist

novice and experienced school leaders. By doing so, principals will build collegial

relationships, enhance skills and knowledge, and reduce feelings of isolation.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The purpose of this research study was to identify the extent to which Pennsylvania principals are using mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching as a district sponsored support system to help build their leadership capacity. Additionally, the study identified the elements incorporated into each support program. For principals not utilizing a support program, the study sought to identify the reasons for not using these aids for assistance. This chapter describes the research design, population, sample, measures, procedures, and data analysis used to address each inquiry.

Research Design

The research design of the study included a closed form questionnaire. The questionnaire evoked principals' responses to their use of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching within their districts. Additional questions sought to identify modifications to these support structures and the possible reasons for not pursuing these systems within the districts. The questionnaire was administered to a random sample of elementary, middle/junior high, and high school principals in public schools in Pennsylvania.

Research Questions

1.A. To what extent do principals report that mentoring, peer coaching, and

executive coaching are offered as either required or optional programs?

1.B. Is there a significant difference regarding participation in each of the support

programs as related to years as a principal?

2.A. For principals engaged in one of the programs, what do they report to be the major

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benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and/or executive coaching?

2.B. Is there a significant difference regarding the perceived benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

3.A. How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of their experience?

3.B. Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

4.A. How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of the mentor/coach?

4.B. Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of the mentor/coach as related to years as a principal?

5.A. What actions/district characteristics do principals report to be deterrents to the implementation of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching programs in school districts?

5.B. Is there a significant difference regarding deterrents to the implementation of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

6.A. What are the expected benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs for principals who have not had the opportunity to participate in a support program?

6.B. Is there a significant difference regarding expected benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?

Population and Sample

The target population of the study consisted of principals from the 500 public school districts in Pennsylvania. The sampling frame was generated from an Excel spreadsheet provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education Division of Data Quality. The list was an electronic copy of the 2011/2012 Pennsylvania Department of Education Directory. The spreadsheet contained current principals and their respective schools within the state. Of the 3,127 schools listed, several were removed from the sampling frame for various reasons. Charter schools and those with school administration titles of assistant/vice principal, superintendent of record, dean, director, director of elementary education, director of operations, directory of secondary educations elementary supervisor, executive director, head of school, head teacher, or left blank were excluded from the sampling frame. Public, non-charter schools and individuals with the administrative title of acting principal, 9-12 principal, high school principal, interim principal, K-3 principal, middle school principal, principal, principal grades 4, 5, 6, principal 9-10, secondary principal were included in the study. A total of 2,881 principals were included in the sampling frame. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling model, 341 respondents were needed to have the power to generalize to the entire population with a confidence level of 95%. Given the difficulty that prior researchers have reported in achieving a high response rate to survey dissertations research (White, personal correspondence, August 2, 2011) the total target sample was 853, an oversampling of 250%.

Instrument

Questionnaire Development. Using previous research on mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching, the Principals Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

was crafted from within the context of current studies and literature. Table 1 provides the research basis for the survey questions.

Table 1

Research Basis for Principal Survey Questions

Survey Items	Corresponding Research
Definitions:	
Mentoring	(Hopkins-Thompson, 2000)
Peer Coaching	(Garmston, 1987) (Robbins, 1991) (Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008)
Executive Coaching	(Kilburg, 1996) (Dutton, 1997) (Tobias, 1996)
Questions 1 & 9:	
Mentoring	(Maxwell, 2005) (Daresh, 2004)
Peer coaching	(Brooks, 2003) (Hansen & Matthews, 2002)
Executive coaching	(Orenstein, 2006) (Grant, 2004)
Questions 5 & 10:	
Leadership capacity	(Diedrich, 1996) (Contreras, 2008)
Isolation	(Dussault & Barnett, 1996) (Riggins, 2001)
Professional relationships	(Dussault & Barnett, 1996) (Kram & Isabella, 1985)

Performance feedback	(Barnett, 1995)
	(Prince, 2004)
Confidence	(Barnett, 1995)
	(Prince, 2004)
Self-reflection	(Hansen & Matthews, 2002)
Goals	(Sparks & Bruder, 1987)
	(Grant, 2004)
	(Kilberg, 1996)
Support/friendship	(Kram & Isabella, 1985)
	(Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008)
Skills	(Woolsey, 2010)
	(Eldemire, 2004)
	(Bluckert, 2005)
	(Daresh, 2004)
Job Satisfaction	(Bowman, 2009)
Career Advancement	(Daresh, 2004)
Risk Taking	(Hansen & Matthews, 2006)

Instrument Validity

Content Validity. The Delphi technique was used in order to determine content

validity of the instrument. The Delphi technique involved developing an initial set of

questions based on the research cited in Table 1. These questions were submitted to a

panel of five experts on leadership development, mentoring, and executive coaching. The

panel members were: Dr. Patrick Crawford, Director of Professional Development

Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, Dr. Bruce Barnett, Professor,

Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, University of Texas – El Paso; Mr. Pete

Reed, Director of Professional Development Leadership Programs and Services, National

Association of Secondary School Principals; Dr. Michael Clemens, Pennsylvania

Inspired Leadership Region 5 Coordinator; and Mr. Geoff Davis, President of

Conversations Work. The panelists were contacted via email to gauge their interest in

being part of the process. With their consent, an email explaining the study (Appendix A)

and links to the draft principal survey and a panelist feedback form (Appendix B) were

sent. The panel reviewed and provided feedback to the survey questions. The five

panelists reached at least 80% approval on each of the eight questions.

A pilot study of the survey was conducted with a small group of principals to

refine the directions, clarify the wording of questions, and identify the completion time

(Appendices C and D). A convenience sample of 18 principals (8 elementary, 6 middle

school, and 4 high school) participated in the pilot survey. After receiving feedback from

the group, the instrument was edited as needed. With revisions made, the questionnaire

was sent to the larger study sample. The pilot sample participants were excluded from

participating in the final sampling process.

Procedure

The electronic version of the 2011/2012 Pennsylvania Department of Education

Directory provided the sampling frame of names. On November 6 and 7, 2011, an email

and link to the survey (Appendices E and F) were sent to a random sample of 510

elementary principals, 155 middle school principals, 25 junior/senior high principals, and

163 high school principals from 309 school districts.

In addition, an email was sent to respective superintendents (Appendix G) on

November 8 and 9, 2011 to help solicit support for principals to complete the

questionnaire. Finally, a follow up email (Appendix H) was sent to all participants one week after the original invitation to help increase the response rate.

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, no indicators were used to connect participants to the data. Only aggregated data were reported with no availability for individual or district results. All electronically stored data was password protected. Any printed data were kept in a locked filing cabinet.

Data Analysis

Based upon the responses from the principals, the data elicited characteristics of support programs in Pennsylvania schools at the current time. Additional questions sought to evaluate the value of these support programs and possible reasons districts do not offer mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Percentages and/or frequencies were reported to provide descriptive characteristics of the data. Regressions were conducted to test for differences based on principals' years of experience and to generalize conclusions to the target population (Table 2).

For question 1.A, "To what extent do principals report that mentoring, peer coaching, and/or executive coaching are offered as either required or optional programs?" a frequency count determined the respondents' perception of availability of each program. The frequencies were converted to percentages. For question 1.B., "Is there a significant difference regarding participation in each of the support programs as related to years as a principal?" data were analyzed using a logistic regression model. The inferential statistics tested whether principals with more years of service (independent or predictor variable) were more likely to have been offered any one of the various

programs (dependent or outcome variable). Because the predictor variable was a continuous variable and the outcome was a categorical variable (either the principal had been offered the program or had not) the appropriate inferential test was logistic regression.

For question 2.A, "For principals engaged in one of the programs, what do they report to be the major benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and/or executive coaching?" a factor analysis clustered variables to reduce the total number of variables within the dataset. Means and standard deviations were reported to provide descriptive statistics on each variable. For question 2.B, "Is there a significant difference regarding the perceived benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" a regression was used to determine the significance of the predictor variable years of service as a principal to the outcome variables of support program benefits.

For question 3.A., "How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of their experience?" Values were assigned to each descriptor of the Likert-type scale. The mean and standard deviation were reported. For question 3.B, "Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" a regression analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between the predictor variable years of service as a principal and the outcome variable perceived quality of each program.

For question 4.A. was, "How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of the mentor/coach?" Values were assigned to each descriptor of the Likert-type scale. The mean and standard deviation were reported. For question 4.B., "Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of the mentor/coach as

related to years as a principal?" a regression analysis examined the relationship between how the predictor variable of years of service as a principal and the outcome variable perceived quality of the coach/mentor.

For question 5.A., "What actions/district characteristics do principals report to be deterrents to the implementation of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching programs in school districts?" a frequency count for each deterrent was reported. The frequencies were converted to percentages. For question 5.B., "Is there a significant difference regarding deterrents to the implementation of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" data were analyzed using a logistic regression model. The predictor variable years of service as a principal predicted whether each potential barrier was listed as a deterrent or not. The inferential statistics tested whether principals with more years of service (independent or predictor variable) were more likely to perceive reasons for support program deterrents (dependent or outcome variable). Because the predictor variable was a continuous variable and the outcome was a categorical variable (reasons for not endorsing a program) the appropriate inferential test was logistic regression.

For question 6.A., "What are the expected benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs for principals who have not had the opportunity to participate in a support program?" a factor analysis clustered variables to reduce the total number of variables within the dataset. Means and standard deviations were reported to provide descriptive statistics on each variable. For question 6.B, "Is there a significant difference regarding the benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" a regression analysis was used to determine the significance of the predictor

variable, years of service as a principal to the outcome variable, perceived support

program benefits.

Table 2

Research Questions and Method of Statistical Analysis

Research Question	Data Source(s)	Analysis
1.A. To what extent do principals report that mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are offered as either a required or optional program?	Items 1 & 2 from questionnaire	Percentage/Frequency
1.B. Is there a significant difference regarding participation in each of the support programs as related to years as a principal?	Demographics from questionnaire	Logistic Regression
2.A. For principals engaged in one of the programs, what do they report to be the major benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and/or executive coaching?	Question 5 from questionnaire	Factor Analysis Mean, SD
2.B. Is there a significant difference regarding the perceived benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?	Demographics from questionnaire	Regression
3.A How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of their experience?	Question 6 from questionnaire	Mean, SD
3.B. Is there a significant difference regarding the perceived quality of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?	Demographics from questionnaire	Regression

4.A. How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of the mentor, peer, or coach?	Question 7 from questionnaire	Mean, SD
4.B. Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of the mentor/coach as related to years as a principal?	Demographics from questionnaire	Regression
5.A. What actions/district characteristics do principals report to be deterrents to the implementation of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching?	Question 8 from questionnaire	Percentage/Frequency
5.B. Is there a significant difference regarding deterrents to the implementation of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?	Demographics from questionnaire	Logistic Regression
6.A. What are the expected benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs for principals who have not had the opportunity to participate in a support program?	Question 10 from questionnaire	Factor Analysis Mean, SD
6.B. Is there a significant difference regarding expected benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?	Demographics from questionnaire	Regression

Limitations

With a correlational study, the researcher cannot experimentally compare the

effectiveness of the programs to one another. In addition, the survey limited respondents'

choices to three support programs. It is possible that schools may have another program

that did not fit the definition of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching. Finally,

this study utilized the perceptions of principals and was not intended to demonstrate a

causal relationship or to indicate that the perceptions represent objective reality.

Chapter Four

Results

Respondents

In total, 853 principals were asked to participate in the study. A total of 399 principals responded resulting in a 46.8% participation rate. However, only 368 completed the survey in its entirety resulting in a 43.1% completion rate. Table 3 shows the current position of the respondents. Respondents who selected "other," listed their positions as follows: seven curriculum directors, two assistant superintendents, one elementary/middle school principal, one intermediate principal, one K-8 principal, one elementary/high school principal, four junior/senior high principals, and one elementary principal/school psychologist. The seven curriculum directors and two assistant superintendents were included in the study because they were originally listed as principals from the directory provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and served as principals during the period covered by this study.

Table 3

Current Position as Reported by Principals

Current position	Frequency	Percentage[a]
Elementary principal	207	56.1%
Middle school/junior high principal	74	20.1%
High school principal	70	19.0%
Other	18	4.9%

Note. $N = 368$.
[a]$X^2 (2) = 1.47$, *ns.*

A series of Chi-square tests were computed to determine if the respondent groups were representative of the population. The first chi-square test compared the sample to the population (after the sample was removed) on the variable "position." The statistic was not significant at the $p < .05$ level indicating that the sample of principals from various positions was not different from the sample at large and thus the findings of the study were generalizable to the target population. Chi-square tests were conducted for gender and size of district to determine generalizablity. The tests revealed $p < .003$ for gender and $p < .062$ for district size. Men were over represented in this sample, but school district size was judged to be representative of the target population.

