NCPEA
Education Leadership Review

Fall 2014
Volume 15, Number 2
ISSN 1532-0723

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Education Leadership Review
Fall 2014

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Pathways for Performance: Recruitment and Selection, University Preparation, Licensure, and Professional Development for School Principals

This manuscript has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration as a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of school administration and K-12 education.

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The need to recruit, prepare, and develop the next generation of educational leaders challenges states and localities everywhere. The complex demands of current educational reform initiatives have been articulated in national and state reports detailing the changing conditions of schools and provide compelling evidence for the necessity of new abilities and sensibilities at all levels of the profession. This article reports on research which examined four locations along the career continuum of school principals in Minnesota: 1) recruitment and selection, 2) university preparation programs, 3) licensing and certification, and 4) continuing professional development. We also include 18 specific policy recommendations.

NCPEA Education Leadership Review, Vol. 15, No. 2– October 2014
ISSN: 1532-0723 © 2014 National Council of Professors of Educational Administration

Introduction

Recruitment, preparation, and development of the next generation of education leaders are a challenge for states and localities across the country. The complex demands of current educational reform initiatives have been articulated in national and state reports detailing the changing conditions of schools and provide compelling evidence for the necessity of new abilities and sensibilities at all levels of the profession (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004; Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008). In response, states have recognized that they bear responsibility to design and nurture the pipeline through which future educational leaders will emerge. This research attempts to describe some of the challenges faced in one state (Minnesota) by listening to the voices of practitioners and stakeholders, and by exploring their understandings of the education workplace. In this manuscript, we utilize our narrative inquiry into principals and other stakeholder perspectives to articulate the experiences of school leaders at a time of new curricular requirements, increasing diversity, and greater demands for accountability and to provide recommendations for a coherently designed pathway for school leadership.

Our research and report on principal preparation and development in Minnesota challenges educational leaders to move away from a command-and-control approach. We articulate principal pipeline policies that emphasize responsibility for stewardship and transformative experiences associated with inquiry into human-centered systems. The experiences described foster recognition of the need for individual and collective learning through collaborative processes that include meaningful experiences that build a professional community of learners (Danzig, 2009; Spillane & Seashore Louis, 2002). The development of professional communities in schools creates the foundation for transformative experiences and systemic change. Spillane and Seashore Louis (2002) argue that one factor in creating a community of learners is social trust, which provides a "foundation on which collaboration, reflective dialogue, and deprivatization of practice can occur" (p. 94). In a community of learners, no single person is expected to master everything. The entire school or institution, rather than a single person, works to build what might be described as collective and collaborative expertise.

Methods

Specifically, this article reports on research which examined four locations along the career continuum of school principals in Minnesota: 1) recruitment and selection, 2) university preparation programs, 3) licensing and certification, and 4) continuing professional development. The research is based on interviews with Minnesota educators and stakeholders followed by literature review to identify key issues and best practices related to each location across the career continuum of school principals. The research moved through the four distinct stages, each of which is described in greater detail in the final report (Danzig, Black, Donofrio, Fernandez, & Martin, 2012).

Research was conducted as result of a contract awarded by the St. Paul Foundation in support of the Minnesota Board of School Administrators (BOSA). Upon awarding of the contract, the principal investigator and team members met with the Executive Director of BOSA, members of the BOSA Collaborative (which included

Administrators, University Faculty, and Teacher leaders), and leadership from the Minnesota Department of Education, and the St. Paul Foundation. Key strategies were developed and interview protocols for different respondent groups were prepared concerning principal recruitment and selection, preparation, licensure, and professional development. During the last week of November 2011, a team of five researchers conducted approximately 30 interviews with individuals and groups of one to five respondents who were identified and recruited through the Minnesota Board of School Administrators. Initial interviews were conducted at the Minnesota Department of Education, while subsequent interviews were conducted by phone or in person (when possible) with individuals identified as having particular expertise or knowledge in one of the four areas. Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed for analysis. Following transcriptions, all interviews were coded and selected text was excerpted for possible inclusion into the final report. A series of narratives were written to capture and reflect the major themes that were part of these conversations.

The majority of interview participants were solicited by the Minnesota Board of School Administrators, with emails sent to various principal groups and professional organizations. Additional interviews were held with people named as important education leaders in Minnesota by the BOSA, the St. Paul Foundation, and other respondents during the interviews. The initial emails inviting people to be interviewed were sent by the BOSA and included: 1) BOSA Collaborative members (university faculty and other higher education administrators), 2) BOSA Board members, 3) principals, 4) superintendents, 5) Minnesota administrator professional association leaders (Minnesota Elementary School Principals Association (MESPA), Minnesota Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP), Minnesota Association of School Administrators (MASA), 6) charter school directors, administrators, and advocates,7) Minnesota community foundation leaders (i.e. Bush Foundation), 8) executives with private leadership development programs (i.e., *New Leaders*), 9) parents, 10) teacher leaders and union representatives, 11) school board members, 12) elected state legislators and U.S. Congressional staff, and 13) Minnesota state Department of Education officials. More detailed information on methods may be found at: http://spa.asu.edu/files/pdf/faculty/prncplpthwysappx.pdf/view.

Recruitment and Selection of Principals

Both individual decisions and system structures affect the choices of potential principals and therefore must be considered by school districts and preparation programs who desire to attract and select the most qualified principal candidates (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003; Myong, Loeb, & Hornig, 2011; Wallace Foundation, 2012). Challenges to recruitment and selection of principals included two contexts in which the capacities and responsibilities of principals are enacted: state standards and local district culture.

Targeted Recruitment of Particularized Skills and Experiences

The participants' responses indicated that leadership preparation programs could better contribute to the preparation of school leaders in three ways: 1) Reach agreement about and identify the desired skills and experiences of the applicants for entry into leadership

preparation programs. 2) Apply these criteria to the recruitment and selection processes. 3) Work closely with schools and districts that employ graduates, to ensure that graduates are successful in finding jobs for which they have been prepared. These combined efforts would help teachers and others thinking about entering school administration gain a richer understanding of what it means to be a school administrator earlier on in their careers, and learn what is required to qualify for entry into leadership preparation programs. The interviews and literature review in this section also raise the possibility of greater concern for social responsibility that is part of principals' work, and an *ethic of care* as a priority for school leadership in the 21st century.

Targeted Recruitment of Women and Teachers of Color Into the Principalship

Approximately 13-15% of teachers in Minnesota schools are teachers of color and the percentage of principal licenses issued to candidates of color during the past five years is even lower. Criticisms related to an underrepresentation of women and minority applicants were expressed by multiple respondents, who stated that many of the teachers most often encouraged to enter principal licensure programs looked very much like the recommending principals and that an 'old boy network' limits new talent, particularly for women and teachers of color. Without specific efforts to the contrary, self-selection and sponsorship will continue to contribute to the reproduction of a largely white population of Minnesota school principals.

Demands on Principals are Limiting Entry in the Pathway

Respondents suggested that the principal's job has become less manageable given time, money, and resource constraints, resulting in lower satisfaction and greater dissatisfaction. Principals said that their work inside of schools changed significantly over the last 10 years with new state and federal mandates, greater demands for accountability, and the constant pressure of school reform initiatives. Changing external conditions such as demographic shifts, widening achievement and technology gaps, funding disparities, and social, political, and economic conditions of poverty were also mentioned as factors contributing to overall reduction in work satisfaction.

Principal Recruitment: Mentors Encourage Potential Future Leaders

Recruiting school principals is a multi-step process that includes identifying potential candidates, encouraging them to pursue preparation coursework that leads to licensure, and following through with the preparation-program selection process. From the start of these steps, it is often the case that individuals who pursue the principalship have done so based on a recommendation or suggestion made by another individual within the educational setting. This may include a current principal, assistant principal, or other teachers who recognize leadership qualities in their colleagues.

Self-Selection and Identification

Teachers are often attracted to the principal position because of an interest in influencing and improving education within the school and education policy more generally. This interest may evolve from demonstrated leadership within the classroom and evolve into work outside the classroom which broadens an individual's leadership skills. Factoring in the decision choices of potential principal candidates is a critical first step in attracting and retaining qualified principal candidates. School districts have the ability to use what is known about succession management to "grow their own" principals. The downside to this policy is that it can lead to reproduction of like candidates, as principals tend to promote others who look like them. If selection is accomplished with greater attention to diversity, it is also an opportunity to engage others not typically represented in the principal's role.

To respond to the challenges raised in the research related to recruitment and selection, we provide four recommendations:

1. Devise programs/processes to ensure efforts to recruit principal candidates of color. Pilot programs with state support for districts utilizing positions such as Teacher on Special Assignment and other full time administrative positions.
2. Support organizational and distributed leadership, not just principal leadership, by supporting pathways for teachers to continue to serve in leadership roles without leaving the classroom. This may entail support for salary scale credit of master's degrees in educational leadership/administration.
3. Support regional and metropolitan collaborations across school districts, universities, state agencies, and professional organizations to recruit principal candidates in shortage areas.
4. Give greater weight to face-to-face screening and selection of applicants, as interviews serve as indications of commitment on the part of applicants and institutions to select the most qualified candidates; it also allows university programs to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of applicants first hand, and devise learning strategies based on what applicants bring from their previous experiences.

Principal Preparation

Despite the criticisms attributed to preparation program content and structure among respondents, there was overwhelming recognition of the value and importance of sustaining preparation programs and reforming them to better align with the challenges of contemporary school environments. Programs with greater quality tend to be more selective in recruitment, including a focus on high-potential candidates with demonstrated classroom leadership and dispositions and skills that align with preparation program standards (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson , 2005; Fuller, Young, & Baker, 2011).

