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Principal Selection and the Stories Superintendents Tell

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A dissertation  
presented to  
the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis  
East Tennessee State University

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In partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Doctor of Education

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by  
Linda L. Baker  
December 2001

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Dr. Hal Knight, Chair  
Dr. Russ West  
Dr. Louise MacKay  
Dr. Judith Hammond

Keywords: Principal Selection, ISLLC, Superintendents, Community, Communication, Ethics,  
Instruction

## ABSTRACT

### Principal Selection and the Stories Superintendents Tell

By

Linda L. Baker

In addition to licensure and certification, there are particular qualities and personal characteristics superintendents look for when hiring a principal. With fewer principal applicants and increased projected needs for principals, it was important to explore the superintendent's reasoning when hiring a principal.

A qualitative research method employing elite interviews was used to explore the criteria that superintendents employ in their process of selecting a principal. When talking about the hiring of principals, superintendents invariably began with the selection process. Teachers, community members, parents, former employers, and college professors gave input in formal or informal ways. Superintendents looked for experience both as a school administrator and as a teacher at the level of the school where the vacancy existed. Communication skills, decision-making, a sense of justice and fair play, a focus on community, and instructional leadership were qualities they considered important. Direct reference was not made to the Interstate School Leaders Licensing Consortium (ISLLC) Standards during interviews, however 48 of 182 indicators were touched upon during superintendent interviews.

Themes of communication, communities, and ethics emerged. Superintendents expressed concern because candidate pools had lessened and projected needs increased. They spoke of the

factors that deter teachers from seeking principalships as being geographic location, principal responsibilities, accountability, and compensation.

There was not a one-size-principal-fits-all-schools attitude on the part of the superintendents. They looked for someone with administrative experience, an instructional focus, communication skills, and finely tuned decision-making skills. Principals needed to be able to relate to a diverse group of people, and have a sense of justice and fair play in dealings with all people. ISLLC Standards did not appear to have a profound influence on superintendents as they searched for individuals to serve as school leaders.

This study adds to development of a comprehensive knowledge base of information regarding qualities of individuals selected for principalships. It provides another framework for professional educators to enhance understanding of school leadership expectations. It may aid superintendents in decisions made regarding recruitment and selection of principals. It may aid researchers when evaluating use of ISLLC Standards in the selection of principals.

## DEDICATION

To my family this work is dedicated. From my parents, Jim and Pearl Layne, I learned to value education and hard work. My son, Drew, and my daughter, Dana, who have had to share me with books and data analysis, have provided encouragement and support during this endeavor. My grandchildren, Matthew, Benjamin, Carlie, and Alexandra, who always have to move books when they climb in the car with me, have shown me just how important it is that the delivery of public education continues to improve. Without the love of my family this research would not have been possible.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Educational reform in the United States was brought to the forefront with the release of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). During the remainder of the 1980s and into the 1990s, the nation continued in an educational reform debate of unprecedented magnitude and duration (Bjork & Ginsberg, 1995). Concern for the performance of schools led to a focus on improving curriculum, instruction, credentials, accountability, and assessments. Since the release of the 1987 report by the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, Leaders for America's Schools, considerable specific attention has been devoted to finding ways to improve the quality of leadership in schools and school systems (Murphy & Shipman, 1997).

School leadership is complex and multifaceted. Even though attention focused on finding ways to improve the quality of leadership in schools and school systems, until recently systemic efforts designed to rebuild the leadership infrastructure of schooling have been conspicuous by their absence (Murphy & Shipman, 1997). In the mid-1990s, with the establishment of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) the tide began to turn. Through the development of content standards an especially appropriate and particularly powerful leverage point for reform was provided (Murphy & Shipman). The standards were developed with the intent of strengthening school leadership. The most visible use of the standards to date has been in the area of assessment for licensure (Wargin & Tate, 1998). Every state licenses principals, but the means of acquiring licensure varies from state to state. States are adopting standards for licensing school administrators based on six general standards, published by the Council of Chief

State School Officers (CCSSO, 1996). In developing the standards, ISLLC considered research into the linkage between educational leadership and productive schools, as indicated by outcomes demonstrated by students, and significant trends in society (Coutts, 1997). Survey results indicated that responses were dominated by superintendents from rural school districts (CCSSO, 1996). In the fall of 1998 at least three states, North Carolina, Missouri and Mississippi, began requiring all principal candidates take the six-hour School Leaders Licensure Assessment developed by Educational Testing Service and the Council of Chief State School Officers (Wargin & Tate).

The principal, as leader of a school, impacts school performance. With attention turning to the effect of school administrators on school performance, educational administration programs were challenged to ensure that prospective principals would be able to work in restructured school contexts, learn new roles, and mitigate the effect of bureaucratic controls that stifle the teaching and learning process (Goodlad, 1984). The nature of education today, in this post-industrial environment, is impacted by economic concerns requiring changes in the level of student outcomes, society's growing gap between the rich and poor, and the politics of increased citizen participation. Post-industrial organizations require shifts in roles, relationships and responsibilities (Murphy & Shipman, 1997). The result is a challenge for school principals to replace the traditional focus on stability with a focus on change in their schools. The existing bureaucratic system of administration is no longer functional nor is it relevant for present times (Blankstein, 1992).

Principals' work is essential. In recent years there has been an increased awareness of the importance of the school principal (Daresh, 1997). As the demand for better schools continues, many universities have undertaken a fundamental examination of their graduate programs. To

better prepare future administrators, universities, professional associations, and schools are working together to develop programs that more appropriately address the tasks encountered by principals (Peel, Wallace, Buckner, Wrenn, & Evans, 1998). Recommendations for reform of principal preparation programs identify schools and school districts as important agents in the principal preparation process. In the 1993-94 School and Staffing Survey, conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), evidence presented shows that schools and districts were playing active roles in the preparation of more than one-third of public school principals (NCES, 1997).

Fewer qualified people want the principal's job. Finding good principals is becoming more difficult (Keller, 1998; Olson, 1999). According to Barker (1997), willing, qualified candidates for the principalship are increasingly difficult to ensure. Additionally, many teachers who seek administrator certification do not plan to seek an administrative position after completing degree requirements (Cooley & Shen, 1999). For example, in Ohio, the turnover of principals has accelerated, but there are fewer candidates who aspire to these positions (Dunn, 1999).

Concern about the growing issue of principal supply and demand precipitated action on the part of the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP). These two groups commissioned the Educational Research Service to examine the current and projected pool of candidates for the principalship. Of the 403 districts with enrollments of 300 or more students, about half of the districts had a shortage of qualified candidates for principalships they were trying to fill (NAESP, 1998). Southeast Missouri State University conducted a study in which superintendents

were asked to indicate the number of applicants they were receiving for principal positions. A definite decrease in applicants was indicated by 56 of the 61 respondents (Shepard, 1998).

Selection and hiring of principals is a responsibility falling primarily on the superintendent. In many school systems, the principal selection process is subject to intense internal and external pressure that impacts efforts to employ individuals on the basis of the qualities they possess. Superintendents are sensitive to local politics and to the political composition of the local school boards (Eaton & Sharp, 1996). Political pressures from school boards to hire particular individuals plays a part in the decision-making process of the superintendent. If members of a school board or a cadre of parents say that a school ought to have a particular program it is hard for a system leader to refuse (O'Neil, 2000). The same can be true when selecting individuals for principalships. According to Marshall and Kasten (1994), many superintendents look for a good fit between the community and the candidate. A good fit is the candidate's ability to mesh with the personalities, culture, and needs of a particular site. For instance, selectors may believe that minority schools should be headed by minority principals; that schools in certain neighborhoods require a principal with strict discipline; or that certain positions are dead-end jobs suitable for those not aspiring to higher levels in the hierarchy (Marshall & Kasten).