Tables 4, 5, and 6 provide further information about the demographics from the sample. The majority of the respondents were male and the modal student population size was between 2,001-5,000 students. Of the 368 participants, 44.4% indicated that they were in a midcareer stage professionally.

Table 4

School District Size as Reported by Principals

Size of district	Frequency	Percentage[a]
Less than 2,000 students	83	22.5%
Between 2,001-5,000 students	177	48.0%
More than 5,000 students	109	29.5%

Note. N = 368.
[a]$X^2 (2) = 5.57$*, ns.*

Table 5

Gender as Reported by Principals

Gender	Frequency	Percentage[a]
Female	147	39.8%
Male	222	60.2%

Note. $N = 368$.
[a]$X^2 (2) = 8.81, p < .003.$

Table 6

Career Stage as Reported by Principals

Career stage	Frequency	Percentage
Early career	112	30.4%
Midcareer	164	44.4%
Advanced/late career	93	25.2%

Note. $N = 368$.

Table 7 illustrates years of service as a head principal. Of the 368 respondents, 47.8% had five or fewer years of experience as a head principal. Only 6.8% of principals had more than 15 years experience as a building leader.

Findings

Question 1.A. "To what extent do principals report that mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are offered as either required or optional programs?" The results indicated the majority of the respondents had mentoring programs available to them. A third of the principals responded that there were no opportunities for them to take part in formal support programs (Table 8).

Table 7

Frequency and Percent of Years as a Head Building Principal

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	176	47.8%
6-10	120	32.6%
11-15	48	13.1%
16-20	8	2.2%
21-25	9	2.4%
26-30	4	1.1%
31-35	1	0.3%
36-40	3	0.8%

Note. N = 368.

Table 8

Frequency and Percent of Formal Programs Reported to Be Available by Principals

Support program	Frequency	Percentage
Mentoring	228	58.8%
Peer coaching	95	24.5%
Executive coaching	28	7.2%
None of the above	130	33.5%
Other	21	5.4%

Note. N = 388.

Twenty-one respondents selected "other." Using interpretation analysis (Patton 2002), four other support programs methods were described: central office directed, state

and national programs, consultant work, and informal peer relationships. Five participants indicated their formal support program was conducted through central office administration. Five indicated involvement with either Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Program or the National Institute of School Leadership (NISL). Two received support through independent leadership consultants. Eight principals described informal support programs through informal collegial relationships. One participant responded "child study", which was left uncoded.

Using a logic sequence in the questionnaire design, respondents were provided different questions based on their selection of available programs as listed in Table 8. Therefore, the sample sizes in the remaining data sets vary based upon the number of participants answering the questions.

The data presented in Table 9 reports whether support programs were required or optional. Based on the formatting of the question, participants were permitted to select one or several choices. As a result, some provided multiple responses to the question resulting in a higher frequency count than the total number of respondents. The results indicated that mentoring was the most frequently required support program. Peer coaching had the most responses as an optional program.

More than 40% of principals have not been a recipient of support within the last three years (Table 10). Principals experienced mentoring most consistently and executive coaching least consistently over the course of time studied in this research. Of the 24 participants who selected "other," interpretation analysis was used to look for themes and commonalities. Six principals experienced peer coaching through informal relationships. Three respondents explained they have been mentors but had not been a recipient of

support. Nine principals mentioned their participation in a formal program outside the district including PILS, NISL and leadership consultants for administrative teams. Three reiterated that they received no support of any kind. One mentioned receiving formal support in a previous district and one responded "both mentoring and peer coaching." Finally, one again responded "child study," which was left uncoded.

Table 9

Support Program Options Available to Principals

Support program	Required	Optional	Total
Mentoring	165	72	237
Peer coaching	17	99	116
Executive coaching required	12	34	46
Other required	5	19	24

Note. Reported as frequencies. $N = 264$.

Table 10

Support Programs Used by Principals Within the Last Three Years

Support program	Frequency	Percentage
Mentoring	70	26.8%
Peer coaching	42	16.1%
Executive coaching	18	6.9%
None	107	41.0%
Other	24	9.2%

Note. $N = 261$.

Question 1.B. "Is there a significant difference regarding participation in each of the support programs as related to years as a principal?" The results from the regression analysis (Table 11) demonstrate that there is no significant difference for either mentoring or peer coaching. However, for executive coaching support, for each additional year of experience, the probability of the program changed from 1.00 to .934. In other words, the probability of having the executive coaching program available decreased by about 7% each year ($p < .06$) which was significant at the trend level with a criterion of $.05 < p < .10$. Figure 1 shows the proportion of executive coaching participants.

Table 11

Participation in Support Programs Based on Length of Time as a Principal

Support Program	*B*	*df*	*Exp(B)*	*p*
Mentoring	-0.010	1	.990	.57
Peer coaching	-0.007	1	.993	.72
Executive coaching	-0.069	1	.934	.06*

Note. N = 369.
* *p* < .10.

Question 2.A. "For principals engaged in one of the programs, what do they report to be the major benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and/or executive coaching?" Participants choices included: 1 = "Not helpful," 2 = "Helped a little," 3 = "Helped a moderate amount," 4 = "Helped a lot," 5 = "Extremely helpful." A series of data reduction routines (principal components and factor analysis routines) were conducted. In every case, the result indicated that the 12 benefits of principal support programs clustered together as a single component or factor (Table 12).

Figure 1

Proportion of Principals Who Participated in an Executive coaching Program Organized by Years as a Principal
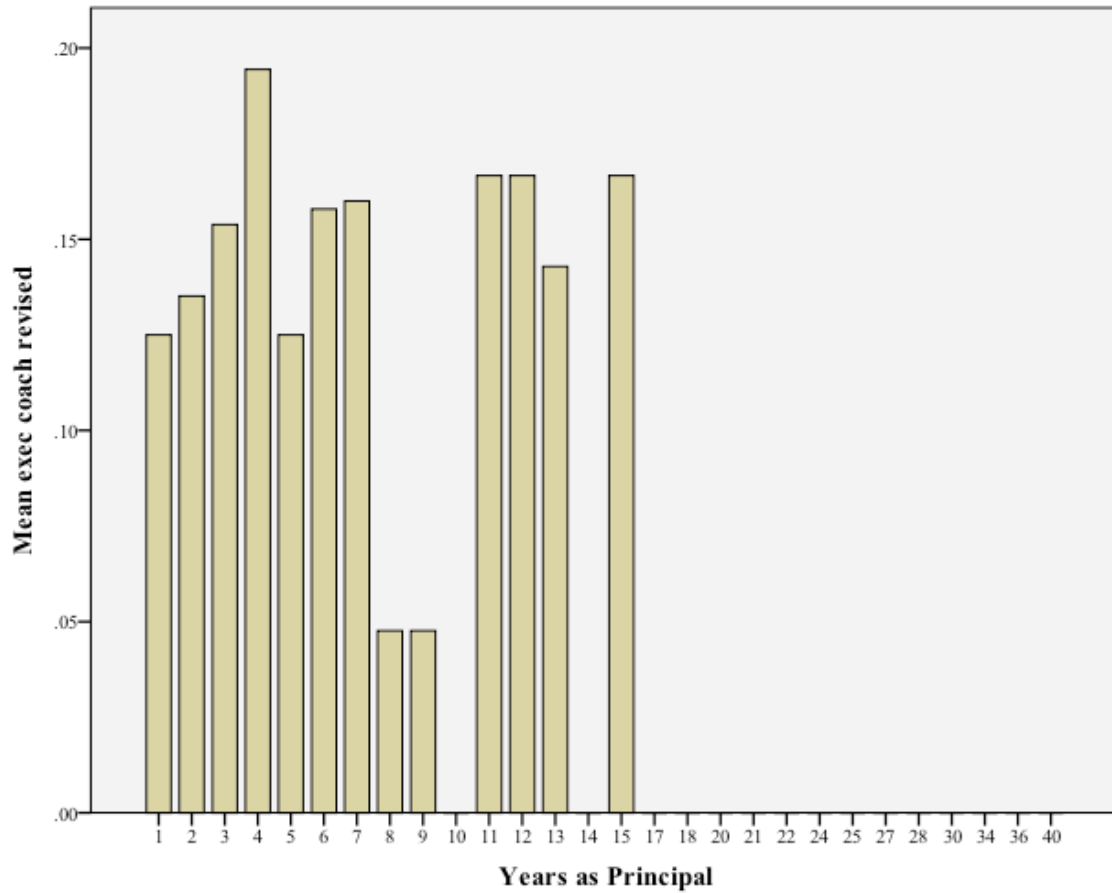

Table 13 shows the results for participants who experienced a mentoring program. The benefit with the highest mean was "built professional relationships." Conversely, principals reported "encouraged career advancement" as the least helpful benefit to a mentoring program.

Table 12

Loadings for Principal Components Extraction Method

	Factor Loadings			
Benefits	Principal Component	Maximum Likelihood	Principal Axis	Alpha Factoring
Enhanced and grew skills	.893	.900	.891	.888
Strengthened leadership	.878	.880	.871	.870
Increased confidence	.869	.855	.860	.864
Increased job satisfaction	.869	.850	.859	.863
Provided opportunities to take risks	.854	.830	.841	.846
Expanded self-reflection	.805	.785	.783	.782
Built professional relationships	.787	.759	.762	.766
Set or reassessed goals	.771	.752	.745	.741
Ensured support/ friendship	.754	.723	.726	.726
Encouraged career advancement	.744	.712	.714	.712
Reduced isolation	.724	.686	.692	.691
Provided performance feedback	.705	.680	.672	.667

Table 13

Mentoring Program Benefits to Building Leaders

Benefit	N	M	SD
Built professional relationships	69	3.72	1.02
Ensured support/friendship	68	3.60	1.05
Increased confidence	69	3.57	.98
Enhanced and grew skills	69	3.51	1.05
Expanded self-reflection	69	3.49	1.17
Strengthened leadership abilities	67	3.46	1.03
Set or reassessed goals	69	3.41	1.06
Reduced isolation	69	3.33	1.02
Increased job satisfaction	69	3.23	1.18
Provided performance feedback	69	3.14	1.15
Provided opportunities to take risks	69	3.10	1.19
Encouraged career advancement	69	2.90	1.19

For principals with experience in a peer coaching support program, "built professional relationships" and "ensured support/friendship" received the highest means. Both benefits averaged rating exceeded 4.00 or the equivalent of "helped a lot." Again, "encouraged career advancement" received the lowest mean similar to the results of the mentoring program (Table 14).

Table 14

Peer Coaching Program Benefits to Building Leaders

Benefit	N	M	SD
Built professional relationships	42	4.05	.82
Ensured support/friendship	41	4.02	.99
Reduced isolation	42	3.93	1.05
Enhanced and grew skills	42	3.81*	.97
Increased confidence	42	3.81*	.77
Strengthened leadership abilities	42	3.76	1.03
Expanded self-reflection	42	3.64	.82
Increased job satisfaction	42	3.57	1.15
Provided opportunities to take risks	42	3.36	1.12
Set or reassessed goals	41	3.24	1.04
Provided performance feedback	42	3.21	1.09
Encouraged career advancement	42	3.10	1.23

Note. * "Enhanced and grew skills" and "increased confidence" had the same mean 3.81, so the listed order for those two benefits does not represent a priority of one over the other.

Eighteen respondents indicated that they had experienced a formal executive coaching program. These participants revealed the primary benefit of the program as "strengthened leadership abilities." Similar to the other two formal support programs, respondents felt executive coaching did not encourage career advancement (Table 15).

Table 15

Executive Coaching Program Benefits to Building Leaders

Benefit	N	M	SD
Strengthened leadership abilities	18	3.83	.92
Expanded self-reflection	18	3.78	.81
Enhanced and grew skills	18	3.72	.89
Built professional relationships	18	3.67	.97
Set or reassessed goals	18	3.61	.78
Increased confidence	18	3.39	.92
Increased job satisfaction	18	3.33	1.14
Provided performance feedback	18	3.17	.79
Ensured support/friendship	18	3.06	1.16
Provided opportunities to take risks	18	3.00	1.08
Reduced isolation	17	2.82	1.42
Encouraged career advancement	18	2.61	1.24

Twenty-one principals selected "other" as the program they experienced. Of those 19 principals chose to provide additional information with the open-ended response option. Seven indicated they had no formal program while eight explained that they received some sort of support either formal or informal. These 15 principals reiterated their participation with a program but did not elaborate on specific developmental skills gained from the use of support. Of the four remaining respondents, one said a program encouraged doctoral studies and another stated that the program inspired reflective thinking. One revealed a desire to maintain consistency between elementary schools and

another principal said providing examples of forms (e.g., evaluation reports and newsletters) helped with the transition to a new position.