Researchers have identified specific and well articulated program components that are found in effective programs in school administration, which include: 1) unified program theory, 2) standards-based curriculum, 3) candidate recruitment and selection, 4) engaging program content, 5) active instruction, 6)

quality internship, 7) cohort structure and other supports, 8) program organization, 9) candidate assessment and program evaluation, 10) knowledgeable and competent faculty, 11) faculty professional development, and 12) collaboration (Orr, 2011; Peterson, 2002; Sanders & Simpson, 2005). Of particular significance are well designed and conceptually supported high-quality internship experiences which enhance graduates' leadership skills, reflectiveness, and career intentions to become principals or school leaders (Perez, Uline, Jonson, James-Ward, & Basom, 2011).

Explicit Application of Concepts in a Timely Fashion

In general, there was greater criticism of programs and coursework when the application of theory to practice was not explicit. These connections may require greater planning, experience and expertise (Perez, et. al, 2011). Many principals also expressed concern over the gap between the time that licensure program courses were taken and the opportunity to do administrative work, as they pointed to many years of separation between the time when courses were taken and their first full-time administrative assignments.

Emotional Management and Resiliency

A second topic area that was mentioned by the principals related to emotional knowledge. There was agreement that principals need skills related to working with large numbers of people in bureaucratic settings and the emotional costs of the work. Balancing professional and personal life and avoiding professional burnout were part of managing emotional work of the principal. A few principals also said that they needed to be stronger advocates for children and families, and that their pre-service programs covered little in this area.

Criticism of Internship Experiences

The responding principals criticized the internship experiences. Many reported that their site mentor had received no formal training, nor did they see evidence of collaboration between the mentor and university program. Principals also noted other problems related to the internship; first and foremost was the concern that it was almost impossible to experience a high quality administrative learning experience while still working full-time as a teacher. The leaders of the professional associations also suggested that more relevant course connections, specific to the events experienced during the internship, were needed. They expressed concern that the internship lacked consistency from one licensure program to the next, and that almost all activities or time spent counted towards the required hours. University faculty members also talked about their concerns with the internships and wide variations among individuals and within and across programs. As detailed by the principals, university faculty members also understood that interns are typically full-time teachers responsible for classroom instruction, and as a result internship hours were accomplished in addition to normal teaching responsibilities.
Considering these findings, we put forth the following recommendations:

1. Require reflective practice in regards to learning that best serves a preparation mission agreed upon by faculty and district partners that is tied to and measured through standards.
2. Require university preparation programs to schedule annual reviews of assessment data, i.e., student evaluations, peer evaluations, accreditation reviews, etc. with a group of practicing principals and/or principal associations for program improvement.
3. Require university coursework in working with diverse populations.
4. Provide formal training and approval of site mentors to work with interns and require mentoring experience with numerous individuals with differing expertise.
5. Begin internships early in the graduate program to ensure coursework is taken while leading as an intern and applying what is learned in school settings.
6. Seek alternative methods for interns to have release time from classroom duties to focus on the internship experience.
7. Require a significant amount of the internship to be concerned with meaningful leadership activities, including leading a significant action research project rather than simply carrying out duties.
8. When feasible, require part of the internship to be undertaken in schools with diverse populations-this can be coordinated on a local and regional basis by universities, regional professional organizations, and the applicable state agencies.

Principal Licensure: Interview and Literature Review Findings

The interviews and literature review related to principal licensure indicated broad consensus for the view that the work of principals in the 21st century was becoming more complex. Some respondents viewed the importance of national and state standards as a way to focus attention on what is important in education, and what it means to educate children in 21st century schools. These respondents were critical of slogans such as *racing to the top* and *maximizing student achievement* and viewed the principals' work in collaboration with others, less as an instructional leader and more as an experienced colleague with deep expertise in multiple areas including teaching and learning, curriculum instruction, educational equity, and education policy. Their comments indicated a deeper concern for the human conditions that are negotiated in classrooms and schools and viewed leadership standards and licensing requirements as providing broad policy directions to guide the work of principals, in relation to the work of others, including students, teachers, parents, and community members.

Reducing the Gap Between Coursework and Experience

Whereas programs in many states have 33-36 hour Masters programs requirements for initial educational leadership licensure (Vistaska-Shelton, 2009), we found that Minnesota had a 60 hour credit rule for initial certification. Many certified principals earned master' degrees in areas outside of educational leadership and then sought certification through additional hours in a sate-approved educational leadership program to reach the 60 credit hour mark. Principals in general supported

requirements beyond a master's degree for initial principal licensure because they felt that principals needed more time to prepare for the job. They also supported the need for successful teaching experience as an expectation for applicants and for accomplishing the principals' work. They were less supportive of allowing all masters' degrees to be counted equally as part of the licensure program requirements. They preferred to limit the acceptable master's degrees to areas more connected to teaching and learning, and specifically referenced graduate degrees in educational leadership, school administration, curriculum and instruction, guidance and counseling, etc. Others were more critical of rules that required principals to complete a master's degree plus additional 30-36 credit hours in educational administration as part of licensure requirements. Respondents were also critical of the gap between coursework, internship experiences, and first full time administrative positions, which limited the learning that comes from an integration of theory and practice.

Alignment of Teacher and Principal Certification Policies

Teachers represent the overwhelming majority in the pool of principal candidates. Finding ways in which principal and teacher licensure overlap and align would help focus attention on issues related to principal licensure and highlight similarities in the concerns of teachers and administrators. Respondents proposed that having discussions along the lines of tiered licensure would be "refreshing" and that better alignment between teacher and principal licensure would be "well received." One question that was raised, though unanswered, was how a licensing structure could reward excellence in the classroom without pushing excelling teachers out of the classroom into administration. Teachers want some say over who becomes their principal and who leads their schools, and the idea of principals motivating teachers should be based on classroom experience and expertise. Taking great teachers out of the classroom to play an administrative leadership role does not seem to be the only way that principal leadership should evolve over time. Respondent interviews and the literature review support a view of distributed leadership and shared responsibility across multiple participants in an education system that is designed to serve the needs of children. Overlap is noted among the various leadership standards and core competencies that are referenced in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) and Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards, and the individual state standards or competencies. State and national standards are often vague and lack context and site specificity. National standards and state competency areas, however, are deemed useful as a way to foster agreement on what is most important for schools to accomplish and help to align the definitions of practice for administrators (and teachers) across schools, districts, and state licensing agencies.

Accountability and Access

Participants wanted to know more about the preparation programs beyond local recognition-they wanted to be able to begin to access program quality when making

hiring decisions. In addition, a significant minority of participants argued for alternative pathways to the principalship.

Our research in Minnesota led us to four recommendations submitted to the Minnesota Board of School Administrators:

1. Revise the 60 credit hour rule to allow 36 credit hour principal preparation programs. Use additional needed hours (may be less than 60) in stages or tiesr where practicing administrators are applying new learning on the job.
2. Review current state standards to ensure alignment with new ELCC Standards.
3. As part of reporting on licensure, require that the licensing agency collect and report on multiple indicators of program performances including: level of participation and subscription, faculty expertise, completion and placement rates, location placements after 1 and 5 years, and other formative and summative assessments in use.
4. Maintain a small alternative pathway to attend to local needs and provide added flexibility without bypassing established routes.

Professional Development and Tiered Licensure

Aspiring principals are rarely able to learn all that takes place in the job before becoming a practicing principal. After a principal completes a preparation program, obtains certification or licensure, and is hired in a principal role, continued active learning becomes part of the process of performing the job of principal. Professional development and participation in advanced learning such as the education doctorate are needed to equip principals with on-going and significant learning that advance education practice.

Need for a System of Coordinated Professional Development

The principals interviewed said that coordinated practices related to continued professional development were sorely needed. Principals felt isolated and on their own to find the kinds of training needed to be more effective on the job. The principals from the metro areas appeared to have more opportunities and funding for professional development opportunities than rural principals. As a group, the principals were not aware of on-going collaborative efforts among school districts, universities, agencies, or professional associations, to meet their professional development needs. They were particularly critical of a "one size fits all" mentality of some of the professional development that they had experienced. The principals expressed needs related to specific skills associated with leading schools with diverse student population, working in communities in which languages other than English were spoken at home, and for the other challenges raised by diversity, such as increasing social cohesion among students in schools.

Tensions Between the Immediate and Long-Term Needs

Professional development provides principals with the opportunities to continue to learn and apply new learning on the job. While principals often report their best learning takes place on the job, there are a number of obstacles that can occur in realizing professional

development experiences. Hectic schedules bias principals towards "solution-oriented learning" and prioritizes the needs of immediate problems. Given this challenge to balance immediate learning and application that takes place in response to specific problems or issues with the long-term development of school leadership and practice, principals are challenged to balance professional development opportunities with short and long-term emphasis. Given expectations for accountability and current mandates, the challenge is to find ways to engage in professional development that involves reflection, innovation, and risk-taking actions, beyond compliance. As a result, initiatives to expand professional development opportunities for principals must overcome some of the challenges of the job that emphasize immediacy over longevity.

Through professional development programs and other learning initiatives, principals are able to engage in active learning that strengthens their ability to respond to the needs of the job of principal beyond what is learned in a preparation program. Active learning takes place through the everyday experiences of being a principal, while structured professional development programs aim to formalize active learning and therefore may differ depending on the school district and even the school. Professional development may also be organized differently depending on the connection such programming has to the renewing of licensure, systems of evaluation, and even the degree to which districts support or prescribe specific professional development activities. More specifically, states are increasingly supporting the continuation of learning and professional development in general, as well as through policies encompassed in certification and licensure.

Our research on tiered licensure and professional development resulted in multiple recommendations being made, all of which document the need for collaboration among the various groups responsible for the education, licensing, and professional development of principals;

1. Create a working body of stakeholders, i.e., State Department of Education and state professional organization affiliates, and University professors to jointly design and implement long-term aspiring administrator workshops, continuing professional development programs, mentoring programs, academies, etc.
2. Provide school district mentors who collaborate with university programs and professional organizations in order to support individuals in the first year of their administrative career.
3. Provide support to principals in creating school based administrative teams in order to develop distributive leadership and lesson the stress on beginning principals.
4. Develop tiered licensing pathways to honor multiple ways for achieving and demonstrating expertise.