Nearly all educators agree that some special preparation is needed for school administrators, but questions of how much preparation and what kind of training are not easily resolved (Sergiovanni, 1991). The primary delivery vessel of training and certification of individuals for principalship positions is university programs of educational administration (Hallinger & Murphy, 1991). University programs are based on state departments of education certification mandates designed to reform school leadership from legislative and regulatory

perspectives (Donaldson, 1987). The manner in which principals become involved in administrator preparation programs may take many forms. The once popular self-selection of prospective principals has been replaced by identification of promising candidates by current principals (Bass, 1990) and university screening processes based on school system recommendation, leadership potential, academic potential, teaching experience, professional commitment, interpersonal skills, and commitment to the program (VA Tech, 1998). Assessment centers, such as the NASSP Assessment Center, evaluate candidates for the principalship on experience, personal characteristics, and performance during activities by evaluators who have no political agenda and thus are recognized by many as a fair method of assessment (Dunn, 1999).

University programs for the training of prospective principals exist nationwide. In Virginia there are 11 universities providing state approved programs leading to a Master's degree in Education Administration and Supervision and ultimately licensure (Duke, 1992). Region 7 is served by both Virginia Tech and Radford University. Both provide state approved programs leading to a Master's Degree in Education Administration and Supervision in Region 7. As is done throughout the nation, Region 7 aspiring principals apply to university programs. Prospective students must obtain division superintendent and current principals' recommendations as required for admission to a state approved program leading to administrative and supervisory certification and licensure (VA Tech, 1998).

#### Statement of the Problem

In addition to licensure and certification, there are particular qualities and personal characteristics superintendents are looking for when hiring an individual to serve as principal of an elementary, middle, or high school. Given the environment of fewer principal applicants and

projected need for principals, it is important to explore the superintendent's point of view as to the reasoning behind the selection of particular individuals to better understand the qualities expected of newly hired principals.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that came into play as individuals were selected for principalships through an examination of the perceptions of superintendents who were responsible for making hiring decisions. A secondary purpose was to explore the congruence between the ideals advocated in the national movement in the preparation of principals and those employed by superintendents in making their choices. Selected principals exemplify the qualities which superintendents perceive foster success for their schools, their systems, and ultimately, the public they serve.

#### Research Questions

What qualities do superintendents look for when selecting a principal? What role does community play in the decision to select a particular individual? Is there congruence between the ISLLC Standards and the qualities superintendents maintain are needed by principals they select?

#### Significance of the Study

Much research exists that examines the principalship and men and women who hold such positions. There are licensing requirements in place coupled with ongoing professional development. Colleges and universities have organized their curricula around standards having the endorsement of professional associations and state leaders. However, with an ever-expanding body of knowledge affirming that certain skills are necessary for a principal to be effective, the stories of the hiring of new principals are fundamental to the effective understanding of the

position. Principals come to their positions with a set of experiences, beliefs, and values that integrate into the organizational culture. Whether an experienced or inexperienced principal, a no-nonsense disciplinarian, or a strong instructional leader, what principals do to promote education, guide instruction, discipline fairly, and manage effectively impacts success in every classroom.

This study adds to the development of a comprehensive knowledge base of information regarding qualities possessed by individuals selected for a principalship. Additionally, this study informs superintendents, principals, assistant principals, other administrative personnel, potential school administrators, and college personnel who are teaching administrators in the improvement of leadership skills. Further, this study may aid superintendents in decisions made with regard to recruitment and selection of prospective principal candidates.

#### Organization of the Study

This study is presented and organized in six chapters. Chapter 1 contains the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, and significance of the study. In Chapter 2, a review of literature is presented as an information base for the study. Chapter 3 describes the research methodology and procedures used in the study. Chapter 4 contains a discussion of the participants interviewed, an overview of the interview process, a discussion of the development of NUD\*IST nodes used and an analysis of the data (QSR NUD\*IST). Chapter 5 is devoted to a summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations, and implications for practice.



## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Chapter 2 is a review of literature pertaining to the role of principals, their preparation, certification, and selection. It is organized looking first at the effect of school administrators on school performance and, second, at training and licensing procedures used for prospective principals. Next, Chapter 2 explores the principal selection process. Finally, a summary is included at the end of the chapter.

#### The Effect of School Administrators on School Performance

A principal plays an important role within the school. Studies before 1980 (e.g., Crowson & Porter-Gehrie, 1980; Inbar, 1977; Kmetz & Willower, 1981) generally sought to describe the nature of the principal's position and work but did not attempt to link these descriptions to other processes and outcomes (Heck, 1998). In the early 1980s the focus of research changed. Principal attitudes and actions on school processes and outcomes began to emerge (Heck, 1998). Research on change implementation and effective schools research evolved. The important role principals play in school improvement efforts (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Hall & Rutherford, 1983) was identified. Additionally, strong principal leadership was among factors within schools that made a difference in student learning according to Brookover & Lezotta, 1977; Brookover, et al., 1978; Edmonds, 1979; and Rutter, Maugham, Mortimore, Ouston, & Smith, 1979. Between 1980 and 1995 studies on principal leadership expanded in scope. Studies on the principal's role in school effectiveness were conducted in over 12 countries (Heck, 1998). The research demonstrated the impact of principals on a variety of school processes and school outcomes as well as other measures of effectiveness (e.g. Greenfield, Licata, & Johnson, 1992; Johnson & Holdaway, 1990; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995; Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989).

American culture places a high value on cognitive reasoning. An assumption that underlies notions of best practice in American schools reflects heavy value placed on individual student achievement and mastery of cognitive learning goals (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998). These values form a context for educational leadership. They shape what leaders and followers perceive as desired outcomes for schools (Brislin, 1993). They also influence the nature of interactions between the principal and teachers, parents, students, and the community. Human interaction within social systems reflects the values and behavioral norms that underlie the surrounding culture (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998).

Within the past decade there has been a shift in emphasis on the principal's role. In the attempt to understand the role of principals in creating and maintaining effective schools, educators have refocused from a broad, panoramic view of the principal as manager to a tightly focused, more narrowly defined instructional leadership role (Lane, 1992). Predominant notions of the principal's role have evolved from manager, to street-level bureaucrat, to change agent, to instructional manager, to instructional leader, to transformational leader (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998).

Principals who are instructional leaders have directed their attention and involvement to curriculum development, instructional supervision, and policy directed to improved student learning. Research supports a strong correlation between principal effectiveness and instructional quality (Brandt, 1987; Whitaker, 1997). The instructional leader is involved in activities that focus on instructional and curricular improvement. This involvement is guided by sensitivity to the cultural values and norms in which the thoughts, feelings, and actions of school personnel are embedded. Effective schools have a principal who is viewed by his or her staff as an instructional leader; a faculty that is directly involved in the decision-making process; a principal

who is able to provide guidance, support, and encouragement to staff members when requested; students who treat teachers and one another with respect; and a staff that shares a commitment to specific instructional goals, priorities, assessments, and procedures (Haller, Brent, & McNamara, 1997). More recently, emphasis has been given to models of leadership, such as transformational leadership, which acknowledge the implications of school restructuring. With respect to organizational improvement, transformational leadership focuses on increasing the school's capacity to be innovative (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998). Principals can facilitate leadership in others and empower them to be leaders. Kleine-Kracht (1993) found that effective principals often dispersed their leadership to teachers by sharing power and responsibility.