The findings from the 21 respondents revealed relatively high means for "built professional relationships," "ensured support," and "enhanced and grew skills." Each of those benefits received a mean of 4.00 or greater. Likewise, this support program option coincided with the other three in revealing that the experience did not encouraged career advancement as much as the other benefits (Table 16).

Table 16

Other Programs Benefits to Building Leaders

Benefit	N	M	SD
Built professional relationships	21	4.14	.73
Ensured support/friendship	21	4.05	.97
Enhanced and grew skills	21	4.00	.84
Expanded self-reflection	21	3.90	.89
Increased confidence	21	3.86	.79
Strengthened leadership abilities	21	3.81	.81
Set or reassessed goals	21	3.67	.80
Reduced isolation	21	3.62	1.07
Increased job satisfaction	21	3.52	1.08
Provided opportunities to take risks	21	3.48	1.03
Provided performance feedback	21	3.19	1.47
Encouraged career advancement	21	2.95	1.24

To summarize the differences between the various support programs, Table 17 shows the rank order of each program. The comparison chart identifies commonalities and differences in received benefits based on the type of support program. The table provides further evidence that the structure of each program provided individuals with specific benefits.

Table 17

Rank Order of Benefits Between Various Support Programs

Benefit	Rank			
	Mentoring	Peer Coaching	Executive Coaching	Other
Built professional relationships	1	1	4	1
Ensured support/ friendship	2	2	9	2
Increased confidence	3	4	6	5
Enhanced and grew skills	4	4	3	3
Expanded self-reflection	5	7	2	4
Strengthened leadership abilities	6	6	1	6
Set or reassessed goals	7	10	5	7
Reduced isolation	8	3	11	8
Increased job satisfaction	9	8	7	9
Provided performance				

feedback	10	11	8	11
Provided opportunities to take risks	11	9	10	10
Encouraged career advancement	12	12	12	12

Question 2.B. "Is there a significant difference regarding the perceived benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" A multivariate regression was conducted with the 12 benefits as the outcome variables and years experience as the predictor variable. Due to the uni-dimensional construct, a multivariate regression was conducted to determine multivariate and univariate correlations. The multivariate effect of "years" as measured by a Pillai's Trace with a value of .075 was not significant at the .05 level ($F[12, 207] = 1.39$, p = [ns]).

Question 3.A. " How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of their experience?" Respondents rated their experiences using a Likert-type scale where 1 = "Poor," 2 = "Fair," 3 = "Good," 4 = "Excellent," 5 = "Outstanding." Means ranged from 3.34 to 4.10. Again, based on the formatting of the question, some participants provided multiple responses to the question resulting in a higher frequency count than the total number of respondents. Mentoring had the highest number of participants. Of those, 83.7% of respondents rated their experience as good, excellent, or outstanding. Peer coaching participate revealed similar findings with 82.5% rating the effectiveness of the program as outstanding, excellent, or good. Executive coaching was the least used of the formal programs with only 29 participants. However, of those who experienced executive coaching, they tended to have a more positive experience with the

program as the overall mean was greater than that of mentoring and peer coaching (Table 18).

Question 3.B. "Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" Table 19 shows that for each of the three formal support programs, as principals' number of years increased, there was a decrease in the mean evaluation scores. This proved to be significant at the $p < .05$ level.

Table 18

Principals' Rating of Support Programs Experienced Within the Last Three Years

Support program	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	*M*	*N*
Mentoring	11.9%	34.0%	37.8%	11.9%	4.4%	3.37	159
Peer coaching	6.2%	40.0%	36.3%	16.3%	1.2%	3.34	80
Executive coaching	13.8%	31.0%	44.9%	10.3%	0.0%	3.48	29
Other	20.0%	70.0%	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.10	10

Table 19

Perceived Quality of Each Support Program based Upon Years of Experience as a Principal.

Support Program	Unstandardized *B*	Standardized *B*	*t*	*p*	n^a
Mentoring	-.085	-.290	-4.5	.0005*	224
Peer Coaching	-.062	-.200	-2.6	.011*	161
Executive Coaching	-.044	-.171	-2.0	.046*	136
Other	.003	.015	0.1	.896	82

[a] Includes participants who answered "N/A" for each program.
* $p < .05$ level.

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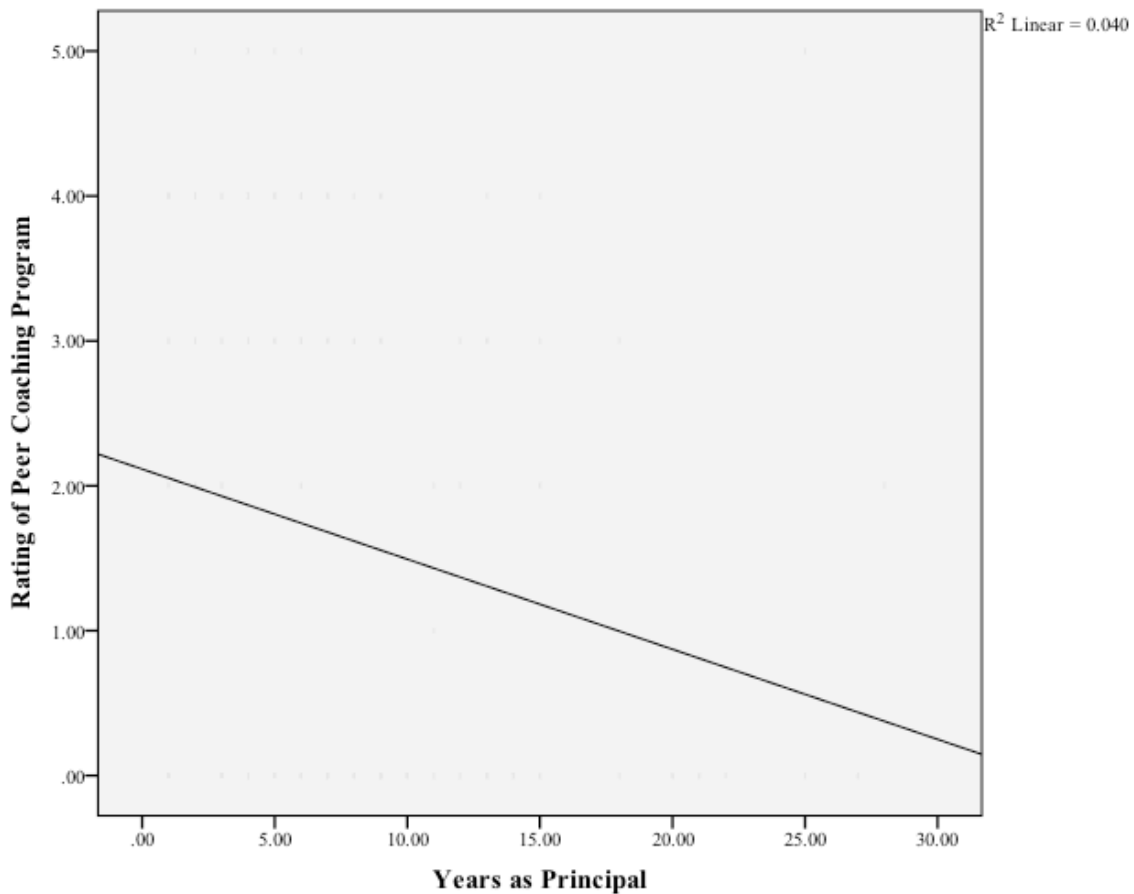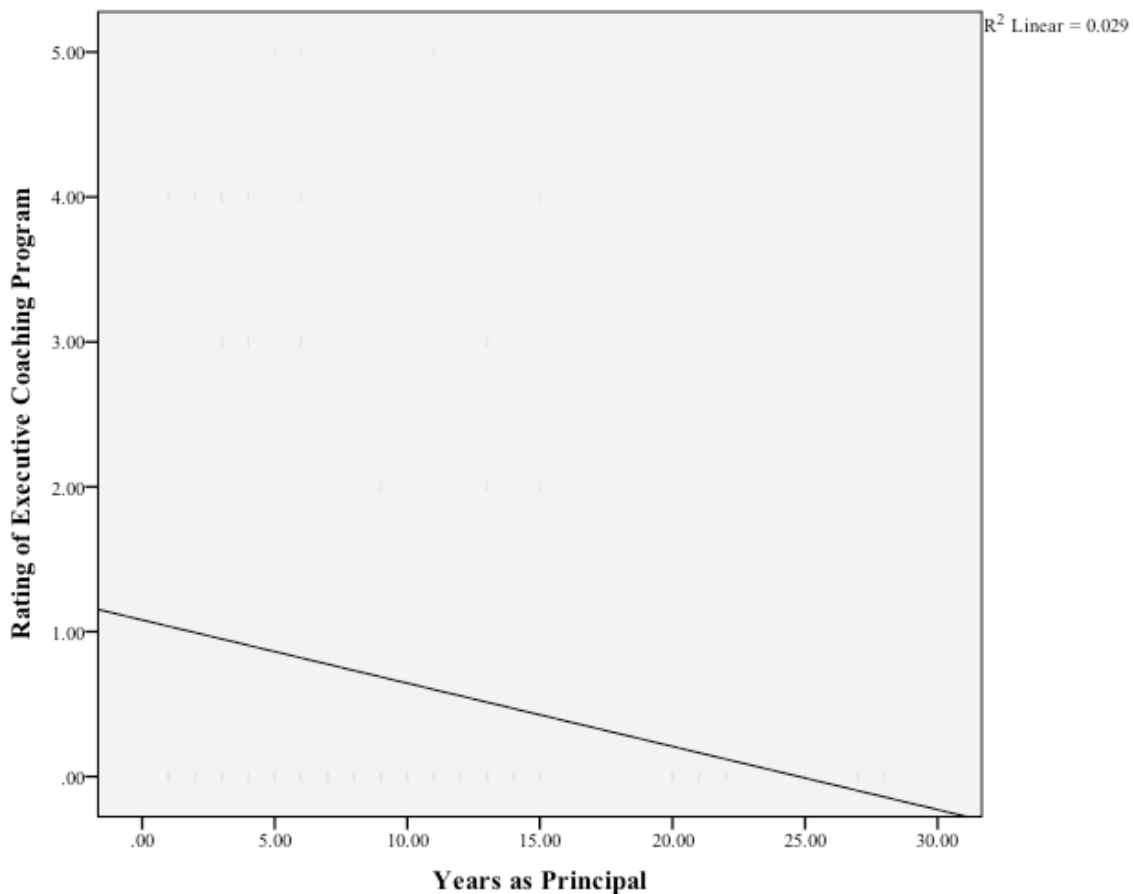
For the mentoring program, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient of -.085 indicated that for each additional year of experience, the mean evaluation score for the mentoring program dropped by .085 points (Figure 2). This translated as a decrease in the mean evaluation score of .29 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient was standardized. This *B*-coefficient was associated with a *t*-statistic of -4.5, was measured with a sample size of 224, and proved to be significant with $p < .0005$ with a criterion of $p < .05$.