Conclusion

Our research in Minnesota on the principal pipeline indicates variation in the views of principals themselves and among the various education stakeholders and constituent groups in Minnesota. Changing conditions at the local, state, and national levels have made the job requirements of the principal more challenging and difficult to place

within a single frame. Shifting demographics, increased demands on schools, resource constraints, and new accountability mandates, have also made the principal's job more complex, prompting considerations for how to improve the performances of principals and even whether or not talented individuals want to enter the profession in the first place. In spite of these concerns and qualifications, we feel that a systemic approach to principal pipeline development, supported from the bottom up, emerged from the data which combine insights taken from analyzing local contexts, respondent interviews, and literature review on research and practice. This research suggests that professional groups and state policy makers in all states should continue the work of further developing a coherent set of policies developed out of respect for the perspectives of current educational leaders and stakeholders, rather than imposed from above. This will be an arduous undertaking, but one much more likely to highlight the successes and challenges of dedicated professionals who all too often and easily are called to task by "reformers" far removed from the lived experiences of school leaders and the people who help to support and prepare them (Spring, 2011). The difficult and collaborative work of creating pathways for a lifetime of performance for school principals has begun and deserves continuing support by multiple researchers and practitioners.

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Learning To Lead: The Professional Development Needs Of Assistant Principals

This manuscript has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration as a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of school administration and K-12 education.

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the professional development needs of assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region in preparation for the launch of the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network, a unique and innovative program to support their leadership development. Using the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 as the framework for our study, survey data revealed professional development needs in all standards. Findings from the open-ended question revealed professional development needs in specific areas such as school finance/budgeting, time management/work-life balance, school culture, instructional leadership, and special education. This paper is intended to help guide the work of professors of educational leadership and those charged with supporting the ongoing development of assistant principals.

NCPEA Education Leadership Review, Vol. 15, No. 2– October 2014
ISSN: 1532-0723 © 2014 National Council of Professors of Educational Administration

Introduction

> The assistant principal lives with the knowledge that daily work will include problems that are never solved, work that is never complete, joys that are never noticed, and needs that are seldom acknowledged. Everyone needs to share the joys and grouse about the problems with others who understand. (Marshall, 1992, p. 99)

Over twenty years ago, Catherine Marshall (1992) wrote the first book focusing specifically on the position of the assistant principal, including the roles they play, the processes of their selection and socialization, and the problems and opportunities they encounter. In particular, the book drew attention to many of the unique issues facing assistant principals at that time: "the issue of the person in the entry-level position, the 'mop-up' nature of the tasks, dependency on the principal, and the particular ambiguities, especially in an era with reform called 'accountability,' 'teacher empowerment,' and 'school-site management'" (Marshall, 1992, p. vii). Ultimately, the book conveyed the need to better understand and improve the assistant principal's role and imagines ways to reconceptualize school leadership.

While many of the issues that Marshall wrote about still hold true today, the job roles and expectations of current era assistant principals have added layers of stress and pressure related to countless national, state, and local mandates not present twenty years ago. Common core standards, new teacher and principal evaluation systems, high-stakes student testing, school safety concerns, and the never-ending list of unfunded "mandates" are but a few of such stresses that face current era school leaders. For example, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) has required schools to administer challenging annual state standardized tests to ensure that *all* students, regardless of poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency, make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in test scores. This year, the law requires that every child in grades 3-8 must test "on" grade level in reading and mathematics. Schools that fail to make AYP will be subject to corrective action and/or restructuring.

Assistant principals can play a pivotal role in responding to the realities of current era school reform by taking a more central role in assuming some of these responsibilities (Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski, 2012). Unfortunately, many assistant principals feel unprepared for their current role (Busch, MacNeil, & Baraniuk, 2012), thereby indicating a need for meaningful and relevant professional development. However, there are few professional development programs available specifically focusing on the needs of assistant principals, and in fact, "assistant principals are rarely afforded the breadth of professional development opportunities that teachers and principals receive" (Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012, p. 267).

In order to address this problem locally, faculty members in the Educational Leadership program at Northern Kentucky University decided to partner with local school leaders to develop and implement the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network (APN), a new and innovative professional development

network to support and develop assistant principals in the eighteen area school districts in northern Kentucky as they prepare to become principals. Prior to the development of this network, we needed to better understand the unique professional development needs of the 104 assistant principals in our region.

Purpose

The purpose of our study was to investigate the professional development needs of assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region as we prepared to initiate the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network (APN), a unique and innovative program to support their leadership development. The following research question guided our study: What are the current professional development needs of the assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region?

Framework

Because the purpose of our study was to investigate the professional development needs of assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region as we prepared to initiate the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network (APN), our framework came from the Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008). According to the Council of Chief State School Officers (2008), the ISLLC 2008 standards "provide high-level guidance and insight about the traits, functions of work, and responsibilities" (p. 5) required of school leaders. Additionally, the standards "can set parameters for developing professional development and evaluation systems that can readily facilitate performance growth of all education leaders" (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008, p. 16). In short, ISLLC 2008 served as the framework of our work as we aimed to better understand the professional development needs of the assistant principals in northern Kentucky.

Review of Literature

Research indicates that school leadership is fundamental in influencing school effectiveness (Heck & Hallinger, 2009) and that principals who focus on teaching and learning greatly influence student performance (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Meyerson, 2005; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Unfortunately, a large number of principals are expected to leave the profession or retire in the next few years and finding suitable replacements may be difficult (Maddern, 2009) making recruitment a major challenge. Recruiting assistant principals is often times a viable option but many principals do not think of their "assistants" as potential "principals" (Mertz, 2006) and "some districts do better than others at preparing internal candidates for the job" (Doyle & Locke, 2014, p. 5). Assistant principals often have different job responsibilities and when their principals retire or move to district office positions, they have to make the transition to principal in a short period of time and with little support. And as many school leaders who have served as assistant principals know, "the assistant principalship is a unique entity because

the position lacks a precise job description yet entails numerous tasks to ensure the success of a school. Although the assistant principal is a critical leader in schools, the position is underutilized and under-researched" (Oleszewski et al., 2012, p. 264).

In this review, we examined the types of professional development that assistant principals need as well as programs that have been developed to help them advance to the principalship. As mentioned in the introduction, Catherine Marshall (1992) wrote the first book focusing specifically on the position of the assistant principal, including roles they play, the processes of their selection and socialization, and the problems and opportunities they encounter. Accordingly, she noted that assistant principals need "training and support to enable them to manage the tasks and responsibilities faced in the position such as discipline, scheduling, and extracurricular activities. But beyond this, assistant principals need to be prepared to face the *fundamental dilemmas* in administration" (1992, p. 89). As one strategy for professional development, she suggested that university and professional associations need to work collaboratively to develop training programs for assistant principals. She also proposed that by "actively identifying, recruiting, and supporting individuals as they *enter* administrative positions, universities and professional associations can most strongly affect the way administrators define their roles and leadership styles" (1992, p. 91). Further, she indicated that at this stage of their careers, assistant principals "may be shocked at the overwhelming demands on administrators and may be searching desperately for management techniques" (1992, p. 91).

Skill Development of Assistant Principals

Unfortunately, according to a recent review of literature on the development of assistant principals, there are few professional development programs for this group of administrators (Oleszewski et al., 2012). One of the areas that assistant principals often seek support for, however, is in the area of deepening their educational leadership content knowledge and skill development. According to Oliver (2005), teacher supervision and personnel matters ranked first for assistant principals in California wanting to participate in professional development activities. Additionally, they desired development in the areas of school finance, conflict management, school law, and curriculum/instruction (Oliver, 2005). In a similar study, assistant principals in Indiana felt they needed more training in the areas of technology and special education (Abebe, Lindsey, Bonner, & Heck, 2010).

In exploring the job realities of assistant principals in South Texas, Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012) found that assistant principals' challenges "pertain to workload and task management, conflicts with adults and students, and curriculum and instruction issues" (2012, p. 92). In particular, novice and experienced assistant principals "did not feel ready to work with people (particularly when conflicts arose), did not understand certain job expectations (especially regarding curriculum and instruction), and did not possess the organizational and managerial skills needed to accomplish tasks" (2012, p. 109).

Preparing for the Principalship

In recent years, some national educational leadership organizations have started focusing on creating specialized programs for assistant principals. For example, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) created the NASSP National Assistant Principal (AP) Leadership Community in order to support the professional development needs of secondary school principals. This special community "focuses on enhancing assistant principals' job performance and their preparation for the principalship" (National Association of Secondary School Principals, 2014, para. 2).

Additionally, some large school districts across the United States offer training and development for their own assistant principals. For example, the Miami-Dade County Public Schools developed the Assistant Principal Induction Academy in order to support new assistant principals in their district. The vision of this program is that "novice assistant principals will have a network of support as they lead their schools to heightened achievement, understand how their work connects to that of the District, and develop the skills necessary to efficiently recognize and improve teacher effectiveness" (Miami-Dade County Schools, 2014, para. 2).

Similar to the Assistant Principal Induction Academy in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools, assistant principals in New York City have an opportunity to participate in The Advanced Leadership Program for Assistant Principals. The purpose of this program is to "build capacity within the existing pool of assistant principals aspiring to principalship" (Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011, p. 51). Designed as a yearlong learning experience, assistant principals have the opportunity to "hone existing skills and explore the complex nature of decision making and authentic leadership required for the principalship" (Drago-Severson & Aravena, 2011, p. 51). The experience includes advanced leadership seminars, mentoring by New York City principals, networking and coaching buddies, and optional after-school sessions.