The nature and focus of a principal's leadership can make a difference in the quality of the academic outcomes and organizational health of a school. A four-year study conducted in London identified 12 factors – most under the control of the principal and teachers – that distinguish effective elementary schools from less effective ones (Mortimore & Sammons, 1987). A distribution of leadership from the principal to teachers enhances instructional programs. Schools characterized by effective instructional programs usually have principals who share leadership with their teachers rather than managing in isolation from behind closed doors (Baron & Uhl, 1995). More effective schools are administered by more effective principals. The teachers of nationally recognized schools perceive their principals as more effective than teachers of randomly selected schools (Valentine & Bowman, 1991). Teacher perception of principal's leadership ability impacts student achievement. Gains and losses in students' test scores are directly related to teachers' perceptions of their principal's leadership (Brandt, 1987).

Principals must attend to critical organizational dimensions as well as to instruction. In addition to being instructional leaders, they must also be counselors or parents, engineers or

supervisors, contenders or referees, and heroes or poets (Blase & Kirby, 1992). Effective principals set the tone and climate of their schools, outline high expectations for students and faculty members, establish discipline standards, engage faculty members in explicating goals and instructional processes, and provide leadership for all aspects of education in their buildings (Wendel, Kilgore, & Spurzem, 1991). Principals make hundreds of decisions every day. Each decision impacts the school and its students. The school's characteristics are a reflection of the educational values of its leader (Goldman, 1998). What a school stands for and believes, seeks to accomplish and the image it seeks to project are defining characteristics shaping its culture. The essence of the school leader then emerges from looking at the tone and educational environment of the school (Goldman, 1998). The actions of the principal are noticed and interpreted by others. A principal who acts with care and concern for others is more likely to develop a school culture with similar values (Stolp, 1994).

Principals, in their roles as school leaders, play a substantial role in determining what will happen educationally in their communities in the future. Principals must exert their leadership at all levels in which activities are occurring: their communities, their cities, towns, and their states (Bradshaw, 1999). The school's external environment that includes the socioeconomic status of the parent and student population, geographic features (e.g., urban, suburban, or rural), parental expectations, and levels of community support for schools, is an integral part of daily operations (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998). Practice in educational administration is strongly linked to the community. Community norms define, to varying degrees, the direct expectations held for those in principal and teacher roles (Hallinger & Leithwood, 1998). Principals must recognize the importance of today's community services and activities, and they must become active participants in those services and activities. To meet the dilemma of expanding services and

restricted funding, an administrator in today's schools must be a problem solver, team builder, risk taker, and visionary (Hill & Lynch, 1994).

What principals do to help create a shared vision and promote it across their schools, to guide good instruction, to manage effectively, to discipline fairly, and to reach out beyond the campus governs success in every classroom. This requires vision, a skill that is key to all successful administrators. Effective school leaders have a characteristic in common. They have a vision for the school, a vision of which all members of the school community are aware (Buell, 1992).

The role of today's principal has become diverse and increasingly complex. Low compensation, long hours, and stress on the job continue to be factors which principals find to be discouraging (NAESP, 1998). With increased emphasis on the principal's role as systemic change agent, he or she is faced with seeking ways to transform whole schools. Additionally, principals are faced with increased responsibilities related to marketing their schools, political involvement in generating financial support, involvement with social service agencies in meeting the needs of students, working with site-based councils within their schools, and sound fiscal decision making (Doud & Keller, 1998). Whether leaders are engaged in intentional reform or merely responding to outside pressures, they are finding themselves confronting new issues such as sexual harassment of students, more rigorous academic standards, the need for technology, and enhance school safety. According to Fullan (1998), principals find themselves locked in, with less and less room to maneuver.

#### Principal Preparation Programs, Licensure, and Certification

With all the demands that immediately descend upon beginning administrators, they need to come prepared with a better working knowledge of educational leadership than textbooks can

provide (Selke et al., 1995). In the last few years, national attention has been focused on how to change administrator preparation programs to better prepare leaders for America's schools. Although a lively debate exists about whether administrator preparation programs should include technical skills or a liberal arts curriculum, many programs are beginning to include practicum experiences that provide an opportunity for students to work closely with a mentor during their formal preparation (Barnett, 1990). Not only do future administrators need experience on the job, they also need someone to serve as a guide. A guide who is interested in the future administrator's progress and wants him or her to succeed. Every stranger hired by the school board needs someone wise in the ways of the community to help him or her professionally and personally (Parsons, 1998). Mentors are needed to help new administrators find their way and make sense of what is happening around them in the organization. The existence of mentoring relationships is also a major step toward finding ways to reduce the sense of isolation felt by many administrators and to increase the opportunities available for individuals to receive feedback concerning their professional performance (Daresh, 1990).

Preparatory programs for school administrators are changing. There is a transformation from a reductionist to a holistic view, from the concept of administrators as consumers of knowledge to being the creators of knowledge, from didactic frontal teaching to student-led groups (Schmuck, 1992). The addition of mentoring, internships, and cohort groups to administrator programs have improved principal preparation. To better serve schools, students and communities in a rapidly changing society, today's educational leaders require knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are different from those reflected in educational administration curriculums of the past (Barnett, et al., 1992).

Almost everyone who wants to prepare for the principalship is able to do so. For those responsible for training principals, the implications are reasonably evident: through a combination of selection and training, principals must be prepared with a good understanding of what it means to be instructional leaders (Smith & Andrews, 1987). Additionally, increased alignment between curriculum and real-world demands provides future leaders with simulated but realistic problems in leadership. Educational administration programs should take a careful look at their coursework to determine if the mix of courses required of their students is appropriate (Dembowski, 1998).

Continued professional development assists the principal in preparing for changes as they rapidly develop in society today. The Delta Principals Institute, the product of the Southern Regional Council and the Delta Areas Association for the Improvement of Schools, has been successful in teaching principals how to be effective leaders. It has been successful because it is based on the assumption that principals have within themselves the ability to help each other become effective leaders and create schools where all children achieve (Franklin & Jones, 1997). Placing principals in the learner role allows insight into the needs of students. In order for principals to teach others how to be learners, they must respect their own needs for ongoing learning (Mohr, 1998).

Recent trends promise better alignment between preparation programs and schools, including the development of standards for administration preparation. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration (1989) identified 21 key proficiencies for principals. The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) developed standards for school leaders. ISLLC standards are closely linked to the goal of improved student learning and are written in language that reflects the real-world environment of principals (Murphy & Shipman,

1997). According to the U.S. Department of Education, CCSSO Policies and Practices Survey (1996), licensure is based on the ISLLC standards in at least 18 states. In 34 states school leader education programs in institutions of higher learning have approved standards for school leaders or are in the design stage.

### Principal Selection

The total number of public school principals grew 2.2% between 1987-88 and 1996-97 from 77,890 to 79,618 (NCES, 1997). The average age of principals rose from 46.8 in 1987 to 47.7 in 1993-94, with 37% over age 50, 53.6% between ages 40 and 49, and 9.5% age 39 or under (NCES, 1993). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey found that 55% of principals plan to remain as principals while able or until retirement. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of education administrators is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2005, meaning that a 10 to 20% increase is projected (NCES, 1998, July). Additionally, NCES projects school enrollment for 2008 to be a total of 54.3 million, which is a 6% increase from 1996 (NCES, 1998, July). Job opportunities for principals will grow as school enrollments increase between now and 2008.