Figure 2

Rating of Mentoring Program Organized by Years as a Principal
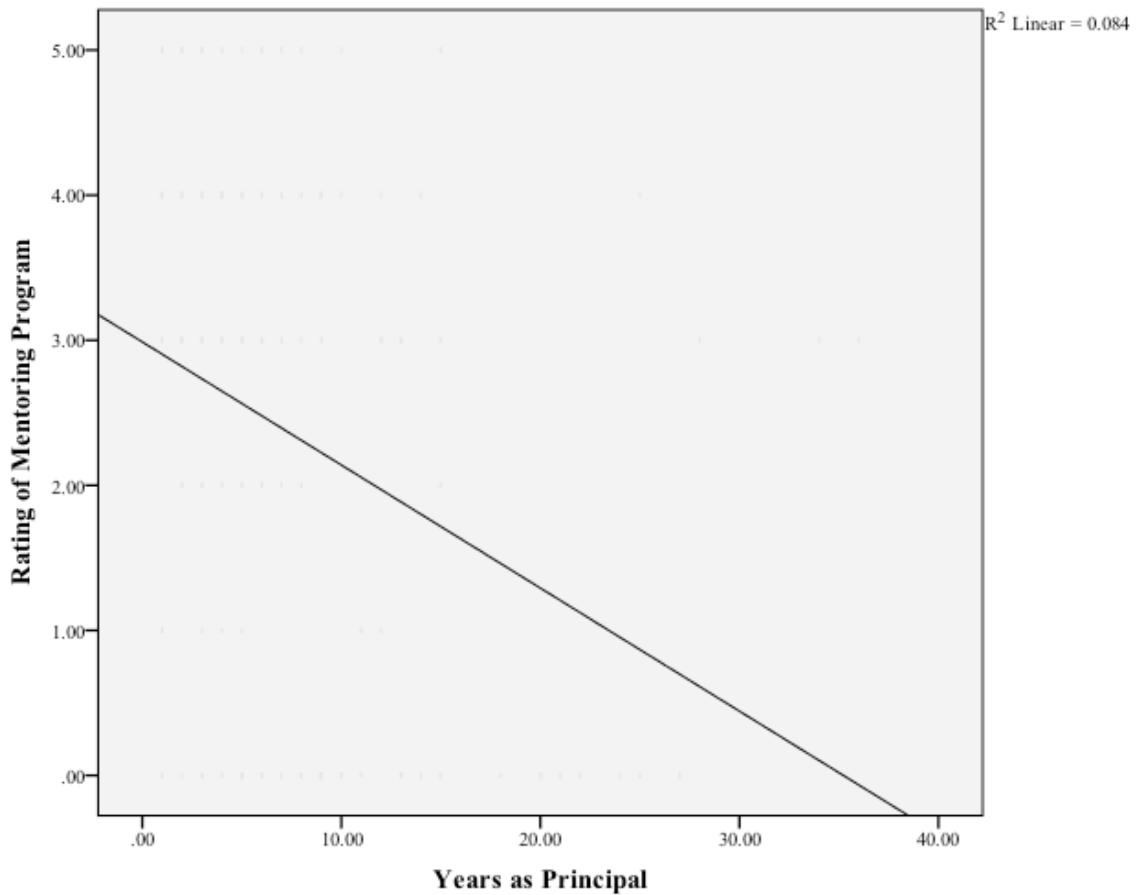
For the peer coaching program, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient of -.062 indicated that for each additional year of experience, the mean evaluation score for the peer

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coaching program dropped by .062 points (Figure 3). This translated as a drop in the

mean evaluation score of .20 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient is standardized.

This *B*-coefficient is associated with a *t*-statistic of -2.6, was measured with a sample size

of 161, and proved to be significant with $p < .02$ with a criterion of $p < .05$.

Figure 3

Rating of Peer Coaching Program Organized by Years as a Principal

For the executive coaching program, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient of -.044

indicated that for each year of experience, the mean evaluation score for the executive

coaching program dropped by .044 points (Figure 4). This translates as a drop in the

mean evaluation score of .171 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient is standardized.

This *B*-coefficient is associated with a *t*-statistic of -2.0, was measured with a sample size of 136, and proved to be significant with $p < .05$ and with a criterion of $p < .05$.

Figure 4

Rating of Executive Coaching Program Organized by Years as Principal

For "other" support programs, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient of .003 indicated that for each additional year of experience, the mean evaluation score for the other programs increased by .003 points. This translates as an increase in the mean evaluation score of .015 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient is standardized. This *B*-coefficient was associated with a *t*-statistic of 0.1, was measured with a sample size of 82, and proved to be non-significant with $p < .9$ with a criterion of $p < .05$.

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Question 4.A. "How do principals who have participated in a support program rate the quality of the mentor/coach?" Respondents rated their experience using a Likert-type scale using the following ratings: 1 = "Poor," 2 = "Fair," 3 = "Good," 4 = "Excellent," 5 = "Outstanding." Means ranged from 3.46 to 4.00. Again, participants were permitted to select one or several choices with some providing multiple responses to the question resulting in a higher frequency count than the total number of respondents. Mentors received the highest number of respondents. Over 88% of the participants rated their experience with a mentor as good, excellent, or outstanding. Of those involved with peer coaching, 85.9% rated a coach's effectiveness as outstanding, excellent, or good. Principals who experienced executive coaching reported similar findings. However, no principals in this support program chose to rate the effectiveness of their coach as poor. Principals that selected "other," reported findings that were consistent with the three formal programs (Table 20).

Question 4.B. "Is there a significant difference regarding perceived quality of the mentor/coach as related to years as a principal?" Regression analysis again determined levels of significance for the three formal support coaches/mentors. For "other" support program mentor/coaches, perceived quality was not significantly linked to years of experience (Table 21).

Table 20

Effectiveness of Mentor/Coach as Reported by Principals

Individual	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	*M*	*N*
Mentor	18.7%	40.8%	29.4%	8.4%	2.7%	3.64	176
Peer coach	14.1%	43.6%	28.2%	10.3%	3.8%	3.54	78
Executive coach	7.7%	38.4%	46.1%	7.8%	0.0%	3.46	26
Other	22.2%	55.6%	22.2%	0.0%	0.0%	4.00	9

Table 21

Perceived Quality of the Support Program Mentor or Coach Based Upon Years of Experience as a Principal

Support Program	*Unstandardized B*	*Standardized B*	*t*	*p*	*n[a]*
Mentor	-.077	-.260	-4.0	.0005*	228
Peer Coach	-.063	-.198	-2.5	.014*	155
Executive Coach	-.039	-.151	-1.7	.092	126
Other	-.007	-.035	-.302	.764	76

[a] Includes participants who answered "N/A" for each program.
* $p < .05$.

For principals who participated in mentoring, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient of -.077 indicates that for each year of principal experience, the mean evaluation score for the mentors dropped by .077 points (Figure 5). This translated as a drop in the mean

evaluation score of .260 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient was standardized.

This *B*-coefficient was associated with a *t*-statistic of -4.0, was measured with a sample

size of 228, and proved to be significant with $p < .0005$ with a criterion of $p < .05$.

Figure 5

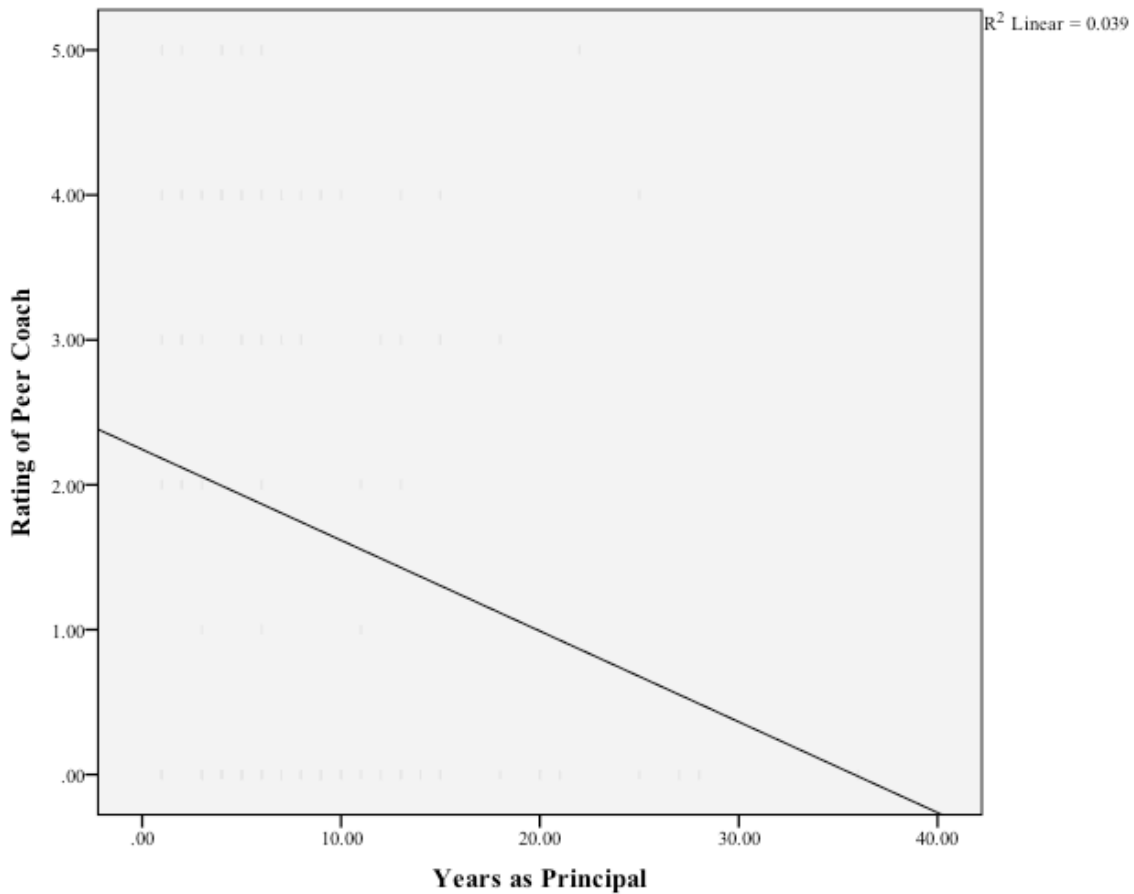*Perceived Quality of Mentor Organized by Years as a Principal*
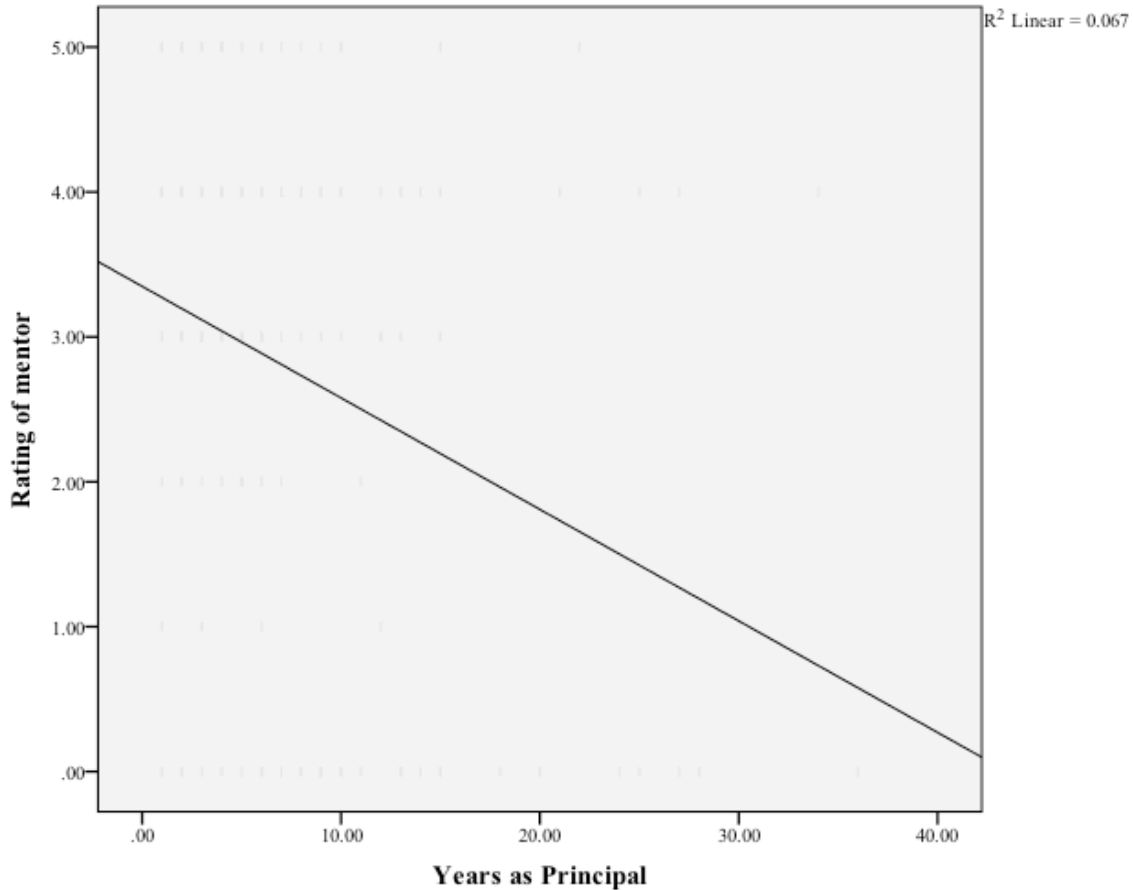
For principals who participated in peer coaching, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient

of -.063 indicated that for each year of experience, the mean evaluation score for the peer

coaches dropped by .063 points (Figure 6). This translates as a drop in the mean

evaluation score of .198 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient is standardized. This

B-coefficient was associated with a *t*-statistic of -2.5, was measured with a sample size of 155, and proved to be significant with $p < .02$ with a criterion of $p < .05$.

Figure 6

Perceived Quality of Peer Coach Organized by Years as a Principal

For principals who participated in executive coaching, an unstandardized *B*-coefficient of -.039 indicated for each year of experience, the mean evaluation score for the executive coaches dropped by .039 points. This translated as a drop in the mean evaluation score of .151 standard deviations once the *B*-coefficient was standardized. This *B*-coefficient was associated with a *t*-statistic of -1.7, was measured with a sample

size of 126, and proved to be have a trend level of significance with $p < 0.10$ with a criterion of $.05 < p < .10$.