The Lead in Denver (2014) program in the Denver Public Schools (DPS), in partnership with the Wallace Foundation, has established a strong commitment to developing their assistant principals through programs like their School Leadership Framework and intensive pathway programs. DPS's Lead in Denver program helps assistant principals

> gain the tools, resources and support necessary to refine your craft as a current principal or assistant principal, or to pursue the new challenge of school leadership. Lead in Denver will sharpen your passion and talent, resulting in a greater ability to run excellent schools and ensure that every student succeeds. (Denver Public Schools, 2014, para. 1)

It is clear that assistant principals desire professional development related to developing their content knowledge and skills and that such learning is necessary throughout their careers as educational leaders. Unfortunately, many assistant principals who do not have access to specialized training from national

organizations for any number of reasons, or do not work in large districts that offer support for assistant principals, lack access to the necessary ongoing professional development needed to help them grow as educational leaders. In this review, we examined the types of professional development that assistant principals need as well as programs that have been developed to help them advance to the principalship. In the following sections, we explain the details of our study, including method, data analysis, findings, and discussion.

Method

As stated previously, we surveyed assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region in order to better understand their professional development needs. It was our intent to use these data as the starting point in the development of the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals Network (APN), a new professional development opportunity to support local school leaders as they prepare to become principals. We made a decision to use a survey design in order to gather input from as many assistant principals in our region as possible prior to the development of the APN.

For the purposes of this study, we developed a 5-point Likert-scale survey instrument using the 31 functions from ISLLC 2008, the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards (see Appendix). The online survey, administered on Surveymonkey.com, required assistant principals to rate the "importance" of each of the 31 functions and their "actual performance or proficiency" on each item. The gap or difference between importance and proficiency, what we call "professional development needs," was analyzed and then used to describe possible professional development areas for the assistant principals. We included one open-ended question at the end of the survey requesting participants to list any knowledge, skills, or topics that they would like to further develop as education leaders.

Participants

At the time of the study, there were 104 assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region. Of these school leaders, 73 granted consent to participate in the study and 66 successfully completed the survey (63% response rate). Demographic characteristics were collected regarding their length of service (1-3, 4-6, 7-9, or 10 or more years) the school level where they work (elementary, middle, or high), the district type (urban, suburban, or rural), and the year they received school leadership certification. The group included 20 assistant principals with 1-3 years of service, 25 with 4-6 years of service, 11 with 7-9 years of service, and 10 with 10 or more years of service; 28 elementary school leaders, 12 middle school leaders, 21 high school leaders, and 5 school leaders representing a different grade configuration; and 14 participants serve schools that are urban, 39 suburban, and 13 rural. Finally, the average administrative certification year for this group of participants was 2004, the median was 2004, and the mode was 2005.

Data Analysis

Given that the design of our study failed to meet the assumptions of a paired-samples *t*-test, we made a decision to use the non-parametric Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test at an alpha level of significance of 0.05. The Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test requires that each of the subjects has two interval scores where "a difference score is computed for each subject (or pair of matched subjects) by subtracting a subject's score in Condition 2 from his score in Condition 1" (Sheskin, 2004, p. 609). The Wilcoxon evaluates whether or not the median of the difference scores equals zero. In our study, we were interested in determining the professional development needs of the participants by examining whether there was a difference between how they value the "importance" of the educational leadership functions and their "actual performance or proficiency." We hypothesized that assistant principals would rate the "importance" of each of the educational leadership elements higher than their "performance or proficiency" on each of the items in the survey.

Findings

A Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test with an alpha level of significance of 0.05 was conducted to evaluate how assistant principals' rated the "importance" of each of the leadership statements relative to their "actual performance or proficiency" in each of the educational leadership functions. The results indicated a significant difference on all of the thirty-one items. For example, assistant principals' rated the "importance" of "Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program" (Survey Element 7) higher than their "actual performance or proficiency," z=-6.033, p=.000. As another example, they rated the "importance" of "Supervise instruction" (Survey Element 9) higher than their "actual performance or proficiency," z=-5.938, p=.000. As a final example, they rated the "importance" of "Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources" (Survey Element 16) higher than their "actual performance or proficiency," z=-6.255, p=.000. This pattern occurred for each of the 31 Survey Elements and in every case, there was a statistically significant difference in their ratings between the "importance" and their "actual performance or proficiency" as indicated in Table 1. On all elements, "importance" was rated higher than "actual performance or proficiency" (see Table 2).

Table 1
Results of Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test

Survey Element	*z-score*	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission	-5.432	.000*
2. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning	-5.429	.000*
3. Create and implement plans to achieve goals	-4.977	000*
4. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement	-5.548	000*
5. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans	-5.765	000*
6. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations	-5.831	000*
7. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program	-6.033	000*
8. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students	-5.575	000*
9. Supervise instruction	-5.938	000*
10. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress	-5.866	000*
11. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff	-6.125	000*
12. Maximize time spent on quality instruction	-6.515	000*
13. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning	-5.772	000*
14. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program	-5.841	000*
15. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems	-5.331	000*
16. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources	-6.255	000*
17. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff	-4.413	000*
18. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership	-5.763	000*
19. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning	-6.155	000*
20. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment	-6.393	000*
21. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources	-5.577	000*
22. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	-5.564	000*
23. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners	-6.104	000*
24. Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success	-6.209	000*
25. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior	-3.283	000*
26. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity	-4.326	000*
27. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making	-4.917	000*
28. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling	-5.378	000*
29. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers	-4.917	000*
30. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning	-6.043	000*
31. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies	-6.273	000*

*$p < .05$.

Table 2
Mean Scores of Survey Elements

Survey Element	Importance	Proficiency
1. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission	4.59	3.97
2. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning	4.74	4.12
3. Create and implement plans to achieve goals	4.64	4.11
4. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement	4.71	4.05
5. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans	4.65	3.95
6. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations	4.83	4.14
7. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program	4.70	3.79
8. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students	4.66	4.00
9. Supervise instruction	4.74	3.85
10. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress	4.52	3.74
11. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff	4.62	3.71
12. Maximize time spent on quality instruction	4.86	3.89
13. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning	4.45	3.56
14. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program	4.74	3.89
15. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems	4.34	3.63
16. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources	4.41	3.29
17. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff	4.92	4.58
18. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership	4.65	3.79
19. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning	4.79	3.88
20. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment	4.67	3.77
21. Promote understanding, appreciation, & use of the community's diverse cultural, social, & intellectual resources	4.21	3.38
22. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers	4.82	4.25
23. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners	4.42	3.39
24. Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success	4.76	3.88
25. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior	4.58	4.29
26. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity	4.36	3.95
27. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making	4.67	4.14
28. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling	4.50	3.89
29. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers	4.48	3.98
30. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning	4.00	2.88
31. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies	4.35	3.41

As mentioned previously, assistant principals were asked to respond to one open-ended statement at the end of the survey. The statement asked them to "list any knowledge, skills, or topics that you need to further develop before assuming the role of principal." While 66 participants completed the Likert-scale survey items, only 44 added open-ended comments to this last question. We manually sorted and categorized these responses according to topic. The most frequently listed topic was school finance, particularly as related to school budget issues. Fourteen assistant principals listed this as an important topic to develop prior to becoming principals. Time management/work-life balance and creating a culture of collaboration were next, each being listed five times. Instructional leadership and supervision along with curriculum were also important (see Table 3).

Table 3
Professional Development Topics Requested by Assistant Principals

Professional Development Topic	Frequency	Percentage
School finance/budget	14	32%
Time management/work-life balance	5	11%
Creating a culture of collaboration	5	11%
Instructional leadership and supervision	4	9%
Special education	3	7%
Curriculum	2	4%
Facilities management	2	4%
Data analysis	2	4%
Discipline	2	4%
Technology leadership	1	2%
Scheduling	1	2%
Anticipating emerging trends	1	2%
Community involvement	1	2%

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the professional development needs of assistant principals in the northern Kentucky region and we set out to answer the following research question: What are the current professional development needs of northern Kentucky assistant principals? We hypothesized that assistant principals would rate the "importance" of the educational leadership elements higher than their "actual performance" on each of the items in the survey. Evidence clearly indicates that assistant principals highly value the "importance" of each of the 31 survey elements related to educational leadership. Additionally, they rated their "actual performance" significantly lower on each item. We believe that the gaps between "importance" and "actual proficiency" indicate areas for professional growth, in this case representing all 31 statements. As stated in the method section, the 31 survey elements are the actual functions of ISLLC 2008 and represent the standards directly. Due to the fact that over half of our participants had less than six years of administrative leadership experience, they may have had limited

opportunities to fully develop their skills in all of these areas. Additionally, many assistant principals may experience an overload of the stereotypical three Bs – "books, behinds, and buses," thereby potentially limiting their involvement and development in other school leadership roles and functions. Further, most of the participants indicated that their administrative certification was around 2004 (the median was 2004, and the mode was 2005). We know anecdotally that many graduates of principal preparation programs in our region return to the classroom for a period of time before taking on their first administrative position. Because it has been ten years since initial administrative certification for many of these assistant principals, they may have had limited professional development in educational leadership functions measured in this survey.

Findings from the open-ended question revealed professional development needs in specific areas such as school finance/budgeting, time management/work-life balance, school culture, instructional leadership, and special education. The area of school finance, the most frequently reported professional development need, is a topic that many assistant principals in this study may feel unprepared to handle because they typically have little experience with school budgets and related accounting procedures. For example, school principals in Kentucky are required to comply with "Redbook," the Kentucky Administrative Regulations *Accounting Procedures for Kentucky School Activity Funds* (2008). "Redbook" outlines the policies and procedure that principals must comply with as they account for all school activity funds. Although "Redbook" policies and procedures are included within the curriculum of most school finance courses in Kentucky, it is possible that the topic was too abstract at the time the assistant principals took the course, that their principal mentors share too little of the school budgeting and accounting responsibilities, or that the anxiety of facing the realities of the "Redbook" guidelines as new principals is generating the strong response in this area.