The likelihood of a superintendent finding the right person with the right set of professional and personal abilities and characteristics to be a principal at one of his or her schools can be increased but not without great effort (Wendel et al., 1991). Because principals are so important to school effectiveness, their selection is of great consequence to the operation of schools and their programs. Until and unless the qualifications needed for a position are prescribed exactly, using the best selection methods and instruments available is not foolproof. Lewis (1997) cited evidence that using a carefully chosen battery of tests along with other



information provides better prediction of success than using professional judgment alone. Although most schools still rely on the personal interview as the primary tool for selection, Wendel et al., (1991), maintained that information on personality types might be helpful in selecting administrators.

Because of the tenuous nature of many selection processes, districts have become increasingly interested in the “grow-your-own” model developed cooperatively between Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas School District, and the Wichita School District Educational Management Association (Johnson & Douglas, 1990). It assists with educational planning and helps those who are known by the district to become viable candidates.

A large number of paper-and-pencil instruments that measure generic management and leadership skills exist (Educational Testing Service, 1998). An alternative is the assessment-center approach offered by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, which takes candidates through two days of simulated leadership tasks, with evaluation by experienced practitioners (Buckner & Jones, 1990). Assessment can provide an early indication of potential success and the need for specific skill development, however there is a fee attached for participants.

In some cases the school uses a site-based team to screen and interview principal candidates. The team is typically composed of parents and other community members, students, teachers, a counselor, the office secretary, an administrator or two, the superintendent, and a board member (White & White, 1998). After the team is assembled, the process for selection varies.

A school district’s administrative organization determines the method a superintendent uses to fill administrative positions. Generally speaking, in small school systems the

superintendent is responsible for principal selection (Parker, 1996). In larger school systems, principal selection responsibilities are likely to be delegated to other central office personnel. Superintendents in small communities report political pressures and board interference with the daily operation of the school district (Parker, 1996). Regardless of size every local board has its own culture and its behavior reflects local tradition, values, education, and wealth. The local social and political scene is reflected in the attitude of the public and their expectations of the board (Rosenberger, 1997). School board members are influenced and pressured by members of the community. Additionally, board members are also influenced by what they read in state and national school board journals and what they hear (and are told to do) at meetings and conventions (Sharp & Walter, 1997). Boards are under pressure from many places, and this public interest involves concern for selection of school principals.

Principals are recruited from internal and external personnel pools. Suburban and urban districts tend to have a mix from both pools because of a large number of vacancies due to retirements and resignations (Hoyle, English, & Steffy, 1998). Using internal recruitment for potential principals has advantages. Employees can be observed by administrators over a period of time (Lundenburg, 1996). However, external recruitment also has benefits. Newcomers bring in new ideas and carry little of the political baggage often associated with internal candidates (Lundenburg). If the school system needs fresh new ideas and a new way of doing things or if an individual needs to be rewarded with a promotion for outstanding performance, both internal and external selection have a role to play in the decision making process of the superintendent.

Small communities outnumber large communities in the United States. According to 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Survey (NCES, 1998), over half (56%) of all public school districts were located in non-urban areas and another 40% of districts were located in urban areas

outside central cities. Additionally, 63% of the school districts in the Midwest and 67% in the South were located in non-urban areas compared with 54% in the West and 34% in the Northeast. In 1993-94, school districts with 1,000 to 9,999 students comprised 44% of the school districts and served 47% of all public school students. In each of these districts there is a superintendent whose responsibilities include selection of principals. The same survey suggests that a majority of the school districts in the Midwest and West had fewer than 1,000 students, and in the Northeast and South at least half of the school districts had enrollments of 1,000 to 9,999 students.

During 1997-98 Virginia's schools were led by 1,844 principals. This was an increase from 1996-97 of 21 principals (Virginia Department of Education, 1998). The 1999 School Census lists 8% of the 113 school divisions in Virginia with enrollments of fewer than 1,000 students, 62% enroll 1,000 to 9,999 students, 17% enroll 10,000 to 19,999 students, and 13% enroll 20,000 or more students (VDOE, 1999). The range for the 113 school divisions was 419 to 187,695 students.

### Summary

Today's schools are complex social, educational, and political systems that operate amid the public clamor for educational reform (Checkley, 2000). The hierarchical bureaucratic organizational structures that have defined schools over the past 80 years are giving way to more decentralized systems (Lawson, 1999). School leadership is connected to competence for needed tasks rather than to formal position, and independence and isolation are being replaced by cooperative work (Clark, 1995).

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of educational administrators is expected to increase. There is, however, a shortage of qualified candidates for principal

vacancies in the United States (Barker, 1997). Many reformers and national groups, including the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration and the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, have called for reforms in principal recruitment and preparation in order to ameliorate potential shortages of high-quality candidates.

The Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) brought together major parties with a stake in educational leadership, the states, relevant professional associations, and the universities. ISLLC developed, from their understanding of leadership, a set of standards to be used to strengthen school leadership at all levels (Coutts, 1997).

The emerging social and political environment with a change in the locus of control based on a reconfiguration of functions among levels of government shapes the arena within which schools operate (Varhola, 1998). Leading the operation is the district superintendent with responsibilities that include selection of the principals to lead local schools. This rebalancing of power emphasizes parental empowerment and adds considerable pressure to address environmental dynamics of schools (Cooper & Mosley, 1999). Superintendents must balance the needs of the students, community, school, faculty, and staff during the decision-making process concerning selection of an individual for a principalship.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter details the methodology used in the study. It includes a discussion of the research design, a description of the context of the study, participant selection, development of the interview, and treatment of the data.

#### Research Design

The goal of this study, through a careful and systematic constant comparative method of data analysis to understand the decisions made during the principal selection process. An elite interview enhanced the researcher's role and allowed for an interpretation from the participants' view rather than taking the role of an expert who passes judgment on participant views.

Qualitative research is concerned with understanding social phenomena from the actor's perspective (Firestone, 1987). In order to understand human perceptions and experiences, it is essential to know how people define their particular situations. A qualitative research method, with its focus on people, situations, and words, as opposed to numbers, was used to understand the criteria that superintendents employ in their process of selecting a principal. The perspective on events and actions held by the people involved in them is not simply their account of these events and actions, to be assessed in terms of its truth or falsity; it is part of the reality the researcher tries to understand (Maxwell, 1996).

The qualitative approach to research is uniquely suited to uncovering the unexpected and exploring new avenues (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Participant perceptions unfolded during the interview process. Through interviews, researchers are able to explore a few general topics that help uncover the participants' perspective but otherwise respects how participants' frame and structure responses (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Because uncovering participant perceptions is

a vital aspect of qualitative research, elite interviewing was used to gain valuable information from participants in positions of expertise.

The elite interview can present barriers for the interviewees. Elites often limit the length of the interview because their time is too valuable to spend in long discussions (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In an effort to overcome this potential barrier, I spent time with potential respondents at a regional meeting during which the opportunity was given to explain the research, personally meet each of the respondents, schedule appointments for the interviews, and stress that the interviews would be a chance for the participants to step back and reflect on matters with someone who is knowledgeable but has no immediate stake. Obtaining valuable information from a well informed individual in a prominent position is an advantage of the elite interview. Elites respond well to inquiries about broad areas of content and to a high proportion of intelligent, provocative, open-ended questions that allow them the freedom to use their knowledge and imagination (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

Qualitative research is complex, involving fieldwork for prolonged periods of time, collecting words and pictures, analyzing this information inductively while focusing on participant views, and writing about the process using expressive and persuasive language (Creswell, 1998).