Question 5.A. "What actions/district characteristics do principals report to be deterrents to the implementation of mentoring, peer coaching, or executive coaching programs in school districts?" Various reasons were selected by participants. Again, some participants provided multiple responses to the question resulting in a higher frequency count than the total number of respondents. Almost 50% of the respondents selected "other." Using interpretation analysis, 48 of those principals who selected "other" indicated that they were unaware why a program was not offered in their district. Eight participants communicated that they received PIL or NISL training. Of the remaining six who selected "other," four mentioned informal support through collegial relationships. One had support in a prior district, and one indicated that there were no new principals in the district for many years. Unfortunately, these six responses only defined types of support but did not provide any further insight as to possible reasons districts did not implement the programs.

The second highest response "Lack of district funds/resources" comprised 30.2% of the responses. The third highest response of 19% indicated that the superintendent did not support the program and 9.5% reported that support programs were only offered to incoming principals. Finally, 7.1% of principals stated they did not have enough time to be involved in a program and 1.6% had no interest in receiving support (Table 22).

Question 5.B. "Is there a significant difference regarding deterrents to the implementation of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" Results indicate that most of the choices were non-significantly linked to years as a principal.

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However, the options "superintendent does not support" and "only offered to incoming principals" proved to be significant at the .05 level. Significant and non-significant findings are shown in Table 23.

Table 22

Principals' Reasons for Not Participating in a Support Program

Reason	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of interest	2	1.6%
Lack of district funds/resources	38	30.2%
Not enough time to be involved	9	7.1%
Superintendent does not support	24	19.0%
Only offered to incoming principals	12	9.5%
Other	61	48.4%

Note. N = 126

Table 23

Perceived Reasons to Support Program Implementation Based on Principals' Years of Experience

Perceived deterrents	B	Exp(B)	df	p
Lack of interest	-.008	.992	1	.95
Lack of funds	.006	1.006	1	.8
Lack of time	.034	1.035	1	.4
Lack of superintendent support	.064	1.067	1	.01*
Only offered to new principals	.076	1.079	1	.02*
Other	-.046	.955	1	.11

Note. N = 126.
* $p < .05$.

A B-coefficient of .064 (*df* = 1), transformed to an exponent of b of 1.067, indicated that after an additional year of experience as a principal, the probability of having a deterrent for the implementation of a program be the lack of superintendent support is 1.067 times as likely as the previous year. This B-coefficient was measured with a sample size of 126 and had a significance level of $p < .01$, which was significant with a criterion of $p < .05$. Figure 7 provides further visual representation of respondents' answers.

Figure 7

Proportion of Principals Who Said, "Program was not available due to lack of superintendent support," Organized by Years as a Principal
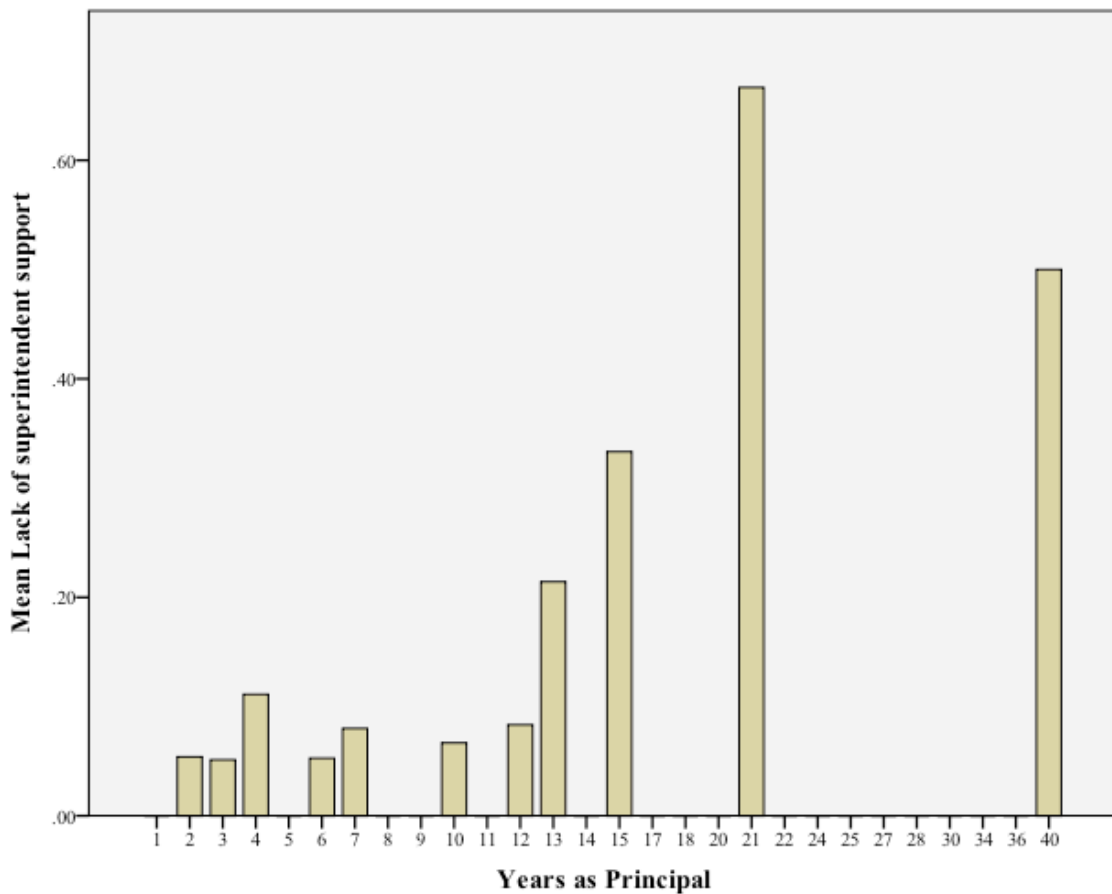
Similarly, a B-coefficient of .076 ($df = 1$), transformed to an exponent of b of 1.079, indicated that after an additional year of experience as a principal, the probability of having a deterrent for the implementation of a program be that the program is only offered to new principals is 1.079 times as likely as the previous year. This B-coefficient was measured with a sample size of 126 and had a significance level of $p < .02$, which was significant with a criterion of $p < .05$. Figure 8 reveals the proportion of respondents believing the program is only offered to new principals.

Figure 8

Proportion of Principals Who Said, "Program was not available because it was only offered to new principals," Organized by Years as a Principal
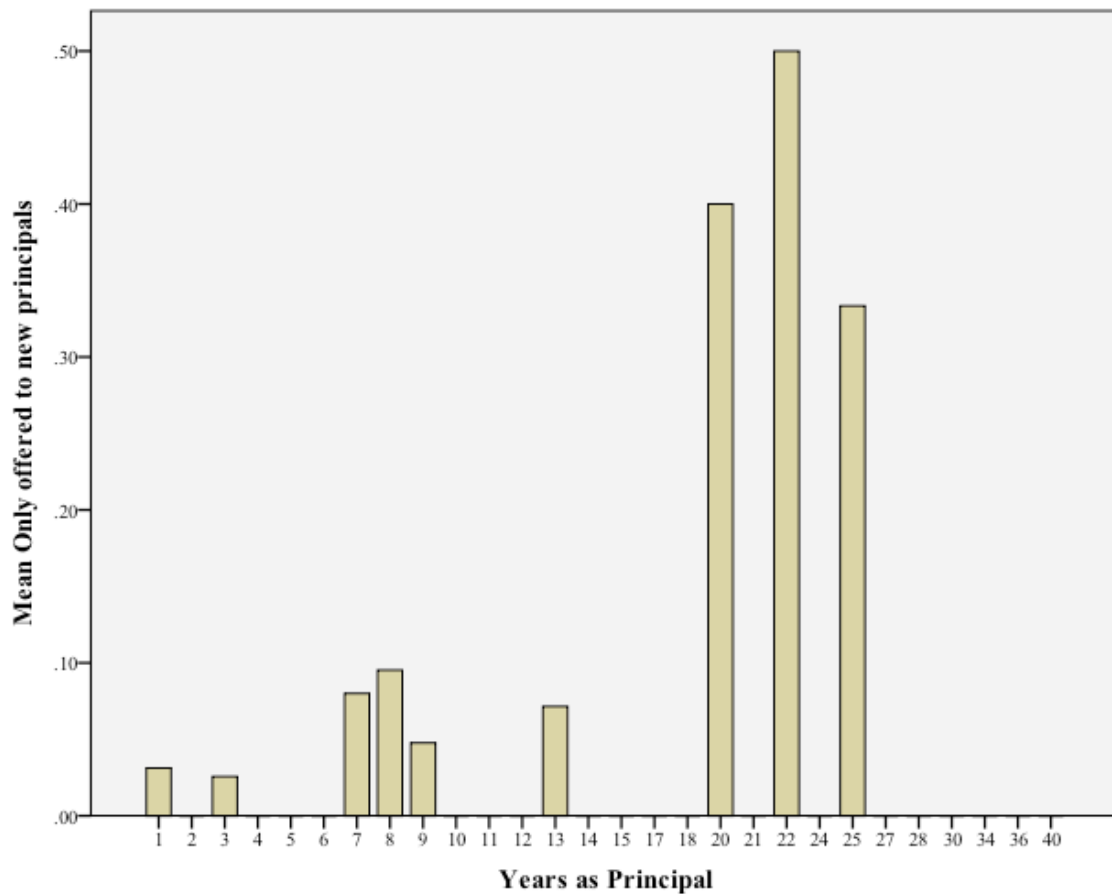
Question 6.A. "What are the expected benefits of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs for principals who have not had the opportunity to participate in a support program?" One hundred twenty-six principals who have not had the experienced a support program chose from a Likert-type scale to select each development skill. Principals choices included: 1 = "Not helpful," 2 = "Helped a little," 3 = "Helped a moderate amount," 4 = "Helped a lot," 5 = "Extremely helpful." Means ranged from 3.21 to 3.91 (Table 24). Principals perceived "building professional relationships" as having the greatest benefit hypothetically. The mean score for this item was higher that for all the other perceived hypothetical benefits. At the other end of the spectrum, principals perceived "encourage career advancement" as the lowest hypothetical advantage of a formal support program. This mean for this hypothetical benefit was lower than for any of the other hypothetical benefits. Four individuals selected "other" from the list. One participant believed support programs could be used to share ideas while another indicated it would be beneficial to have someone to "gripe" to about job frustrations. The final two principals indicated that benefits of support programs would encourage better communication between buildings and central office.

A series of data reduction routines (principal components and factor analysis routines) were conducted. The 12 hypothetical benefits of principal support programs clustered together as two components: leadership/management and social interactions/relationships (Table 25). The seven benefits that factored around leadership/management included strengthen leadership abilities, provide performance feedback, increase confidence, enhance and grow skills, set or reassess goals, expand self-reflection and provide opportunities to take risks. The remaining benefits grouped

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together around social interactions/relationships. They included: provide opportunities to take risks, ensure support/friendship, encourage career advancement, increase job satisfaction, build professional relationships, and reduce isolation. Of the twelve benefits, only one, provide opportunities to take risks, overlapped the two components.

Table 24

Possible Benefits to Building Leaders Who Have Not Experienced a Support Program

Development skill	N	M	SD
Build professional relationships	126	3.91	0.97
Enhance and grow skills	126	3.88	0.91
Strengthen leadership abilities	125	3.86	0.86
Provide performance feedback	126	3.73	0.99
Expand self-reflection	125	3.63	1.02
Ensure support/friendship	126	3.60	1.11
Increase job satisfaction	125	3.58	1.05
Provided opportunities to take risks	126	3.47	1.11
Reduce isolation	125	3.46	1.21
Increase confidence	126	3.45	1.02
Set or reassess goals	125	3.28	0.99
Encourage career advancement	126	3.21	1.22

Table 25

Factor Loadings for Hypothetical Benefits of Principal Support Programs

Benefit	Component 1	Component 2
Strengthen leadership abilities	.804	
Provide performance feedback	.795	
Increase confidence	.746	
Enhance and grow skills	.729	
Set or reassess goals	.704	
Expand self-reflection	.697	
Provide opportunities to take risks	.588	.532
Ensure support/friendship		.855
Encourage career advancement		.738
Increase job satisfaction		.723
Build professional relationships		.716
Reduce isolation		.558

Question 6.B. "Is there a significant difference regarding expected benefits of each of the programs as related to years as a principal?" The data presented in Table 26 demonstrates that both, the leadership/management factor and the social interaction/relationship factor, proved to be non-significant with criterion of $p < .05$.