It is clear to us that this group of assistant principals could benefit from professional development in all of the areas as indicated in these findings. While we believe that some of the findings may be unique to this particular group of principals, many of the findings align closely with research that has been conducted in other parts of the country. For example, while we believe that assistant principals in Kentucky are challenged by Kentucky Administrative Regulations related to issues of school finance, according to Oliver (2005), assistant principals in California also indicated a need for professional development in a variety of areas including school finance. While finance was not their top priority, they indicated professional development needs in teacher supervision and personnel matters, curriculum and instruction, scheduling, law, conflict management, communication, and discipline to name a few. Similarly, Barnett, Shoho, and Oleszewski (2012) found that the job realities of assistant principals in South Texas had professional challenges in conflict management, curriculum and instruction, and workload/task management. Further, Abebe et al. (2010) found that assistant principals in Indiana felt they needed more training in the areas of special education and technology. All of these areas were found to be significant within our findings and could point to a trend in understanding the professional development needs of assistant principals across other regions and states.

Our findings have helped us better understand the professional development needs of the assistant principals in northern Kentucky and as a result, we offer three implications related to research and practice. The first relates to our roles as professors of educational leadership. We recommend educational leadership programs or other related professional organizations begin to offer more professional development to assistant principals targeting their specialized needs. After we completed the analysis from this study, our faculty team, in conjunction with selected principals and administrators, used the data to develop the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network (APN), a new effort to support local school leaders through a variety of professional development opportunities as they prepare to become principals. According to Marshall (1992), "by actively identifying, recruiting, and supporting individuals as they *enter* administrative positions, universities and professional associations can most strongly affect the way administrators define their roles and leadership styles" (p. 91). We planned a series of monthly professional development opportunities on topics such as school finance, time management, issues of school culture, instructional leadership, and special education in online, hybrid and face-to-face formats. Additionally, an online community was established to allow participants to network, discuss, share ideas, pose questions, connect with experts, find resources, etc. – a community that we hope will span far beyond the scope of this project. These seminars have been extremely popular with high participation rates. For those who were unable to attend, sessions were recorded and posted in an online organization that was created to facilitate communication. At the end of each session, assistant principals completed evaluations to provide feedback and offer suggestions for future sessions. During the summer, the assistant principals were invited to attend an innovative two-day academy which included panels of expert leaders such as principals, superintendents, finance officers, and others. It is our hope that the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network will serve as ongoing leadership support as these future principals prepare for their new roles and responsibilities. While it is exciting to note that professional development opportunities are happening in some of our large urban districts like Denver, Miami-Date, and New York City, we believe that additional opportunities need to occur elsewhere and the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network could serve as an example for others to replicate within their service regions.

The second implication relates to using standards as a framework for professional growth. Because we used ISLLC 2008 as the framework for our survey, we believe that standards can indeed make a difference and influence our practice. According to Oliver (2005), "ISLLC and state standards offer excellent frameworks within which to design and monitor such professional development activities to ensure that they produce effective instructional leaders" (p. 99). As indicated by Council of Chief State School Officers (2008), these standards "can set parameters for professional development and evaluation systems that can readily facilitate performance growth of all education leaders" (p. 16). Unfortunately, although most states have adopted the ISLLC standards, "support and evaluation systems for principals do not typically map back to these standards" (Sun, 2011, p. 6). In our case, we set out to intentionally utilize the ISLLC 2008 standards and as a result, we were able to better understand the professional development need of the assistant principals in our region at this particular point in time. Leadership preparation programs in other regions or states should indeed use the standards as a basis for developing professional development for assistant principals in

areas such as school finance/budgeting, time management/work-life balance, school culture, instructional leadership, and special education.

The third implication relates to future research. Because research on assistant principals is still somewhat limited, we recommend further work needs to be done to address their unique needs, ongoing professional development, and career advancement. For example, we would recommend implementing a longitudinal approach to better understand assistant principals' needs and how they may change over time, especially once they become principals. Additionally, we would recommend the use of a 360° process (Allen, Wasicsko, & Chirichello, 2014) in order to give assistant principals feedback from multiple perspectives and possibly minimizing any gap between their self-perceptions and how others see them. After gathering multiple inputs, assistant principals should also be encouraged to develop professional growth plans to begin to address areas targeted for growth as well as strength areas. Further, professors of educational leadership in other states or regions could replicate this study in order to explore the professional development needs of the assistant principals within their region. Even though contextual factors may differ, we believe that understanding and then providing ongoing quality professional development for assistant principals is imperative. This is particularly critical for assistant principals who serve in districts that do not offer opportunities like the programs in Denver, New York, or Miami.

In addition to these three implications, we propose the following questions to guide future research:

1. Would similar findings apply on a state, national, or international level?
2. Could interviews or focus groups provide qualitative data to reveal further information regarding assistant principals' professional development needs?
3. Would a longitudinal approach reveal useful information regarding how professional development needs change over time, especially once they become principals.
4. How are individual schools/districts or other regions in Kentucky (or another state), the United States, or internationally engaging assistant principals in professional development?

Limitations

Throughout the development and implementation of this study, we took safeguards to minimize two potential limitations. The first limitation concerns generalizability. Because this study took place within the northern Kentucky region of the United States, similar results may not be produced within other regions, other states, or internationally. It would be beneficial to conduct a similar study inclusive of a stratified sample of assistant principals from across Kentucky (or another state), across the United States, or internationally.

The second limitation deals with a measurement issue. As detailed in the method section, data were collected from assistant principals through self-reports. We are well aware that the assistant principals may not give honest answers or that some may inflate their answers because they believe their skill sets as educational leaders are better than what they really are. We also understood that "even when respondents are doing their best to be forthright and insightful, their self-reports

are subject to various sources of inaccuracy" (Paulhus & Vazire, 2009, p. 228). Some researchers supplement self-reported data with observational data or data from multiple perspectives if they are available. To minimize this limitation, our informed consent explained clearly that participation in the research was voluntary and that all data would be confidential and all reports would be completely anonymous. As noted in the previous discussion section, we have recommended the use of a 360° process to further minimize this concern in the future.

Conclusion

Given the scarcity of research on the professional development needs of assistant principals, this study will contribute to the knowledge base concerning how we might more effectively design professional development programming and networking opportunities for these educational leaders. It is our hope that through such contributions, "the assistant principalship can continue to develop as an integral member of an administrative team that influences school effectiveness and academic performance and is prepared to move into the principalship with confidence" (Oleszewski et al., 2012).
Additionally, we hope that the assistant principals who have participated in the Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network, continue to "share the joys and grouse about the problems with others who understand" (Marshall, 1992, p. 99).

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Appendix

NKU NORTHERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

Northern Kentucky Assistant Principals' Network-Survey

Instructions: In the **left** hand column, rate the "**importance**" of the statements relative to what principals should know and be able to do as educational leaders. In the right hand column, rate your current "**actual performance or proficiency**" on each of the statements in the area of educational leadership.

Length of service as an assistant principal: ❑ 1-3 years ❑ 4-6 years ❑ 7-9 years ❑ 10 or more years
School level: ❑ Elementary ❑ Middle ❑ High (check all that apply)
District type: ❑ Urban ❑ Suburban ❑ Rural
*What year did you complete principal certification?*_____

IMPORTANCE						ACTUAL PROFICIENCY				
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important		Very Weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	Very Strong
1	2	3	4	5	**1. Collaboratively develop and implement a shared vision and mission**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**2. Collect and use data to identify goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and promote organizational learning**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**3. Create and implement plans to achieve goals**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**4. Promote continuous and sustainable improvement**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**5. Monitor and evaluate progress and revise plans**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**6. Nurture and sustain a culture of collaboration, trust, learning, and high expectations**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**7. Create a comprehensive, rigorous, and coherent curricular program**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**8. Create a personalized and motivating learning environment for students**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**9. Supervise instruction**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**10. Develop assessment and accountability systems to monitor student progress**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**11. Develop the instructional and leadership capacity of staff**	1	2	3	4	5

IMPORTANCE						ACTUAL PROFICIENCY				
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important		Very Weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	very Strong
1	2	3	4	5	**12. Maximize time spent on quality instruction**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**13. Promote the use of the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**14. Monitor and evaluate the impact of the instructional program**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**15. Monitor and evaluate the management and operational systems**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**16. Obtain, allocate, align, and efficiently utilize human, fiscal, and technological resources**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**17. Promote and protect the welfare and safety of students and staff**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**18. Develop the capacity for distributed leadership**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**19. Ensure teacher and organizational time is focused to support quality instruction and student learning**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**20. Collect and analyze data and information pertinent to the educational environment**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**21. Promote understanding, appreciation, and use of the community's diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**22. Build and sustain positive relationships with families and caregivers**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**23. Build and sustain productive relationships with community partners**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**24. Ensure a system of accountability for every student's academic and social success**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**25. Model principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**26. Safeguard the values of democracy, equity, and diversity**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**27. Consider and evaluate the potential moral and legal consequences of decision-making**	1	2	3	4	5

IMPORTANCE						ACTUAL PROFICIENCY				
Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neutral	Important	Very Important		Very Weak	Weak	Neutral	Strong	very Strong
1	2	3	4	5	**28. Promote social justice and ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**29. Advocate for children, families, and caregivers**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**30. Act to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning**	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	**31. Assess, analyze, and anticipate emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt leadership strategies**	1	2	3	4	5
					32. Please list below any knowledge, skills, or topics that you need to further develop before assuming the role of principal.					
					•					
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Analysis of the Reliability and Validity of a Mentor's Assessment for Principal Internships

This manuscript has been peer-reviewed, accepted, and endorsed by the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration as a significant contribution to the scholarship and practice of school administration and K-12 education.

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In this study, researchers analyzed the reliability and validity of the mentor's assessment for principal internships at a university in the Southeast region of the United States. The results of the study yielded how trustworthy and dependable the instrument is and the effectiveness of the instrument in the current principal preparation program. Study results were analyzed using reliability requirements for instruments utilized in obtaining national accreditation and to provide suggestions for program improvement. The instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts from areas outside of the research population to establish content and face validity. Internal consistency and reliability were measured using Cronbach's alpha. A total of 229 candidate internship scores were used. The reliability test resulted in an overall alpha of .949. The results obtained in this study indicate the instrument has a very high level of validity as well as reliability.