To improve the probability of trustworthiness, I used member checks, peer debriefing, an audit trail, and an inquiry auditor. Systematically soliciting feedback about the data and conclusions, member checking is the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpretation of the meaning of what participants are saying and the perspective they have on what is going on (Maxwell, 1996). Participating superintendents received a copy of the interview for review and reaction. They were permitted to expand upon a topic covered if it may not have

been clearly stated in the initial interview. Follow up questions were explored by sending previous interviewees questions for their comment. Thus, they were given the opportunity to respond to a theme or topic they originally did not comment upon. This provided the respondents the opportunity to correct errors of fact and challenge what were perceived to be wrong interpretations, as well as, to volunteer additional information. The respondents were then on record having said certain things and having agreed on the correctness of their statements.

In an effort to make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations were produced, an external check on the inquiry process was used. Peer debriefing provided the opportunity to develop and initially test next steps in the emerging methodological design and provided an opportunity for catharsis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A fellow student in the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis program at East Tennessee State University acted as peer debriefer for this study. This student asked and suggested questions of the researcher in an effort to explore aspects of the inquiry that may have been overlooked. The researcher and debriefer kept a written record of each encounter for the audit trail.

To establish confirmability and dependability, an audit trail was kept that consisted of all records stemming from the inquiry (personal notes, instrument development information, reflexive notes, and data reconstruction and analysis products). All documents are housed at the researcher's home for ease of viewing. Electronically recorded materials from all interviews, as well as transcribed summaries, are available. Additionally, confirmability and dependability were further addressed through the utilization of an inquiry auditor. The use of an inquiry auditor for examination of data, findings, interpretations, and recommendations, attests that the study is supported by data and is internally coherent so that the bottom line may be accepted (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The auditor was a graduate from the Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

program at East Tennessee State University who has previously conducted a qualitative inquiry. The inquiry auditor not only examined the end product but examined the process being followed for the inquiry.

### Context for the Study

Individuals selected to participate in this study were the public school superintendents in the counties of southwestern Virginia (Region 7). There are 19 public school systems (figure 1) in Region 7 (4 city and 15 county). Region 7 is comprised of the following school systems: Bland County, Bristol City, Buchanan County, Carroll County, Dickenson County, Galax City, Giles County, Grayson County, Lee County, Norton City, Pulaski County, Radford City, Russell County, Scott County, Smyth County, Tazewell County, Washington County, Wise County, and Wythe County. The region is bordered by North Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and West Virginia.

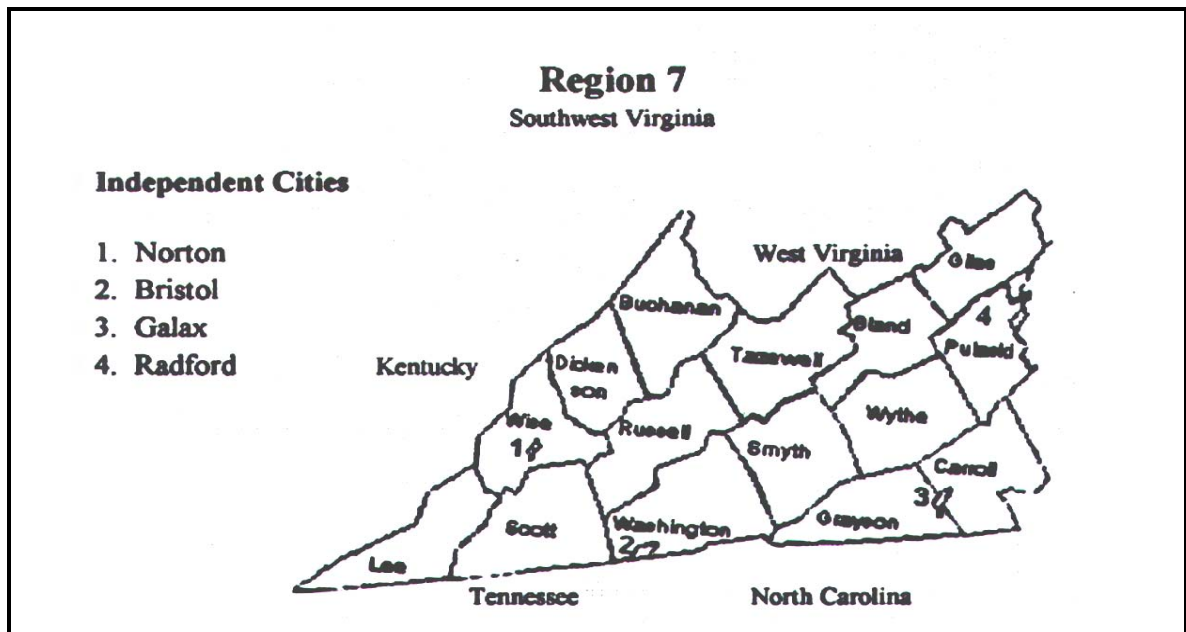


Figure 1: Region 7: Southwest Virginia



According to Virginia Department of Education's Annual School Report (VDOE, 1999), in 1997-98 these systems employed 197 principals and served 71,476 students (VDOE, 1999). Region 7 is similar to Virginia and the United States. For instance, 17% of the population of the United States, 16% of the population in Virginia, and 16% of the population in Region 7 are students in elementary or high school (U.S. Bureau of Census).

Southwest Virginia is typically a non-urban area as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau. According to the 1993-94 Statistical Profile, such non-urban districts with fewer than 1,000 students comprised 51% of all public school districts, and districts with 1,000 to 9,999 students comprised 44% of the school districts and served 47% of all public school students (NCES, 1998, February). Additionally, 56% of all school districts in 1993-94 were found in non-urban areas. These non-urban school districts were responsible for the education of 25% of the nation's public school students (NCES, 1998).

The school systems of Region 7 range in size from the smallest, Norton City, which has a student population of 737, to the largest, Tazewell County, with a student population of 7,475. The mean student population for the school systems of Region 7 is 3,762 (VDOE, 2000).

#### Participant Selection

All superintendents in the 19 public school systems located in southwestern Virginia (Region 7) were contacted and arrangements were made for interviews. Participants must have worked in their current system for no less than one year and have hired a principal in that system. I selected participants to represent the most cosmopolitan districts with participants originally from outside Southwest Virginia, as well as the local district with participants having spent numerous years, teaching and administering within the system. Interviews continued until no new themes emerged from the data collected (Marshall & Rossman, 1995). Participants within

the region were interviewed and clearly emerging themes identified, described, analyzed, and interpreted.

### Interview Strategy Development

According to Rubin and Rubin (1995), qualitative interviews are modifications or extensions of ordinary conversations but are more focused on understanding, knowledge, and insights of the interviewees than in categorizing people or events in terms of academic categories. I explored a few general topics to help uncover the participant's perspective, but otherwise respected how the participant framed and structured the responses. The participant's perspective should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it (Marshall & Rossman, 1995).

In forming the initial interview questions, the researcher focused on a request that the participant tell the story behind his or her most recent principal selections. Key elements of the story probed for included the culture of the school, the nature of the community, characteristics of the faculty, and qualities of the individual chosen. As the interview proceeded I requested clarification on particular points. Giving center stage to the participant, I probed with patience or requested further descriptions and explanations. I encouraged the participant to reflect and express personal views as the interview process unfolded.

Assimilation and evaluation of data collected from each interview served to refine questions in subsequent interviews. Main questions were prepared in advance (Appendix A) and built in such a way as to encourage the respondents to express their own opinions and experiences. Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested that all main questions cover an overall subject in ways that suggest an underlying focus. With an underlying focus on high quality principals,

the questions were open-ended, matched the research design, and encouraged the respondents to propose their own insights.