Table 26

Benefits of Support Programs Based on Years as a Principal

Factors	Unstandardized B	Standardized B	t	p
Leadership/ Management	-.013	-.115	-1.3	.3
Social interactions/ Relationships	-.018	-.141	-1.6	.2

Of those with no option to participate in a program, the overwhelming majority preferred to receive some sort of support (Table 27). Mentoring was the most preferred method of support with 39.7% of principals selecting this option. Of the 126 respondents, only 7.9% believed a support program would not ne beneficial to them.

Table 27

Preference for Principals Who Have Not Had the Option to Participate in a Support Program

Support program	Frequency	Percentage
Mentoring	50	39.7%
Peer coaching	42	33.3%
Executive coaching	24	19.0%
None of the above	10	7.9%

Note. N = 126.

Mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching programs all revealed significant findings. The results from this study suggest that principals' time in the position is related to their perception of support programs and the mentors and coaches associated with them. In addition, for principals who have not participated in a support

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program, they have identified a lack of superintendent support and the possibility that programs are only offered to novice administrators as deterrents to district implementation of these support programs. Finally, results were generalizable to the school districts in Pennsylvania and position levels of principals. However, female respondents were underrepresented within the study.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Recommendations

Summary

In total, 853 principals were invited to participate in the study. Of that, 368 completed the survey in its entirety resulting in a 43.1% completion rate. The majority of the participants were male, elementary principals in districts ranging in populations between 2,001 – 5,000 students. Based on the sample, results were generalizable to districts and building level positions. However, female principals were underrepresented in the study. While most of the respondents indicated that they were in their midcareer professionally, 47.8% had less than six years experience as a head building principal. Mentoring was the most popular support program option for principals, however nearly one in three reported that they did not have any support program opportunities available to them.

Principals who participated in a support program generally rated their experience as a favorable one. In addition, principals commonly rated their experiences with coaches and mentors as positive. The two most highly rated benefits of the support programs were the chance to build professional relationships and strengthening leadership abilities. Conversely, principals who participated in any of the three support programs indicated that participation in a support program did not encourage career advancement.

Individuals who did not experience a support program identified a shortage of district funds and a lack of knowledge as the most identified reasons why programs were not available to them. The same principals identified possible benefits if they had they

opportunity to participate in a support program. Of the twelve possible choices, their responses clustered together around two common themes: leadership/management and social interactions/relationships.

The results failed to show any significant relationship between a principal's years of service and the availability of mentoring and peer coaching or the benefits of participating in one. However, there were significant findings with regards to a principal's years of service and the opportunity to experience executive coaching. Specifically, for each additional year that a principal was in the position, the opportunity to experience executive coaching decreased by 7%.

Significant results were also found for overall ratings of each support program and the perceived quality of the coach or mentor. For instance, the longer respondents held the title of head principal the less positively they rated the effectiveness of the support program and the quality of the mentor or coach.

In addition, significant findings were shown for respondents who had not participated in a support program. In particular, as principals' years of experience increased, the more likely they were to suggest that lack of superintendent support and the availability of programs only being offered to incoming principals as possible reasons why these supports were not available to them in their districts.

Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that mentoring was the most commonly selected support program available to public school principals in Pennsylvania in the past three years. This confirms previous research on mentoring programs as they have routinely become common methods to support principals (Daresh, 1995; Daresh, 2004;

Hansen & Matthews, 2002). However, the research does not take into account principals' years of experience. Instead, the research has primarily focused on the benefits of mentoring to acclimate principals to new positions.

Executive coaching was the least available program for principals. This support program's restricted availability to principals has been acknowledged in the existing literature. The research on executive coaching in education has largely been devoted to teachers coaching students or coaches assisting teachers (Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010). A smaller body of research has concentrated on public school administrators receiving coaching, most commonly superintendents (Bowmaster, 2007; Eldemire, 2004; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Wyatt 2010). While executive coaching has been recommended for middle level managers in the business sector, that same ideal has not fully transferred to education (Smith, 1993). Based on the results of the study, it is advisable that further research be conducted to determine how executive coaching could be implemented in a public school setting to assist principals in their professional responsibilities.

With regards to the three formal support programs, principals generally acknowledged that they had a favorable experience with the mentor or coach and the program. However, the longer the principals were in the position the less inclined they were to conclude that the support program they were engaged in was effective. This may be attributed to several factors. First, research shows that most mentoring programs are routinely developed for leaders new to a position (Crow & Matthew, 1998; Daresh, 2004; Daresh & Playko, 1992; Ehrich, Hansford, & Tennent, 2004). Consequently, those in a principalship for a more than a year or two may feel mentoring is not necessary for their

success as a leader. Second, it could simply be that veteran principals may be less inclined to participate in professional development. For example, earlier research has suggested that principals move through various career stages. Ribbins (1999), based on the earlier work of Day and Bakioglu (1996), suggested principals obtain a stage of autonomy characterized by a sense of competency after serving close to eight years in a head position. During this stage, principals feel confident and in control of the environment. They have the ability to handle the natural stressors of the position. Therefore, support programs as defined in this study may be viewed as unnecessary aids to help already confident and competent principals with multiple years of experience.

Another possibility may be that some principals do not have a desire to partake in a support program based on the "disenchantment" phase. During this time, principals can lose motivation to pursue a vision and may become stagnant in their professional responsibilities (Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Ribbins, 1999). Unlike the autonomy phase, the previous researchers gave no real indication of how long it takes to reach this point, only finding that is generally matches those serving in a position for an extended length of time. While this study cannot determine the reasons why the findings were significant, it does suggest that the longer principals are in their position, the less likely they feel support programs are a viable method to assist them in developing their leadership capabilities.

Participants of a support program generally had a very favorable perception of their experience. Principals also conveyed approval for the coaches and mentors. This response by the participants has coincided with the research about the perceptions of support programs for protégés. From building positive relationships to increased skills

and benefits, principals have routinely acknowledged the helpfulness of these programs and interactions with others (Dussault & Barnett, 1996; Smith, 2009). For instance, Woolsey (2010) found protégés gained insight and utilized new knowledge and skills particularly in instructional leadership, management, and building operations through participation in a formalized mentoring program. Likewise, Contreras (2008) reported principals found coaching to be an effective method to improve their ability to lead a school. The benefits identified by Woolsey and Contreras compliment the findings from the present study.

With support program benefits, both participants and non-participants indicated positive outcomes to these types of professional development opportunities. For example, principals participating in mentoring, peer coaching, or other programs not specified on questionnaire rated "built professional relationships" as the greatest benefit from the experience. The process of forming a relationship with a mentor or coach makes people feel like they are part of the organization (Daresh, 2004). Similarly, non-participants also believed that the most beneficial experience of a support program would be building professional relationships. While executive coaching participants indicated that their program helped with professional relationships, they felt the greatest benefit of the experience was the chance to strengthen leadership abilities. Research has show that the use of coaching to assist principals has enhanced their leadership capabilities (Contreras, 2008). In all circumstances, participants and non-participants ranked "encouraged career advancement" as the least beneficial option to the formalized programs. While this benefit has been reported in the literature (Daresh, 2004), this study is unable to

determine why it was uniformly ranked as the least productive element of a formalized support program.

Furthermore, while principals rated the quality of the program and mentor or coach as effective, the design of the study does not allow researchers to determine how participants measured the effectiveness. Respondents self-reported their enhancements of job benefits while in the position. With no other measure to verify a change in leadership skills, it is difficult to ascertain how principals improved their leadership abilities.

Non-participants perceived benefits of a support program, in particular, revealed a pattern. Their choices for hypothetical benefits clustered together around two themes: leadership/management and social interactions/relationships. This finding revealed a desire for principals to reduce the amount of isolation they are currently experiencing as well as an eagerness to enhance their role in leading a school. Both of these themes have been acknowledged in research on the role of the principalship. Piggot-Irvine (2004) and Wolf and Sherwood (1981) have recognized the lonely environment that building principals experience. They concluded that continuing to remain isolated could increase feelings of helplessness and ultimately result in burnout. Based on the present study, principals may still feel this loneliness and are seeking ways to reduce this job stress.

Furthermore, principals indicated that another hypothetical benefit of participation in a program would be development of leadership skills. With principals being only second to teachers as the greatest influence to school achievement, respondents considered strengthening job skills as paramount for leadership success (Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). Mentoring has shown benefits of enhancing knowledge of a working environment (Crow & Matthews, 1998). Research on formalized peer coaching

and executive coaching have also eluded to the benefits of job skill enhancement
(Barnett, 1989; Frisch, 2001; Kilberg, 1996) Additional research has indicated that
principals felt they were able to enhance job skills when they had the opportunity to
participation in these support programs (Daresh, 2004; Bluckert, 2005; Woolsey, 2010).
The results of the present study support the findings of the previous research suggesting
that one major reason for support programs is the benefits for principals' leadership
development.

Non-participants results also revealed that 33% of respondents did not have the
opportunity to partake in a support program. Of those, over 90% of non-participating
principals indicated a preference to be involved in a support program. This desire
compares with earlier research on professional development for principals. Bischel's
(2008) study on principals in the southwestern part of Pennsylvania revealed mentoring
and coaching as the top two choices for professional development. While the state
approved Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) program is an obvious option to give
consideration to, it tends to be skill based and does not provide the type of support
identified in the literature associated with mentoring and coaching programs.
Consequently, there appears to be a preference for principals to participate in some type
of support which is not course or skill specific but is designed to assist them in better
understanding and managing their position as building leaders.

Tables 12 and 25 in Chapter Four revealed a discrepancy between the loading
factors of support program benefits of participants and non-participants. This difference
may be attributed to the hypothetical wants and expectations of a program rather than the
actual experience. Non-participants may have an expectation of how a support program

could benefit them with particular skills associated with leadership/management or relationships/social interactions. Conversely, actual participants revealed that all benefits were acknowledged as part of the experience.

Limitations

This study is bounded by a number of limitations, which are important to understand as one attempts to generalize the findings to the broader population. First, the design of the questionnaire limited the amount of information able to be collected. In part, this was to ensure anonymity throughout the process. However, this decision restricted the type of data able to be collected. For example, based on the random sampling technique, principals from the same district could have reported duplicate data. With 399 principals participating in the study from a random selection of 309 districts, it is apparent that there was at least some redundancy of information, and there is no means to determine how duplicity of information was accounted for in the study.

Second, the study did not account for the support program process. Participants only acknowledged their awareness and experience with these support programs. The results do not indicate how their skills as leaders grew based on the completion of a program. Also, by their own self-reporting there is no means to determine whether the benefits of the program were merely perceived or exhibited in professional practice.

Third, based on the question format, some principals failed to complete the survey. Respondents emailed the researcher to explain that while a support program was available to them, they had not actually participated in program. Some felt they could not answer the remaining questions pertaining to the effectiveness of the program and the coach/mentor. As a result, they failed to complete the questionnaire in its entirety.

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Fourth, the respondents did not fully represent the target population of principals in the state of Pennsylvania. While principals from various levels and district sizes were sufficiently represented, females were underrepresented. Therefore, results were not able to be generalized to women within the target population.

Fifth, there appears to be conflicting data regarding participants self-reporting of career stages and years in the principalship. While the data can allow for some interpretation, it is difficult to discern how principals categorized themselves. Some respondents may have indicated their career stage based on their years serving as a building principal while others may have may have reported their career stage by including all of their years in education. For example, a principal with 13 years in education and five years as a principal may have indicated a mid career stage rather than an early career stage.

Finally, the definitions of the support programs were used to promote understanding of mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching. Through this study, there is an assumption that the respondents read and understood the nuances between the three programs. However, there was a possibility that there were general misconceptions with the terminology. Over time, researchers have routinely substituted coaching for mentoring when discussing support programs (Brooks, 2003; Garmston, 1987; Riveria, 2000). As a result, some individuals pre-conceived understanding of the supports might have factored into their own reporting of available programs. In addition, from the written responses of principals, some felt inclined to mention PIL as a form of support. However, based on this study, it is incapable to determine how respondents classified the program. Some may have included it as a mentoring option as it related to those within

the first several years in a position. Others may have selected it as none of the three defined programs since its structure did not match the definitions presented within the study.

Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the design of this study, investigators may want to modify the sampling method in order to reduce duplication of responses. Future researchers interested in investigating this topic should find a way to include a code to identify school districts. This way they will be able to test for dependencies among responses within district. A stratified randomly sampling process for gender may also help ensure that a more representative sample of the target population is part of the study.

Also, researches may want to investigate the processes used during these support programs. What does a program entail? Providing descriptive data about the exchanges between a mentor or coach and protégé would provide further detail about the relationship between the two parties.