ISSN: 1532-0723 © 2014 National Council of Professors of Educational Administration

Even after decades of use, designing and implementing worthwhile administrative internships remains a work in progress (Lehman, 2013).

National accreditation for educational leadership preparation programs has recently been approved by the United States Department of Education (USDOE) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEV) for one accreditor, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). One pathway for accreditation under CAEP is the *Inquiry Brief (IB)*. Although standards and principles of quality are key elements in the *IB*, all assessments adopted must be valid and reliable interpretations of the evidence (Teacher Education Accreditation Council, 2012). One instrument utilized by a university in the Southeast region of the United States to evaluate the principal internship is the Principal Internship Mentor's Assessment (PIMA). This study will address reliability and validity for the PIMA.

Reliability measures are designed to yield confidence that an assessment is trustworthy and dependable indicating to what degree the assessment measures what it is designed to measure. There is a difference in the relationship between reliability and validity. Arcy, Jacobs, Razavieh, and Sorensen (2006) posited that, "A measuring instrument can be reliable without being valid; but it could not be valid unless it is first reliable" (p. 256). Arcy, et. al., provides as an example that intelligence may be studied by determining the circumference of the head. Consistency in the measurements of the head from time to time may be very similar (reliable), but doing this would not yield valid inferences about intelligence because there is no correlation of measurements of the head with any other criteria of intelligence or theory of intelligence. The result is very reliable scores over time but not a sufficient condition for valid interpretation of test scores.

Scores for this study are derived from one internship assessment (PIMA) aligned with common elements from the six Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards. Williams and Alawiye (2014) reported that, "there is a huge increase in adopting the ISLLC Standards in higher education as a pre-requisite for new leaders in the school system" (p. 2). Consistency in measuring elements of the ISLLC Standards would yield inferences about principal preparation because of the correlation between the ISLLC Standards and the principal internship assessment, $r=0.872$, $n=59$, $p=0.01$ (Koonce and Causey, 2011).

Definition of Terms

Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. If we attain the same result repeatedly the measure is considered reliable. For example, "if an assessment is designed to measure a trait (such as introversion), then each time the assessment is administered to a subject, the results should be approximately the same" (Cherry, 2013, p. 1). It is not possible to calculate reliability exactly, but it can be estimated in various ways.

Cronbach's Alpha

"Cronbach's alpha is a model of internal consistency reliability based on the average inter-item correlation of an instrument" (Rovai, Baker, and Ponton, 2014, p. 545).

PIMA

The instrument for measuring student success in the internship for this study is the Principal Internship Mentor's Assessment (PIMA) (Arroyo, Koonce, & Hanes, 2008). The PIMA is a 24-item Likert-type scale instrument derived from the ISLLC Standards. There are four items per standard (total of six standards) with each item rated on a 5-point scale ranging from "fails to address/no evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application" to "very specific/convincing evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application" (Hessel & Holloway, 2002, p. 24). All assessment items are taken from "Components of Professional Practice for School Leaders" (p. 27). Each sub-score on the PIMA is directly linked to a correlating ISLLC Standard.

Purpose

This study looks at one important component of a good assessment, reliability. If a measure was not consistent and produced different results every time it would not be considered and certainly would not meet rigor, as evidence for attaining national accreditation for an educational leadership preparation program. For this study, the reliability for the PIMA is investigated.

Rationale and Significance of the Study

The driving force for conducting this study is continuing national accreditation through TEAC/CAEP for a university in the Southeast region of the country. National accreditation is required by the state in order for program completers to be awarded the administration and supervision endorsement. TEAC/CAEP accredits programs, not an administrative unit of the institution such as the School of Education (SOE). Accreditation for the educational leadership preparation program within the SOE must "affirm their goal to prepare competent, caring, and qualified leaders for the schools" (TEAC, 2012, p. 28). Program faculty members collaborate on the claims made about their graduates and provide evidence to support these claims. Certain components regarding claims must address: professional knowledge; strategic decision-making; caring and effective leadership skills; learning how to learn; multicultural perspectives and accuracy; and technology.

TEAC (2012) requires faculty to provide evidence by assessing what candidates have learned. Examples of this evidence includes: (a) grades and grade point averages; (b) scores on standardized tests, for example, the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA); (c) ratings of portfolios; (d) case studies; (e) surveys, like an alumni survey; and (f) ratings by cooperating mentors (usually principals) of clinical experiences, like the principal internship. It is Item (f) that this study addressed. The principal internship is the capstone course/activity in the university leadership preparation program in this study. The assessment for the internship is mostly comprised of an instrument developed in house by the faculty. The PIMA is an example. TEAC/CAEP requires that such assessments "meet the accepted research standards for reliability and validity" (p. 30). Evidence must be sufficient, clear, and consistent. It must be supported with "local evidence about the trustworthiness, reliability, and validity of the assessment (p. 30).

The Missouri Standards for the Preparation of Educators (MoSPE) (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013) directed in their program standards that assessments be fair, valid, and reliable. Most educators assume that when they see a principal internship measure that it is fair, valid, and reliable. As the review of literature will reveal, this is

not always the case. There is little in the literature on internship assessment instrument design and often, instruments have not been established as valid and reliable by the program faculty. More studies of this nature are needed from the field to inform current and future practice.

The faculty have used the PIMA since 2006 providing mentoring principals in the field with a tool to evaluate how candidates have performed. PIMA was designed based on a review of the literature on the ISLLC Standards. The rubric for the PIMA provides a common language for assessment by the mentoring principal, university supervisor, and the intern. The PIMA is a major component for assigning a final grade for the required internship. The reliability for the PIMA has not been fully addressed.

Literature Review

In response to the standards movement, many principal preparation programs have embedded the ISLLC Standards in the curriculum to provide the necessary knowledge for effective school leadership. Knowledge of the curriculum presented in coursework alone will not suffice. The ability to apply that knowledge comes from candidates in the program successfully completing the principal internship. (Barton, 2013). This internship has been described as exposure to "situations requiring the application of acquired skills, knowledge, and problem solving strategies within authentic settings" and "higher levels of involvement on the part of interns resulting in higher perceived levels of knowledge" (p. 2). Interns themselves report that "increased involvement in leadership activities resulted in more learning" (p. 2). With national accreditation comes the requirement that programs are accountable for providing real world practice in authentic settings for student learning (Teacher Education Accreditation Council, 2012). The review of literature focused on assessment of interns as well as use of Cronbach's alpha.

Assessment of Interns

A report from the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (ND) stated that although many university leadership preparation programs have recognized the need for, "high-quality" (p. 2), they have not fully addressed "one of the most serious problems-the quality of internships" (p. 2). The report was based on a survey of 61 programs in the 16 state SREB. A key finding was that the evaluation of candidate performance during their internship "lack a high degree of rigor" (p. 6). Of those programs that participated in the survey, only 45% were considered to have internship evaluations that are rigorous, valid, and consistent. No in-depth discussion on a tool to assess the internship or validity and reliability of an assessment was found.

Are universities conducting rigorous evaluations of their candidate performances during the internship? Other than a few books that focus on the principal internship: *School Leader Internship: Developing, Monitoring, and Evaluating Your Leadership Experience* (Martin, Wright, Danzig, Flannery, & Brown, 2012); *The Standards-Based Administrative Internship: Putting the ISLLC Standards into Practice* (Hackman, Schmitt-Oliver, & Tracey, 2005); and *The School Administrator Internship Handbook: Leading, Mentoring, and Participating in the Internship Program* (Capasso & Darish, 2000), the review of literature did not produce any reliable assessments of the internship by a mentoring principal in the field. The books only provide sample assessments, mostly included in a portfolio style, with no validity or reliability measures.

SREB (ND) reported 95% of the evaluations of the principal internships are based upon portfolios. Since no samples of portfolios or their scoring rubrics were found in the literature review, it is assumed that preparation programs keep those assessments in-house, use them for grading of candidates and accrediting purposes, but do not provide copies or their own research related to these tools in principal program preparation literature. It is not possible to make a defensible argument for or against the rigor, validity, and reliability in principal internship assessment since little to no criteria or samples are available for making judgments. National accreditation for preparation programs may require more of these assessments to be reviewed and studied.

The literature produced one sample of an internship assessment and that document did not use quantifiable data in which to assess results or any measures for reliability. The Illinois Principal Preparation Program (ND) *Sample Worksheet for Candidate Mastery of the SREB Critical Success Factors and Activities* lists 13 SREB Critical Success Factors for the internship and includes a space for interns to list their internship experiences for each critical success factor. In addition, there is a space for each factor that asks the intern to, "Describe Assessment Used to Determine Proficiency". No assessment models were provided. It is assumed that this document is meant to be a template for all state leadership preparation programs to meet regulations and/or policy. It appears to leave the data-gathering instrument, which includes validation and reliability up to each program. No instruments from Illinois were found in the literature review.

Only three university programs reviewed in the literature indicated a scale for rating an intern by a mentoring principal. Texas' Lamar University's (2011) Principal Internship Supervisor Evaluation (PISE) is made up of 9 items based on the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) Standards and rated by the mentoring principal on a scale of 3=Exemplary, 2=Proficient, 1=Minimally Proficient, and 0=Unacceptable. A review of the Lamar University program documents did not reveal any measures for validity or reliability. The University of South Dakota (2014) competencies for the administrative internship were also established using the ELCC Standards and includes three assessments (mentor, university supervisor, and intern self-assessment). Although they have a formal document describing the principal internship program for a master's, specialist', and doctorate' degrees, there is no mention of validity or reliability. The instrument used for all three assessments is composed of 27 items on a four point scale: Area Needing Further Improvement; Area of Moderate Strength; Area of Significant Strength; and Not Observed/Applicable. No measures of validity or reliability were found in the Texas A&M University-Kingsville (2012) *Principal Internship Handbook* for the Mentor Summative Evaluation of Intern form. The instrument is composed of 9 items with ratings ranging from: 5=Clearly Outstanding, 4= Exceeds Expectations, 3=Meets Expectation, 2=Below Expectations and 1=Unsatisfactory.