A pilot interview was conducted. The pilot interview was conducted with a public school superintendent employed outside the targeted region of study. The pilot interview allowed me to plan an appropriate amount of time for tapes used in the taping of the interview, as well as rehearsal of interviewing techniques. Suggestions and recommendations by the pilot interviewee were discussed and changes made to the interviewing process.

### Data Gathering

Interviews were conducted in the office of each participant. Permission for doing so was obtained at a regional meeting of superintendents. Each superintendent was given a follow-up letter summarizing information given at the meeting and asking him or her to complete a short demographic questionnaire. The need for a second abbreviated interview, review of their transcripts, as well as the possibility of phone calls to discuss themes emerging from interviews with other participants was explained. The letter went on to explain that any comments made could be used verbatim in the study, the names of respondents will not be divulged, and that any person involved in the study may choose to withdraw from participation by contacting the researcher. A follow-up phone call was made to confirm interview dates. A copy of the letter is included as Appendix B.

### Data Analysis

Interviews were tape recorded and listened to by the researcher prior to transcription. During the listening time, rough notes were made about what was seen and heard from the data, and tentative ideas were generated about categories and relationships. Interviews were transcribed. Each interview was transferred into the NUD\*IST qualitative data analysis software

program (QSR NUD\*IST). NUD\*IST provided a system for storing and organizing files, searching for themes, crossing themes, diagramming, analyzing, and reporting. NUD\*IST provided me the opportunity to create a visual tree diagram of the data analysis procedures. Document files were created, and a transcript from each interview was placed in document files. Common segments from each interview were tagged and new theme categories created. Crossing of themes allowed me an additional perspective into the data. Additionally, the diagram produced by NUD\*IST presented a visual picture of the categories and displayed their interconnectedness.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of this study was to explore the factors that come into play as individuals are selected for principalships through an examination of the perceptions of superintendents who are responsible for making hiring decisions. More specifically, the study explored detailed stories from superintendents that described the most recent principal selection in their school system.

As initially planned, data were collected by interviewing superintendents in Southwestern Virginia's Region 7. Region 7 includes the counties of Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, the cities of Bristol, Galax, Norton, and Radford. The school systems in Region 7 vary in size and student population. Interviewing superintendents from school districts that vary greatly in size was done in an attempt to develop a broader perspective of the factors that come into play as individuals are selected for principalships, and to glean information from a wider cadre of professionals with experience in hiring principals.

From the 19 systems in Region 7, 15 interviews were held. Within Region 7 there is one female superintendent. Her interview is included with those reported for this study. It should be noted that not all superintendents in the region had hired a principal. Each superintendent who had hired a principal granted the researcher an elite interview which lasted from 45 minutes to an hour and a half in length. Interviews were held in the office of each superintendent. All superintendents did not reveal the name of the school or the level for which they had searched for a principal. However, five did state that it was a high school principalship they had filled. Three superintendents hired elementary school principals and two had selected middle school administrators. Superintendents read and signed an informed consent form with information

regarding the study. See Appendix E. While with the researcher, superintendents were also asked to complete a short demographic data form. Information obtained from this form allowed the researcher to better understand the thoughts and decisions of the first-time superintendent as well as those of the most experienced.

These superintendents had served from one to 17.5 years, and amassed a total of 97 years with a mean of 6.5 years. Four of the superintendents served in school districts (both inside Virginia and outside the state) other than the one that they presently serve. Eleven of the superintendents had not held the position of superintendent in any other school district.

Confidentiality played an important role in the interview process. For the most part participants neither revealed the names of the individuals selected nor the schools they were selected to lead. However, the researcher's assurance and respect for the participant's need to maintain confidentiality played a role in the candidness with which each superintendent spoke. In an atmosphere of mutual respect, the superintendents spoke at length about the factors that come into play when making a decision to hire principals as well as the personal dispositions needed by candidates in order to be selected to lead a particular school.

Interviews began with a summary of the purpose of the study and its research questions. What qualities do superintendents look for when selecting a principal? What role does community play in the decision to select a particular individual? Superintendents were specifically asked to reflect upon and include in the response the qualities they believe are needed by an individual to be chosen to lead a school as well as the role played by the community in the decision to select one individual over another.

The initial explanation was followed by a request from the researcher to hear the story of the most recent principal selection. Each superintendent began his/her reflection with an

explanation of the process followed to select a principal. There was not a consistent procedure for advertising of positions among the school districts. Many districts advertised positions externally as well as internally while others advertised only within the school system.

Themes were identified by the researcher using information gleaned from interview transcripts. This effort was aided by the use of NUD\*IST 4 (QSR NUDIST 4 User Guide, 1997). Themes identified in that analysis are presented below using description from the interviews. The first theme presented describes the selection process including formal and informal involvement of others. School system superintendents seek input from a variety of people to aid them in the decision to select one individual to lead a school within their district. Next, the qualities as seen by the participants needed in order to be selected as a school leader include experience, decision-making skills, a focus on community, and ethics, integrity and fairness, and a focus on instruction. Included is a description of the consideration given to the needs of a particular school and community as well as the ability to get along with people when searching for public school principals. Finally, the need for administrators is a presented theme and described as superintendents spoke about the importance of school principals as well as the need they saw for administrators in the near future. An impending shortage was addressed by many with others feeling quite good about the pool of potential candidates within their own district.

### Selection Process

As interviews began, superintendents were not specifically asked to share with the researcher details of the selection process used within their school division. However, as initial interviews were conducted, superintendents detailed the process used to select their most recent

principal. Later interviews found me asking about the selection process used since initial interviews included that information.

Participants discussed the selection process used for their most recent principal selection. The need for a principal began the selection process for school systems. Led by the superintendent the process for selecting a particular individual began with advertising. Advertising for some school districts was done internally with the notification of a vacancy being sent to schools. Additionally, external advertising of a vacancy was done through the use of newspapers, local school district, and state department of education internet sites.

Involvement of other individuals in the selection process varied across the region. Superintendents openly discussed the need for a principal with a variety of people; however, the role each played in the final decision to recommend a particular candidate varied. There were formal groups organized and informal discussions held. In all cases a decision was made, and a group of three individuals ranked in order of preference in some cases to a single name in others was given to the school board for final approval.

#### Formal Involvement of Others

The selection process varied somewhat across the region from formal committee input, a predetermined set of questions, and strict time limits to casual conversations with community members, teachers, college professors, and other superintendents. Superintendents spoke at length of the process used to select a principal. In all cases a variety of individuals served to assist in the selection process. Certification and licensure of the applicant was a given and simply checked off as being there for one's information.

Teams, committees, panels, work groups. Thirteen of the superintendents interviewed explained the use of temporary groups, teams, committees, work-groups, or project teams were



widely used throughout the school systems for selection of principals. Names and work responsibilities of committee members were at times different; however, their purpose was the same. These collections of people came together in a relatively short period of time. Each team member had full-time assignments and work elsewhere, but they came together and provided input to the superintendent almost immediately.

Mr. Lane, spoke at length of his belief in and commitment to the use of teams when he said:

I have a real firm belief in teamwork, and you can take any one of the packages that exist. We have exposed our personnel to everything from Deming's method, Xerox Training to School and Rule. The bottom line is what we have given our faculty and staff is what tools are out there to work in teams. What is the best way to get there? You pick those pieces to develop your operating process within the school. There are some requirements similar to what I'll talk about in the personnel selection process that was used for hiring the last principal, but basically there is a mission statement in our division that says teamwork is how we do things. Like bureaucracies, we've got lots of other words and we had people develop that together. But, it is a mission in this division to work in teams to create a positive learning environment. That's the bottom line. In terms of principal selection the decision for principal is one step different than the decision for all other personnel.