Researchers may also want to investigate the impact a program has on a particular principal or district. A case study could potentially reveal the influence a support program has on the leadership capabilities of principals. It may also look to determine if a program reduces administrative turnover or reduces common stresses associated with the position. Likewise, an exploratory study on superintendents' perceptions of support programs could reveal alternate perspectives on value of these programs and additional reasons why some districts fail to offer them to principals.

Another recommended study would be to compare the support programs to one another? Is mentoring a more effective method to support principals than executive

coaching? What option has the most benefits to principals? Which is the most realistic option with the current state of public education?

A more detailed approach on the relationship of career stages on principals' desire to participate in a support program should be studied. Findings from this research revealed that experience decreases the perception of these programs. Is this the result of particular career stages? Does the working environment or size of the district make a difference in how principals view this form of support?

Similarly, researchers may want to investigate the decline in the positive benefits of programs and coaches/mentors as principals' years of service increased. In particular, a follow up mixed-methods study could look to identify if trends are similar to the present study and ascertain reasons for the occurrence if results are similar.

Finally, career stage identification could be investigated. Creating a study to determine the most appropriate approach to identifying career stages could provide researchers with a better method to identify particular phases on one's career. In doing so, future studies would have a reliable tool to gather career stage data.

Recommendations for Practice

The findings from this study indicate several key components that school districts, intermediate units and universities should consider. First, principals want to take part in a support program with most indicating a preference for mentoring and peer coaching. Superintendents should consider offering an "in-house" program to their administrative team. This could be either an option or mandatory professional development experience for all building principals. In larger districts, this can be done with existing personnel. At smaller, rural districts, it may be beneficial for several local districts to work together and

develop a shared support program. In doing so, principals can receive the benefits of the support while minimizing costs to implement it.

Second, superintendents and institutions need to look at the impact of professional development on veteran principals. The results of this study showed that principals' perception of the effectiveness of a support program decreased as their experience grew. Therefore, districts must be cognizant of this and see how best to support these principals. Kram (1985) concluded that individuals need some level of support at various points in their career, not just when they are novices. Therefore, districts, universities, and intermediate units should seek out professional development opportunities that experienced principals value.

Finally, based on the limited pool of highly qualified candidates readily vying for open principalships, superintendents may want to look at offering a support program as a recruitment option. The results of the study revealed that 92% of non-participants indicated a preference to partake in a program. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that offering a program may be a viable recruitment technique to attract highly qualified candidates and retain effective leaders.

Conclusion

The role of the building principal is filled with challenges. Today, the expectations placed on administrators are unsettling. Pressures from district superiors, school boards, state and federal mandates as well as community members all play a pivotal role in the reality of being a school leader. Increased accountability on standardized testing along with dwindling monetary reserves to fulfill public expectations has placed the principal in a dire position. Many of those in the role are looking ahead to

the next career opportunity, and many capable future principals are shirking away from the possibility of being a building leader.

Consequently, it is the responsibility school district leaders, universities and intermediate units to establish safeguards that will enable principals to do their job well. In addition, understanding the need for high caliber, professional educators to take the lead in schools, organization need to develop systems to entice teachers to join administrative ranks. Through the use of support programs, districts can help alleviate some of the natural stress of the job as well as provide safeguards to help avoid burnout within the principalship. More importantly by implementing support programs that develop and improve leadership capabilities, districts are creating a sound investment within their organization. The opportunity to provide support programs that help transform individuals into better leaders is imperative to the success of a district, to a school, and most importantly, to a student in the classroom.

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Appendix A

Delphi Panelist Invitation

Dear _____,

Please accept this invitation to participate as a panelist for my doctoral dissertation study titled "What types of support programs have Pennsylvania school districts established to aid principals as building leaders?" In particular, this dissertation will look to identify how mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are being used by principals to assist them as building leaders. To collect information about these programs, a survey will be administered to head principals. In an effort to make sure the instrument has strong content validity, a modified Delphi technique will be used to ascertain appropriateness of the instrument. You, along with several other panelists, will have the opportunity to evaluate the survey questions and provide feedback. Based on the responses, additional follow-up questions may be necessary to help refine the questionnaire.

At the bottom of this email are links to the proposed survey to be sent to a random sampling of public school principals in Pennsylvania and the assessment form. First, click on the "Principal Survey" link. Read through the proposed survey and then return to the email. Second, click on the "Panelist Feedback Form" link. This form will ask you to rate each of the survey questions and provide any additional suggestions about the length, format, and/or content of the instrument. In total, the survey should not take more than ten minutes to complete.

If you have any questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at Cocalico Middle School, (717) 336-1471, by cell (717) 471-4248, or email at sam904@lehigh.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor Dr. George White at Lehigh University at (610) 758-3262 or gpw1@lehigh.edu.

Thank you for your time and professional feedback.

Sincerely,

Stephen Melnyk
Principal, Cocalico Middle School
Doctoral Student, Lehigh University

Principal Survey:
https://spreadsheets.google.com/a/cocalico.net/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dG9SNE
04YkxRcTFjbndRakNORmNKaFE6MQ

Panelist Feedback Form:
https://spreadsheets.google.com/a/cocalico.net/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dFRLVE
Ezckw1WU1SSmpXQnhyT3lNZ1E6MQ

Appendix B

Panelist Survey & Feedback Form

Delphi Panel Assessment Form

Panelist,

Please use this form to evaluate each of the eight questions from the principal survey using the following rating scale: keep, modify, or delete.

In addition to rating each question, please feel free to offer suggestions and comments to help strengthen and clarify the instrument. This is especially important if you believe a question should be modified.
* Required

NAME:

[   ]

Question 1: Please indicate the method of support(s) used by your district for building principals. (Check all that apply.) *
○ Keep
○ Modify
○ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #1 if necessary:

[   ]

Question 2: Is it a required component of your job to participate in a support program? *
○ Keep
○ Modify
○ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #2 if necessary:

Question 3: What is the duration of the support program used in your district? *

○ Keep

○ Modify

○ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #3 if necessary:

Questions 4: Do you feel the support program is (was) beneficial to you in your leadership capacity? *

○ Keep

○ Modify

○ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #4

Question 5: How do you feel a support program helped you in your role as building leader? (Check all that apply.) *

◯ Keep

◯ Modify

◯ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #5 if necessary:

[ ]

Question 6: If you do not (or have not) participated in mentoring, peer coaching or executive coaching as a building principal, what is the reason? (Check all that apply.) *

◯ Keep

◯ Modify

◯ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #6 if necessary:

[ ]

Question 7: As a building leader, which support program do you feel would benefit you the most? *

◯ Keep

◯ Modify

◯ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #7 if necessary:

[text box]

Question 8: In what way(s) do you feel a support program would help you in your role as a building leader? (Check all that apply.) *

○ Keep

○ Modify

○ Delete

Suggestions to modify Question #8 if necessary:

[text box]

Please comment on the overall format of the survey. Was it easy to read? Is the expected timeframe to complete reasonable? Will the questions help gain insight into identifying support programs for principals?

[text box]

Is there anything else not already mentioned in this feedback form that you feel should be addressed?

Submit

Appendix C

Pilot Group Invitation

Participant,

Thank you for taking the opportunity to be part of this pilot study. Currently I am a student at Lehigh University and in the process of completing the requirements for my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. My research is focused on the various support programs available to principals. In particular, this dissertation will look to identify how mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are being used by principals to assist them as building leaders.

You, as a colleague and a fellow educator, are invited to take the pilot survey. In addition, you will have the opportunity to provide feedback about the instrument including the design, time to complete, questions asked, and any other information you feel is pertinent to refine the questionnaire.

There is minimal risk in participating in this type of pilot survey. All information from pilot group participants will be kept as separate data from the study and kept confidential.

If you have any questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at Cocalico Middle School, (717) 336-1471, by cell (717) 471-4248, or email at sam904@lehigh.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor Dr. George White at Lehigh University, (610) 758-3262 or gpw1@lehigh.edu. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact Susan E. Disidore at (610)758-3020 (email: sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (email: tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your time and professional feedback. Please click on the link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6CYPCF2 to access the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Stephen Melnyk
Principal, Cocalico Middle School
Doctoral Student, Lehigh University

Appendix D

Pilot Survey & Feedback Form

Pilot Group Survey

Participant Consent

*1. By clicking "Continue", you agree to participate in the study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact Susan E. Disidore at (610)758-3020 (email: sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (email: tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

○ Continue

○ Do not take the survey

Pilot Group Survey

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Participant,

First, please read the definitions of each support program. Then complete the survey questions based on your own experiences.

Mentoring –
A support program, usually designated for individuals new to a position. The model consists of a veteran administrator (mentor) providing guidance and support to a younger administrator (protégé). In most cases, the goal of the relationship is to acclimate the protégé to the position and/or organization.

Peer coaching –
A support program, which two or more professionals work together to enhance, refine, or develop skills within their current positions. The combination of colleagues usually consists of staff members of similar age, job title, and/or working experience.

Executive coaching –
A support program between an employee and a hired consultant. The one-on-one relationship is based on individualized goals and is restricted to a mutually agreed upon time period through a contract. The goal is to improve individual performance in a specific area and ultimately enhance the organization's effectiveness through the process.

*2. Please indicate the methods of support programs used by your district for building principals (check all that apply) The programs can be directly run and operated by the district or indirectly operated through another entity e.g., intermediate unit, university endorsed programs, etc.):

☐ Mentoring

☐ Peer coaching

☐ Executive coaching

☐ None of the above

☐ Other (please describe)

Pilot Group Survey

3. Please indicate whether the program(s) selected in question 2 is(are) optional or required?

	Required	Optional
Mentoring	○	○
Peer coaching	○	○
Executive coaching	○	○
Other	○	○

4. Within the last three years in your current district, what program have you personally experienced as a recipient of support?

○ Mentoring

○ Peer coaching

○ Executive coaching

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

5. Within the last three years in your current district, how long were you or have you been a recipient of the support program?

○ Less than six months

○ Six months to a year

○ One year

○ More than one year

○ No designated timeframe – only as needed

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Pilot Group Survey

6. Within the last three years in your current district, to what extent do you feel the support program helped you in your role as building leader in each of the following areas?

	Not helpful	Helped a little	Helped a moderate amount	Helped a lot	Extremely helpful
Reduced isolation	○	○	○	○	○
Built professional relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Provided performance feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Increased confidence	○	○	○	○	○
Expanded self-reflection	○	○	○	○	○
Set or reassessed goals	○	○	○	○	○
Ensured support/friendship	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthened leadership abilities	○	○	○	○	○
Enhanced and grew skills	○	○	○	○	○
Increased job satisfaction	○	○	○	○	○
Encouraged career advancement	○	○	○	○	○
Provided opportunities to take risks	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

Please describe "Other"

7. Rate the overall effectiveness of the support program you have been involved in during the past three years.

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Mentoring	○	○	○	○	○	○
Peer coaching	○	○	○	○	○	○
Executive coaching	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○	○

8. Rate the overall effectiveness of the mentor/coach.

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Mentor	○	○	○	○	○	○
Peer coach	○	○	○	○	○	○
Executive coach	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○	○

9. If you do not (or have not) participated in mentoring, peer coaching or executive coaching as a building principal, what is(are) the reason(s)? (Select all that pertain.)

☐ Lack of interest

☐ Lack of district funds/resources to support

☐ Not enough time to be involved in a program

☐ Superintendent does not support/endorse

☐ Only offered to incoming or new principals

☐ Other (please explain)

[   ]

10. As a building leader, which support program do you feel would benefit you the most?

○ Mentoring

○ Peer coaching

○ Executive coaching

○ None of the above

Please provide a reason for your response

[   ]

Pilot Group Survey

11. To what extent do you feel a support program could help you in your role as a building leader in each of the following areas?

Please select one choice for each of the following areas.

	Not helpful	Help a little	Help a moderate amount	Help a lot	Extremely helpful
Reduce isolation	○	○	○	○	○
Build professional relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Provide performance feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Increase confidence	○	○	○	○	○
Expand self-reflection	○	○	○	○	○
Set or reassess goals	○	○	○	○	○
Ensure support/friendship	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthen leadership abilities	○	○	○	○	○
Enhance and grow skills	○	○	○	○	○
Increase job satisfaction	○	○	○	○	○
Encourage career advancement	○	○	○	○	○
Provide opportunities to take risks	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

If you chose Other, please describe.

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Pilot Group Survey

Demographics

12. Size of district:

○ Less than 2,000 students

○ Between 2,001-5,000 students

○ Greater than 5,000 students

13. Your current position:

○ Elementary principal

○ Middle school/junior high principal

○ High school principal

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

14. Number of years as a head building principal:

Years as Principal

Select the number of years
from the drop down menu

[▼]

15. What career stage do you report you are in as a principal?

○ Early career

○ Midcareer

○ Advanced/Late career

16. Gender:

○ Female

○ Male

Pilot Group Survey

Survey completed!