The literature review revealed one TEAC Inquiry Brief related to teacher educator preparation. The *Montana State University* (2010) *TEAC Inquiry Brief for Teacher Education* includes 2 assignments in the internship (student teaching) that requires candidates to submit: 1) a fall evaluation from the school administrator responsible for evaluating interns as a formative measure and the same evaluation (summative) submitted in the spring at the conclusion of the internship. Based on the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) Standards, the measure used is the *Internship Performance Evaluation Instrument* (pgs. 143-149). The instrument is made up of 13 items scored on a scale of 4:1 - Unacceptable, 2 - Less Competent, 3 - Competent, and 4 - Highly Competent. The big difference is that this is an assessment for student teacher interns and not educational leadership interns. Montana State

University's Inquiry Brief noted on page 44 that the internship assessment has not been evaluated with respect to validity and reliability, thus providing some credence to the fact that many preparation programs (teacher preparation and leadership preparation) use measures that have not been determined to be valid or reliable.

Use of Cronbach's Alpha

Although a review of the literature did not produce any studies regarding reliability for principal internship assessment, Gaudrea's (2008) research provided evidence leading to a better understanding of how engagement during a principal internship relates to the readiness for school leadership. It incorporated a Cronbach alpha application. Using summated Likert scales from the National Association of Secondary School Principals Assessment Center's Skills and Behavior Indicators as a measure of readiness for school leadership an instrument (questionnaire), with scales, was designed. The questionnaire contained 38 items with ratings for 3 different responses per item. Item 1) "Domains" with ratings from 1-4 included: "Engagement in internship"; "Institutional Support for the Internship"; "Relevance of internship to school-level leadership"; and "Quality of field supervision". Item 2 "Association" with ratings 1-4 included: "very weak"; "weak"; "strong"; "very strong". Item 3 Clarity with ratings 1-3 included: "very unclear, delete"; "somewhat clear, revise"; and "clear, leave as written" (p. 50). Reliability of the three scales was assessed with Cronbach's alpha: .84, .89, and .90 respectively. Gaudrea found that all variables had an alpha greater than .80, however, "the low *N* contributed to the questionable reliability of the results" (p. 50), N - 44.

Riggs, Verdi, & Arlin (2009) also used Cronbach alphas in their study of the California Teacher Performance Assessment. The study utilized quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess if the data possess adequate psychometric properties that include internal reliability. Quantitative results included descriptive statistics regarding subject specific pedagogy, designing instruction, assessing learning, and culminating teaching experience. For internal consistency, Cronbach alphas were calculated on each set of items by task. All items were entered across all dimensions as though they were measuring a single construct. Based on this single measure approach Alphas were very high (.95 for subject specific pedagogy, .95 for Designing Instruction, .95 for Assessing Learning, and .96 for the Culminating Teaching Experience. "These values indicate that all items can be used as a measure of a single, global construct" (p. 22).

Another use of Cronbach Alpha was found in a presentation (Murphy, 2011) to the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) for building a principal evaluation system. Although not linked to internship assessment, principal evaluation assessment has been an area of change over the last few years. Murphy designed a pilot study on the evaluation of practicing principals using the Vanderbilt Assessment of Leadership in Education (VAL-ED). In providing background information regarding the VAL-ED (i.e.: the conceptual model, leadership behavior framework, core components, key processes, and support from a grant from the Wallace Foundation) the psychometric properties were reviewed that included reliability. For the 108 item-form scales, the Cronbach's Alpha was .92. Feedback from the pilot-study provided potential areas of growth for principals and key targets for professional development.

In summary, the literature is terse when addressing quantitative principal internship assessment instruments; even less (almost none) when seeking measures for reliability such as

utilizing Cronbach's alpha. This makes the current study valuable to the principal preparation field and to the program addressed in this study.

Methodology

Participants

A total of two hundred and twenty-nine (229) educational leadership internship completers participated in this research over a four year period from one university Educational Leadership Preparation Program in southeast Virginia. The participants were uncompensated and were not interviewed, tested or surveyed beyond the normal program requirements. All participants were licensed and experienced educators (minimum three years teaching experience) prior to participating in the internship. The participant group makes up a purposeful sample consisting of all students that completed the internship between September 2009 and August 2013.

Instrument

The Principal Internship Mentor's Assessment (PIMA) is a 24-item Likert scale assessment derived from the ISLLC Standards that is divided into six distinct categories. The instrument was initially developed in 2006 as a way for program faculty to evaluate student success during the principal internship experience.

There are four items per standard with each item being rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 0 – fails to address/no evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application; 1 – vague/skeletal evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application; 2 – less detail/specific evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application; 3 – detailed/specific evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application; and 4 – very specific/convincing evidence of knowledge, understanding, and/or application.

The four items per standard are taken from "Components of Professional Practice for School Leaders" (Hessel & Holloway, 2002, p. 27). The assessment reflects the 24 Components of Professional Practice for School Leaders derived directly from the ISLLC standards. Each item on the assessment is directly linked to one of the six broad ISLLC Standards. Below are the broad categories as well as the four individual items under each category raters used to evaluate graduate students during the internship experience. The stem provided for each to each item is, "please rate the intern regarding the following standard using the scale below".

<u>ISLLC Standard 1: The Vision of Learning</u>

> A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision for learning that is shared and supported by the community.

- Component 1a: Developing the Vision
- Component 1b: Communicating the Vision
- Component 1c: Implementing the Vision
- Component 1d: Monitoring and Evaluating the Vision

ISLLC Standard 2: The Culture of Teaching and Learning

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

- Component 2a: Valuing Students and Staff
- Component 2b: Developing and Sustaining the Culture
- Component 2c: Ensuring an Inclusive Culture
- Component 2d: Monitoring and Evaluating the Culture

ISLLC Standard 3: The Management of Learning

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

- Component 3a: Making Management Decisions to Ensure Successful Teaching and Learning
- Component 3b: Developing Procedures to Ensure Successful Teaching and Learning
- Component 3c: Allocating Resources to Ensure Successful Teaching and Learning
- Component 3d: Creating a Safe, Healthy Environment to Ensure Successful Teaching and Learning

ISLLC Standard 4: Relationships with the Broader Community to Foster Learning

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

- Component 4a: Understanding Community Needs
- Component 4b: Involving Members of the Community
- Component 4c: Providing Opportunities for the Community and School to Serve Each Other
- Component 4d: Understanding and Valuing Diversity

ISLLC Standard 5: Integrity, Fairness and Ethics in Learning

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

- Component 5a: Demonstrating a Personal and Professional Code of Ethics
- Component 5b: Understanding One's Impact on the School and Community
- Component 5c: Respecting the Rights and Dignity of All
- Component 5d: Inspiring Integrity and Ethical Behavior in Others

ISLLC Standard 6: The Political, Social, Economic, Legal, and Cultural Context of Learning

A school administrator is an educational leader who has the knowledge and skills to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural contexts.

- Component 6a: Operating Schools on Behalf of Students and Families
- Component 6b: Communicating Changes in Environment to Stakeholders
- Component 6c: Working Within Policies, Laws, and Regulations
- Component 6d: Communicating with Decision-Makers Outside the School Community

Data Collection and Statistical Analysis

Data Collection

Data was collected through the mentoring principals' completion of the Principal Internship Mentor's Assessment (PIMA) for each graduate student completing the principal internship. The PIMA assessment was administered online using SurveyMonkey™. The final date for collection of data was August 31, 2013. Data was then organized into an Excel spreadsheet and entered into the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS).

Validity

After the initial development of the PIMA assessment in 2006, the assessment was pilot-tested in the 2006-2007 academic year with four mentoring principals and internship students. The feedback from the pilot testing was reviewed, and adjustments to the instrument were made. The major adjustments were to shorten the length of the statements and overall appearance in formatting the items. The content of each item was approved. The items and the instrument were next reviewed for content validity by the program faculty as part of the continuous improvement plan for the program in the fall of 2008. Feedback from the faculty resulted in additional adjustments to the instrument. One adjustment was to use less verbiage and link all items to a common repeated theme. The more time principals spent on the instrument the less time they would devote to completing the assessment. In addition, the whole look of the instrument was streamlined.

During the summer of 2009 an educational focus group was formed in order to provide feedback on the instrument, and help further establish content validity. The Educational Focus Group (Cannizzaro, 2007) provided feedback on the form and confirmed its content validity since participants were practicing experts in the field. To address inter-rater reliability, 4 sets of two raters used the form and discussed the outcomes in the Focus Group and the four teams of practitioners rated an intern similarly (Cannizzaro, 2007). Subjective scoring (Inter-rater-reliability/consistency between tests) is helped when usable guidelines for scoring are developed such as the scoring rubric for the PIMA.

Reliability

Rovai, et. al. (2012) recommended measuring internal consistency and reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Each of the six distinct categories based on the ISLLC Standards were individually tested for reliability based on the responses to the four sub-questions under each standard. Then the entire response set was also tested to determine overall reliability. Reliability tests resulting in an alpha of .7 are generally accepted as having high reliability (Rovai, Baker & Ponton, 2012, p. 385). Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient generally ranges between 0 and 1. However, there is actually no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0 the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale. George and Mallery (2003) provide the following rules of thumb: "_ > .9 – Excellent, _ > .8 – Good, _ > .7 – Acceptable, _ > .6 – Questionable, _ > .5 – Poor, and_ < .5 – Unacceptable" (p. 231).