The use of a team for decision-making in Mr. Lane's school division has become a customary practice, one that has been developed and perfected through the years. Mr. Lane stated:

The team consists of, at a minimum, somebody from my office, somebody from the school and when we select principals, we pull other administrators to be part of that team, as well as parents and teachers. So, for each position we hire that team consists of the real decision-makers. That process has been in place long enough that it has been institutionalized for us. The school board's buy into that process is just as good. When that team conducts the interviews, they recommend two or three finalists. Whatever number they choose. The team's task is to reach consensus on all the applicants that have been screened and interviewed as to who was acceptable for the job. The team can put them in priority order; they can put them in the same order; they can put them in alphabetical order, but the commitment from the school board and my office is whoever that team identifies are the only individuals that can receive the position. I will tell you that in the process 90 to 95 percent of the time there is a first choice, and 90 to 95 percent of the time I will recommend that and the board will accept it.

The process varied somewhat for Mr. Cole, Mr. Hauge, Mr. Rutter, and Mr. Milton's school divisions. Committee or team involvement was expected and composition of the team was primarily central office personnel. Central office personnel carry with them years of experience working with school principals. Because of this expertise superintendents rely on active input from the central office team on a regular basis for selection of instructional as well as administrative personnel. The team varied little from one position vacancy to another. Mr. Cole went on to relate:

Yes, we have a committee. As a matter of fact, the central office administrators, we try to have four, and I serve on that as well, for a total of five. Of the four central office administrators, the only two that are required to be there are the secondary supervisor and the director of personnel. The other two can be other supervisors that are not specifically identified. We have a script that we go by as far as the questions. Everyone is asked the same questions. The responses are recorded and we go through the process of evaluating each answer one through five with five being the highest.

Many superintendents expect a committee of central office personnel to review all applications received and determine which applicants to interview. The superintendent, as part of the team reviewed, selected, interviewed, and recommended applicants to the school board for further review. Mr. Hague stated:

The process we went through involved a committee, composed of three individuals. The assistant superintendent, the director of instruction and I interview all the applicants. I receive the applications the three of us reviewed the 12 applications, selected six for interview, and from that 6 we selected 2 that the board interviewed.

Often times it was only one central office employee along with the superintendent who screened applications. Although others had the opportunity to sit in on interviews and give input, only the superintendent and a supervisor determined the list of applicants to be interviewed. The team followed a standard interview sheet. After interviews were conducted, the team ranked the top candidates and submitted a list of names to the school board. From that group the school board chose one individual to hire. Mr. Rutter explained:

The same person other than myself involved in this is the elementary supervisor. We invite all of our directors and supervisors in the central office to set in on the interviews. We advertise the positions internally and externally. It is a mandate for the elementary supervisor to set in on the interviews with me. What we do first when we realize that we've got an opening in any administrative position, we advertise it in the paper as an external means. Also we advertise it internally in all the schools. We send out an announcement with qualifications and that kind of thing. Of course, we give two weeks as a time to apply. Then we take all those applications, and for administrative positions we attempt to interview everybody that applies in order to get a good look at it. We have a standard interview sheet that we go through. We've all got certain questions there that we can ask the person and then we get together, rank the top three and submit them to the board for their consideration in priority order or rank order. Usually it is three people we submit for the recommendation and they choose from that group.

The use of school administrators or school board members in the interview process was not a practice used by many superintendents. Only central office personnel, calling on their experience and expertise in the area of what type of individual was needed to lead their schools, assisted in the screening as well as interview process. With scores averaged and notes prepared the committee made a recommendation to the school board that ultimately did the hiring. Mr. Milton explained:

In this case we did advertise in the paper for the principal positions. Upon receiving the applications, they were screened by the central office. The only persons we really talked to were people that had completed all of the course work and met the principal endorsements. That scrubbed out two or three that had applied (one from another state and so forth). After they were screened as to who had met the requirements and all, they were interviewed by the central office (the director of instruction, the director of personnel, the secondary supervisor and the title one supervisor). This was done over a period of three or four days. At the completion of the interviews if it was anyone that was not local or previously employed by the school system we did check the names that they might have given and we could check with. I believe on the last two if I am not mistaken, maybe two people were asked to come back and we did have some further questions that they were asked. Basically, the interview lasted an hour. A series of questions, standard type questions, were asked. Upon the completion of this, scores were averaged. Each one of the four people prepared notes, and a recommendation was made to the school board who naturally in turn did the final hiring.

Composition of the team or committee that assisted with interviewing and screening of applicants for Mr. Owen's and Mr. Roe's school districts involved most certainly central office

personnel. However, for the principalship they asked a principal from the school system to be a member of the selection committee. Mr. Owens explained:

We use an interview team which consists of people from here in the central office. Often times we will have a principal from another school, but not always. When we have a principal vacancy or an assistant principal vacancy we advertise that position. We advertise in the local papers in addition to sending that information to every school, often times to colleges and universities, depending on what it is. We set approximately two weeks to four weeks to get applications back in and during that period of time we look at where those people have taught and actually decide who to interview from the applications we received. Then we set up interviews individually.

Several superintendents asked teachers and principals to serve on the selection committee. A great deal of importance was placed on the interview and placement of an experienced principal on the interview team assisted the superintendent with the decision to select an individual. The principal perspective was often times sought by superintendents. Mr. Roe stated:

What we do once principals have indicated that they intend to retire we take a look at it. What I mean when I say we, I'm talking about myself, the assistant superintendent and other central office people. We determine whether or not there is a need for whatever reason to move another principal, a setting principal or an assistant principal into one of the positions. If we know, for example, that we are going to move an assistant principal into a principalship then there is no real reason to advertise that, go through the motions and pretend like we are going to interview and hire people, when we know we're not, when we know this is going to be an in house transfer. With the interview process here, a lot depends on the interview. There is a lot of pressure on that particular individual. The interview process involves not only myself, but it involves the assistant superintendent in all searches, the director of finance in all searches and we also will use if it is an elementary principal the elementary supervisor. She's the director of instruction and in charge of elementary schools. We also like to use a teacher on the committee if we can and we like to use other principals on the committee if we can.

Including a school board member as well as teachers elected by the faculty, central office personnel, and a school district principal allowed for a cross section of the school and community to be involved in the selection of a principal. Partnering with the superintendent the group formed a team that formulated the interview process to address issues the superintendent and staff identified as important. Mr. Lopez explained:

We formulate the interview process then to address the things that I feel are important and the things that the staff has identified as needs. There are other folks involved in our interview team. I like to use interview teams that represent a cross section of the faculty and the central office. In these interview teams, I asked for one school board member to be a representative on the interview team, two representatives from the faculty that were elected by the faculty, the director of instruction from the central office and then usually another principal. I am a part of that team as well.

For Mr. Dooley, customary practice was for him to initially screen applications, decide who would be interviewed, select a committee to assist with selection of candidates, and guide the interview process. Included on the committee were parents, teachers, and a board member. This team represented all interests within the community which was a tremendous asset in the decision making process to select a school leader. Mr. Dooley explained:

I set up a committee to help with the screening of applications. Certainly, I served on it. I had one board member, two teachers and two parents, I believe. The applications had already been received and I had the data. I first started screening them. I screened the applications and decided who would be interviewed, but I think we invited almost everyone who had applied, because we did not have a very deep candidate applicant pool. I guided the process. The community and the board was quite pleased with doing a selection process with a committee like that, an interview team. You represent all of the interests, especially for the principalship. They liked it. It was well received, but I did guide it. I knew exactly what I was looking for and I guided it and even guided the discussions with the candidates.