Thank you again for taking the time to complete the pilot survey and feedback form.

Appendix E

Participant Invitation

Dear _____,

My name is Stephen Melnyk and I am the principal of Cocalico Middle School located in south central Pennsylvania. I am also a student at Lehigh University and in the process of completing the requirements for my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. My research is focused on the various support programs available to principals. My study titled, "What types of support programs have Pennsylvania school districts established to aid principals as building leaders?" will look to identify to what degree and how mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are being used by principals to assist them as building leaders.

As a building leader, I know your time is very valuable and also very limited. However, your feedback and insight can provide me with information about the current state of support programs. Therefore, I am asking for your assistance. Please set aside 5-10 minutes of your day to answer a very short questionnaire. By taking only a few moments, the information gathered from you and other principals throughout the state will provide our profession with new knowledge that will enhance the education research in this area about the current state of these programs.

I invite you to participate in this study. There is minimal risk in participating in this type of survey. All information from participants will be kept confidential, and individual responses will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at Cocalico Middle School, (717) 336-1471, by cell (717) 471-4248, or email at sam904@lehigh.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor Dr. George White at Lehigh University, (610) 758-3262 or gpw1@lehigh.edu. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), **you are encouraged** to contact Susan E. Disidore at (610)758-3020 (email: sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (email: tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your time and professional feedback. Please click on the link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CR2N6FS to access the questionnaire.

Sincerely,
Stephen Melnyk
Principal, Cocalico Middle School
Doctoral Student, Lehigh University

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Participant Consent

＊1. By clicking "Continue", you agree to participate in the study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact Susan E. Disidore at (610)758-3020 (email: sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (email: tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

○ Continue

○ Do not take the survey

Page 1

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

Participant,

First, please read the definitions of each support program. Then complete the survey questions based on your own experiences.

Mentoring –
A support program, usually designated for individuals new to a position. The model consists of a veteran administrator (mentor) providing guidance and support to a younger administrator (protégé). In most cases, the goal of the relationship is to acclimate the protégé to the position and/or organization.

Peer coaching –
A support program, which two or more professionals work together to enhance, refine, or develop skills within their current positions. The combination of colleagues usually consists of staff members of similar age, job title, and/or working experience.

Executive coaching –
A support program between an employee and a hired consultant. The one-on-one relationship is based on individualized goals and is restricted to a mutually agreed upon time period through a contract. The goal is to improve individual performance in a specific area and ultimately enhance the organization's effectiveness through the process.

＊2. Please indicate the methods of formal support programs used by your district for building principals. Check all that apply. (The programs can be directly run and operated by the district or indirectly operated through another entity e.g., intermediate unit, university endorsed programs, etc.):

☐ Mentoring

☐ Peer coaching

☐ Executive coaching

☐ None of the above

☐ Other (please describe)

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

*3. Please indicate whether the program(s) selected in question 2 is(are) optional or required?

	Required	Optional
Mentoring	○	○
Peer coaching	○	○
Executive coaching	○	○
Other	○	○

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Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

*4. Within the last three years in your current district, what program have you personally experienced as a recipient of support?

○ Mentoring

○ Peer coaching

○ Executive coaching

○ None

○ Other (please specify)

[   ]

5. Within the last three years in your current district, how long were you or have you been a recipient of the support program?

○ No time at all

○ Less than six months

○ Six months to a year

○ One year

○ More than one year

○ No designated timeframe – only as needed

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

6. To what extent do you feel a support program helped you in your role as building leader in each of the following areas?

Please select a rating for each of the 12 development skills.

	Not helpful	Helped a little	Helped a moderate amount	Helped a lot	Extremely helpful
Reduced Isolation	○	○	○	○	○
Built professional relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Provided performance feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Increased confidence	○	○	○	○	○
Expanded self-reflection	○	○	○	○	○
Set or reassessed goals	○	○	○	○	○
Ensured support/friendship	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthened leadership abilities	○	○	○	○	○
Enhanced and grew skills	○	○	○	○	○
Increased job satisfaction	○	○	○	○	○
Encouraged career advancement	○	○	○	○	○
Provided opportunities to take risks	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

Please describe "Other"

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Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

*7. Rate the overall effectiveness of the support program you have been involved in during the past three years.

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Mentoring	○	○	○	○	○	○
Peer coaching	○	○	○	○	○	○
Executive coaching	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○	○

*8. Rate the overall effectiveness of the mentor/coach.

	Outstanding	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	N/A
Mentor	○	○	○	○	○	○
Peer coach	○	○	○	○	○	○
Executive coach	○	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○	○

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Principal Support Program Questionnaire (PSPQ)

*9. If you do not (or have not) participated in mentoring, peer coaching or executive coaching as a building principal, what is(are) the reason(s)? (Select all that pertain.)

☐ Lack of interest

☐ Lack of district funds/resources to support

☐ Not enough time to be involved in a program

☐ Superintendent does not support/endorse

☐ Only offered to incoming or new principals

☐ Other (please explain)

_____

*10. As a building leader, which support program do you feel would benefit you the most?

○ Mentoring

○ Peer coaching

○ Executive coaching

○ None of the above

Please provide a reason for your response

_____

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

*11. To what extent do you feel a support program could help you in your role as a building leader in each of the following areas?

Please select a rating for each of the 12 development skills.

	Not helpful	Help a little	Help a moderate amount	Help a lot	Extremely helpful
Reduce isolation	○	○	○	○	○
Build professional relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Provide performance feedback	○	○	○	○	○
Increase confidence	○	○	○	○	○
Expand self-reflection	○	○	○	○	○
Set or reassess goals	○	○	○	○	○
Ensure support/friendship	○	○	○	○	○
Strengthen leadership abilities	○	○	○	○	○
Enhance and grow skills	○	○	○	○	○
Increase job satisfaction	○	○	○	○	○
Encourage career advancement	○	○	○	○	○
Provide opportunities to take risks	○	○	○	○	○
Other	○	○	○	○	○

If you chose Other, please describe.

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Demographics

*12. Size of district:

- ○ Less than 2,000 students
- ○ Between 2,001-5,000 students
- ○ Greater than 5,000 students

*13. Your current position:

- ○ Elementary principal
- ○ Middle school/junior high principal
- ○ High school principal
- ○ Other (please specify)

*14. Number of years as a head building principal:

Years as Principal

Select the number of years
from the drop down menu:

*15. What career stage do you report you are in as a principal?

- ○ Early career
- ○ Midcareer
- ○ Advanced/Late career

*16. Gender:

- ○ Female
- ○ Male

Principal Support Program Questionnaire

Survey completed!

Thank you for taking the time to complete this short survey.

Appendix G

Superintendent Support Letter

Dear Superintendent _____,

My name is Stephen Melnyk and I am the principal of Cocalico Middle School located in south central Pennsylvania. I am also a student at Lehigh University and in the process of completing the requirements for my doctoral degree in Educational Leadership. My research is focused on the various support programs available to principals. My study titled, "What types of support programs have Pennsylvania school districts established to aid principals as building leaders?" will look to identify to what degree and how mentoring, peer coaching, and executive coaching are being used by principals to assist them as building leaders.

Recently, principals in your district were randomly selected to participate in the study. The information gathered from the survey will provide me with data to determine if these support programs are being used in school districts as well as identify the benefits of each program to building administrators. Being respectful of their time, the entire questionnaire is less than 15 questions and completion time is only 5-10 minutes.

In order to have a sufficient response rate, I am asking for your assistance. If possible, I would appreciate it if you would acknowledge to your administrative team that this survey is being conducted and encourage your principals to complete the questionnaire in a timely manner. Your support and approval to carry out this research will only increase the total number of respondents. With your assistance, the information gathered can help enhance research in this area.

Ultimately, the information gathered from principals throughout the state will provide you and other superintendents with new knowledge about the current state of these programs. If you have the opportunity to assist me with this request, I will make sure to share the overall results from the dissertation with you. However, in order to maintain anonymity of respondents, no individual or district level data will be available.

If you have any questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at Cocalico Middle School, (717) 336-1471, by cell (717) 471-4248, or email at sam904@lehigh.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor Dr. George White at Lehigh University, (610) 758-3262 or gpw1@lehigh.edu. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact Susan E. Disidore at (610)758-3020 (email: sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (email: tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

I and the members of my dissertation committee, Dr. George White, Dr. Ron Yoshida, Dr. Louise Donohue, and Dr. Robert Hollister, thank you for your time and professional support.

Sincerely,

Stephen Melnyk
Principal, Cocalico Middle School
Doctoral Student, Lehigh University

Appendix H

Participant Follow Up Request

Dear _____,

Last week I invited you to take part in an online questionnaire about principal support programs. As a fellow principal, I know the hectic nature of the workday. Finding 10 minutes to complete a survey is sometimes next to impossible. To date, over 260 principals have participated in this research project. If you are one of those participants, thank you very much for taking the time to complete the survey. Your feedback is greatly appreciated.

For those you who have not had the opportunity to complete the questionnaire, again, I invite you to participate in this research. There is minimal risk involved in this type of study. All information from participants will be kept confidential, and individual responses will remain anonymous.

If you have any questions about my research, please feel free to contact me at Cocalico Middle School, (717) 336-1471, by cell (717) 471-4248, or email at sam904@lehigh.edu. You may also contact my dissertation advisor Dr. George White at Lehigh University, (610) 758-3262 or gpw1@lehigh.edu. In addition, if you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact Susan E. Disidore at (610)758-3020 (email: sus5@lehigh.edu) or Troy Boni at (610)758-2985 (email: tdb308@lehigh.edu) of Lehigh University's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. All reports or correspondence will be kept confidential.

Please consider taking a few moments to complete the questionnaire. Thank you so much for your time. Click on the link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CR2N6FS to access the questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Stephen Melnyk
Principal, Cocalico Middle School
Doctoral Student, Lehigh University

STEPHEN A. MELNYK II

137 Winesap Lane, Palmyra, PA 17078 – (C) 717-471-4248

PROFESSIONAL PROFILE:

A building administrator with experience at the middle school level with
expertise in: middle level philosophy, scheduling, school improvement planning,
curriculum planning, and professional development.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2009-Present   Principal, Cocalico Middle School, Denver, PA

- o Reconfigured grade level teams
- o Introduced philosophical change to teaching middle level learners
- o Created new rotation schedule for special area classes
- o Implemented math and reading remediation courses
- o Introduced German as another exploratory course option
- o Redesigned 6th grade teams to smaller units
- o Instituted a school-wide advisory program
- o Wrote a school improvement plan
- o Developed and revised professional development to help all subgroups achieve AYP
- o Scheduled professional development opportunities for departments to have common planning time during the school day

2004-2009   Assistant Principal, Cocalico Middle School, Denver, PA

- o Supervised over 60 professional and 10 paraprofessional staff members in collaboration with the building principal
- o Oversaw discipline of 800 students
- o Developed alternative schedules for various events
- o Coordinated the Gifted and Student Assistance Programs
- o Monitored the summer reading and math programs
- o Represented the district in court for truancy violations
- o Presented at building in-services and the new teacher induction program
- o Reviewed achievement data and action plans with grade levels and teams

2003-2004   Department Chair for Middle School Communication Arts

- o Coordinated the middle school curriculum for the department
- o Supported district initiatives including local assessments
- o Facilitated purchase of new textbook program

2000-2004   8th Grade Communication Arts Teacher, Cocalico Middle School, Denver, PA

- o Worked collaboratively with team of teachers to adapt teaching schedule, planned field trips, and created interdisciplinary units
- o Conducted "team sharing" in-services
- o Presented assignments and projects to reach multiple intelligences
- o Adjusted classroom management to meet teaching style
- o Coordinated Audio/Visual needs of building including equipment and budget

1999-2000   7th Grade Communication Arts Teacher, Wissahickon Middle School, Ambler, PA

- o Used intensive writing program to develop skills
- o Collaborated with colleagues to create interdisciplinary instruction
- o Developed activities and incentive rewards for team days
- o Advised the high school Key Club

EDUCATION:

- o Doctor of Education (pending), Lehigh University
- o Superintendent Letter of Eligibility, Lehigh University
- o Principal Certification (K-12), The Pennsylvania State University
- o M.Ed. Teaching and Curriculum, The Pennsylvania State University
- o B.A. of Secondary Education, English, The Pennsylvania State University

TRAINING:

- o Leadership Development Program, 2008
- o PVAAS & eMetric Data Tools, 2007
- o Emergency Management for School, 2007
- o Danielson's Frameworks for Observation, 2005
- o Improving Student Performance at the Secondary Level, 2005
- o Autism Select Team, 2005
- o Learning Focused Schools, 2004
- o Student Assistance Program, 2003

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS:

- o National Association of Secondary School Principals
- o Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development
- o Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals
- o Association for Middle Level Education