Findings

ISLLC Standard 1: The Vision of Learning

For responses to the intern's performance related to ISLLC Standard 1, 206 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 1). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 206 of 229 items were .945 (Table 2), which represents an excellent correlation between items. The instrument for ISLLC Standard 1 related to the vision of learning can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 1

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	206	90.0
	Excluded[a]	23	10.0
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 2

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.945	4

ISLLC Standard 2: The Culture of Teaching and Learning

For responses to the intern's performance related to ISLLC Standard 2, 222 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 3). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 222 of 229 items were .880 (Table 4), which represents a good correlation between items. The instrument for ISLLC Standard 2 related to the culture of teaching and learning can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 3

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	222	96.9
	Excluded[a]	7	3.1
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 4

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.880	4

ISLLC Standard 3: The Management of Learning

For responses to the intern's performance related to ISLLC Standard 3, 201 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 5). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 201 of 229 items were .868 (Table 6), which represents a good correlation between items. The instrument for ISLLC Standard 3 related to the management learning can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 5

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	201	87.8
	Excluded[a]	28	12.2
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 6

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.868	4

ISLLC Standard 4: Relationships with the Broader Community to Foster Learning

For responses to the intern's performance related to ISLLC Standard 4, 191 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 7). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 191 of 229 items were .840 (Table 8); though this is the lowest reliability score for the instrument, the alpha still represents a good correlation between items. The instrument for ISLLC Standard 4 related to the developing relationships with the broader community can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 7

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	191	83.4
	Excluded[a]	38	16.6
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 8

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.840	4

ISLLC Standard 5: Integrity, Fairness and Ethics in Learning

For responses to the intern's performance related to ISLLC Standard 5, 224 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 9). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 224 of 229 items were .903 (Table 10), which represents an excellent correlation between items. The instrument for ISLLC Standard 5 related to integrity, fairness, and ethics in learning can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 9

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	224	97.8
	Excluded[a]	5	2.2
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 10

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.903	4

ISLLC Standard 6: The Political, Social, Economic, Legal, and Cultural Context of Learning

For responses to the intern's performance related to ISLLC Standard 6, 186 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 11). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 186 of 229 items were .874 (Table 12), which represents a good correlation between items. The instrument for ISLLC Standard 6 related to the political climate can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 11

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	186	81.2
	Excluded[a]	43	18.8
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 12

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.874	4

ISLLC Standard 1-6 Combined

As a final test of reliability, a combined analysis of all responses on the instrument was run across all six subcategories. For responses to the each intern's performance related to ISLLC Standards 1-6, 157 cases of the possible 229 were included in the analysis (Table 13). Students who did not have a complete data set were excluded. Cronbach's alpha for the 157 of 229 items were .949 (Table 14), which represents an excellent correlation between all items across the entire instrument. The instrument for ISLLC Standards 1-6 related to the political climate can be deemed highly reliable.

Table 13

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	157	68.6
	Excluded[a]	72	31.4
	Total	229	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Table 14

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.949	24

Conclusions and Recommendations

Through a thorough analysis of both the validity and reliability of the Principal Internship Mentor's Assessment (PIMA), the researchers are able to determine that the instrument itself is both valid and reliable for its intended purpose. The validity of the instrument has been verified using a variety of methods, including investigating face validity, content validity, and making use of an independent panel of experts. Cannizzaro (2007) was an independent consultant hired to conduct the work of the focus group. He collected the data from instrument items at the time that had already been constructed from the work of Hessel and Holloway (2002). Cannizzaro worked independently with pilot-test members, faculty, and the focus group members to further validate each instrument items.

The instrument has also been deemed to be extremely reliable, with an overall alpha value of .949. Each independent sub-group on the instrument also had alpha values that ranged from good (.800) to excellent (.999). The alignment of the instrument to national standards undoubtedly played a significant role in producing the strong results found in this study.

In light of these findings, the researchers make the following three recommendations for future use/study:

1. Other programs that use the ISLLC Standards as a foundation for their programs are encouraged to use a similar model for evaluating internship progress in the field. By doing so, programs can also correlate the internship experience to student results on the School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), and other assessments as well. This could build a broader data base upon which improvement in leadership preparation can emerge and rigor for national accreditation can be met.
2. Programs in the field that may use the PIMA should consider conducting a pre- and post- PIMA for students in their educational leadership program. Currently the PIMA from this study is only administered as a post-experience assessment. Programs would benefit greatly from data on students that could be collected as they enter the program as well. Student growth in the program could also be more easily measured.

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Book Review

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Shifting to Fit: The Politics of Black and White Identity in School Leadership by Carol Mullen and principal, Kim Robertson (2014) offers engaging, provocative discourse on the meaning of educational leadership for women leaders of color. Mullen is a professor of educational leadership at Virginia Tech. Robertson is an elementary school principal in North Carolina. The authors emphasize the importance of a different perspective for understanding the complexity and challenges facing women principals and especially Black women principals. Further, they suggest that there is a need for a new recognition of skills needed by Black women principals in order to survive and be successful as educational leaders.

The foreword was written by Noelle Witherspoon Arnold, followed by the authors' Preface: Work Shifts and Identity Shifting. Nine chapters address these topical areas: Snapshot, Under the Watchful Eyes of the Public, Theorizing about Identity Politics in School Leadership, Race-Sensitive Methods of Inquiry, Interviews With Black Female Principals, Identity Issues in a Black Female Principal's Diary, Behavioral Shifts of Black Female Principals on the Job, Educating for Critical Consciousness in Leadership Preparation, Parting Reflections, in Solidarity.

A most impressive feature of this book is the voices of the Black female principals—their own worldviews presented in their own words. The authors use critical race methodology and phenomenology to explore their data set (i.e., the women's stories) focused on personal and professional experiences of racism and sexism experienced in Black female leaders' careers. The use of a narrative structure facilitates a deep analysis of how the females represent themselves as well as the complexities involved in shifting their identities relative to different situations and people in their site-based position and in relation to stakeholders who themselves are associated with race and gender dynamics, as well as power dynamics. The Black women principals in this study understood the need to change their behaviors based on the setting: "They seemed to instinctively know what role they must play in different situations" (p. 108). The authors further examine pivotal points in the narratives as they relate to power, privilege, and oppression. Each chapter ends with an "elevator view" that gives major highlights and an opportunity for readers to reflect on the major components of the chapter.

Mullen and Robertson use the term *shifting* (building on the research of Jones and Shorter-Gooden, as cited in Mullen & Robertson) to describe how some Black females and principals carefully select their behaviors and even physical presentation of self and attire as strategies for survival. For example, one participant leader of color related that she "ensured that she always looked professional" (p. 78). As described, the women principals are scrutinized by the public and thus deliberately had to fight inequalities, as one shared, "Before I go to this PTA meeting or that golf match, I remind myself of who I am and what people's perceptions are and try to make sure that I shoot down the perceptions" (p. 78). Mullen and Robertson note, "in the affluent part of her world, she had to shift a great deal to fit the culture while trying to change it to fit her expectations" (p. 78).

The authors also provide insight into critical race theory in action, with the stories of this marginalized group at the center. There is a clear and vivid description of each Black female principal and her life-world. The females are of different ages and years of experience as a principal, which provides a fuller set of lenses through which to examine this phenomenon. The women's stories illustrate how gender and race were barriers in the careers of these leaders, prompting them to shift their leadership style and presentation of self. All participants expressed their need to dress for a role with traditional and conservative professional attire. This concurs with Knight's (2011) finding that the positioning of women as they aspire to leadership requires them to examine their physical attire while having a desire to stay true to their own style and individuality.

As I reflect on my own experiences and struggles to move into school administration, the stories resonate with my own questioning of how to break through barriers. Once I became an administrator at a building level, I assumed the movement to a superintendent position would be easier. I volunteered for many district-level committees to gain more skills and visibility. I wore the most professional attire. I obtained a doctorate in educational leadership. It was my goal to ensure that I could develop my resume and skills to the highest level to be a competitive applicant. However, I needed to reach out to my male colleagues for networking in order to advance in the administrative field. Once in a position of principal and superintendent, I realized that I was working extremely hard to ensure that I was seen as successful so other women would benefit and have an easier time obtaining administrative positions in schools and districts.

The rich description of the women's voices in the Mullen and Robertson book is followed with one of the author's own challenges as recorded in her personal diary. It showcases the myths of Black female principals and the struggle of being a principal who is female and of color. She shared that "we are asking why and we are trying to change things, thus the 'counter' part of 'narrative' because "the leaders are caught between worlds" (p. 87).

There are comparisons made relative to stakeholders and their reactions towards Black female principals, male principals, and White female principals. These reactions are included for the purpose of better understanding the political nature of the principalship position and thus the needed attention on how to navigate the challenges of the role as a Black female.

The authors persuasively argue that educational leadership preparation programs need to develop leaders who are willing and capable of being strong advocates for social justice. Additionally, they recommend that institutions that prepare leaders should connect the research with the practice of social justice to enliven the hybrid frameworks of critical race theory and Black feminist theory. They illustrate, not only through the principalship vignettes but also through their own tellings as leaders, that reflection is a key practice for strong leader development. The need for future research is also explained in order for the critical consciousness of developing leaders to be further developed as educational leaders.

The need for further conversations about the self and culture, and shifting as a personal experience and cultural experience, is a major tenet of this book. Because principals are shifted by their cultures and in turn shift their cultures, the work they do is political. The personal–political nature of the role of a school principal and some of the complicated nuances involved in what it means to shift one's identity to fit when you are a female leader of color in predominately Black and White school contexts is a centerpiece of this work.

As I have written, these crucial conversations are necessary and research is important for a better understanding of the workplace and leadership as it relates to gender (see Sampson, 2014). Mullen and Robertson share the stories and voices of six women, endeavoring to make

"[their] results more meaningful and potentially powerful, especially where [their]readers resonate and feel compelled to tell their own stories" (p. 111). The authors make a strong case for this needed dialogue. *Shifting to Fit*, which is courageous and engaging, provides an excellent starting point on the conversation about social justice leadership as this intersects with the lived experiences of women leaders of color.

Shifting to Fit: The Politics of Black and White Identity in School Leadership by Carol A. Mullen and Kim C. Robertson
Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2014; ISBN: 9781623966614

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