Mr. Santino did initial screening of applications for principalship positions within his district as did Mr. Dooley. However, committee composition varied somewhat. Included on the committee were central office personnel and a faculty member elected by the school faculty of the school that had the vacancy as well. A strictly imposed time limit was set and followed for each interview. The interview process began without a predetermined set of interview questions agreed to by all. Committee members entered the interview with a set of questions known only to them. Mr. Santino related:

We advertise all vacancies. We have at least a 10-day period for receipt of applications. Following is an evaluation of applications to determine who might be what we characterize as candidates for the job. A candidate would be someone who would be interviewed. An applicant who applied but was not interviewed would be a non-

candidate. The first step is to select candidates and we did that. We invited the candidates here for what I consider to be a panel interview of approximately 45 minutes. The panel was composed of myself, the assistant superintendent of schools, another principal and a faculty member that was elected by the faculty of the school that had the vacancy for the principalship. We did not develop questions in advance of the panel interview. Although there is probably nothing wrong with doing that, but we didn't. Each panelist was told to have 3 to 5 questions and would probably have the opportunity to ask 2 or 3 of the questions during the interview. We simply invited the individual in, introduced ourselves, asked the candidate to distribute a resume and introduce themselves and then we would begin with the questions. The questions for the most part were pretty uniform. Each person asked pretty much the same question of each candidate. The rationale for not developing a list prior to an interview is that we didn't want there to be any possibility that there could be any breeches of security. None of us knew what the others would ask until we sat down here. Once the questions began though and candidate after candidate came in, I would say that the questions were uniform for the most part, structured and fair to all. We did set a time limit on the interview. Which means that after 45 minutes the interview was over. If that person in the 45 minutes answered 15 questions, fine. If they answered 12 questions, 9 questions, whatever, fine. We felt that instead of exhausting the list of questions the fairest thing to do would be, given that some people answer certain questions more succinctly than others, to limit the time.

Once interviews had been conducted, committee input on the selection of a particular candidate over another occurred for Mr. Santino's school district without sharing of information or collaboration on the part of the committee members. In an atmosphere of confidentiality, the superintendent received an anonymous recommendation from each committee member. A decision to recommend a particular individual rested with the superintendent as interview recommendations from the committee were studied and weighed against his perceptions of the interview. He stated:

Each candidate was assigned a number based on the order in which they interviewed. Each panelist was given an index card and they were asked to write with the numbers from top to bottom their top choices. The reason numbers were used is because that way the anonymity of the recommendation would be guaranteed. No panelist writes his name on the card. All a panelist has to do is write a number down. Those are completed then I examined the panelist's recommendations. Based on those recommendations and what I saw in the interview, I make a decision as to whom I want to recommend. Following that the panelists were all briefed of the identities of the people who had applied which is confidential and not to be repeated. The content of the questions was also confidential, the responses given were confidential and the panel was dismissed. There was no collaboration or sharing of information, it was simply that each individual gave his perceptions as best he could and anonymously.

Mr. Lopez asked the interview team to meet prior to the scheduled interviews. Each member received information about the candidates and a schedule as well as the interview questions. At this time open discussion was held with regard to what the team members wanted to hear from the candidates. Focusing on specific issues previously identified through discussions with the faculty, the team worked to identify evidence needed from the candidate to conclude that a question had been answered to their expectation. Mr. Lopez related:

Prior to the actual interview, we met and members of the interview team were given a booklet of information that contained the schedule, a copy of the profile as submitted by the staff and a copy of the interview questions. We met an hour before the first interview and went through all of that information and we talked about what we would like to listen for during the interview process. Again, I led that and tried to be concise with each question and say things like in this particular question I am going to be listening for this as evidence. Then I asked the other team members, "What are some of the things that you would like to hear that your candidate can give you by answer or evidence that they have this and are practicing?" After we did this we were ready for the candidates.

Consultation with team members after interviews had been completed allowed for open discussion and identification of needed qualities of the new principal. Placing rank scores of all team members on a chart began the open discussion. The superintendent played the role of facilitator. Of interest to the superintendent was that the candidate had provided evidence that was needed to match the specific needs of the school. A group decision was then made. Mr. Lopez explained:

Each individual interview member then is responsible for assigning their scores and then they rank order. At the end of the process I ask them to give their rank. I just put it on a flip chart. On one side straight down the line I would have the panelist names and across the top are the candidate names, so that in each of those corresponding grids we write how they would rank them. So, for example, if panelist John selected interviewee Sue as a first choice in that grid there would be a one. We do that and then we just set there and look at that. That tells a lot, but I tell them up front that we are going to do this and that's what we'll do at the end. I am not interested in averaging scores that they come up with. We talk about things that we had talked about before to listen for. We get into some discussions about what the staff said and then we will reference back to the interview questions that were designed based on those types of input. Back to where the school may have said that their number one choice for a stellar attribute was instructional leadership,

we say, “How did this person respond to those items as instructional leadership?” So we work it from there.

Committee assistance in some cases included several central office individuals acting independently to screen applications prior to the superintendent receiving them for review. Mr. Eisner explained:

Applications were reviewed by our director of personnel, our assistant superintendent of instruction, and our assistant superintendent for operation. They did an initial screening and then I looked at their work. In our process there was a screening device that we used, again trying to be certain that we were approaching it in a consistent way.

Screening, review of applications, and interviewing candidates was conducted prior to Mr. Austin’s meeting with the potential principal. Meeting privately with the candidate, Mr. Austin posed one question. Response to the question as well as consideration of ranking of the candidate by the central office team determined if a recommendation to hire was to be made to the school board. Mr. Austin explained:

We have a committee that is composed, in this case, of our middle school supervisor who supervises four middle schools in the county, our personnel director, our director of curriculum and our special education director. They interviewed the group and then when the interviews were completed I met personally with each of the candidates and basically asked them one question. That one question was “What is your vision for this particular school?” From that I learned whether they really had personal perspective as a principal. Then after meeting with all the candidates I go to the committee and I ask them to rank each of the interviewees in order. Each person on that committee gives me their rank as to who their first choice would be, their recommendation, down through all the people that we have interviewed.

On the other hand, committee assistance involved deciding the format to use for the selection, interviewing all applicants, collaboration, and joint decision-making as to the particular individual to recommend to the school board for approval. Through a formal interview for all candidates and an informal meeting for finalists, Mr. Powell’s selection committee jointly agreed upon the individuals to be recommended to the school board. His description included:

What the committee (myself, director of instruction and our supervisor of special education) did was we decided basically on the format we were going to use in the



interview process. Basically, we advertised, decided on the format and that format was this: we were going to have interviews that lasted approximately an hour and a half (first round) and it was very structured in the questions in the areas we were seeking to find information such as instruction, how they relate to the community, how they relate to colleagues, how they relate to teachers, support staff and all those areas. With questions designed as structure, we advertised, had 13 applicants for four positions (two assistant principals and two principals). We took a two-day period of time and we interviewed 13 people for an hour and a half approximately each time. Then we decided on the group we were going to bring back. We brought back seven. The second interview was more in the form of an exchange. Even though we asked questions it was more of an informal situation where we could just talk and we could really gain some insights into what they thought. We were more specific in some of our questions. We would say that we think this is an issue at this particular school and how would you handle it? How could you improve it? It lasted about an hour for each of those people and it was a good exchange. From there we decided on the two principals we were going to employ.

There were times when a committee or team was formed at the request of the superintendent in an effort to provide him/her with a different perspective. The involvement of a teacher panel from the school where the vacancy exists was a valuable tool to the superintendent. With specific directions not to select one to hire but to inform the superintendent of their perceptions of the candidates' strengths and weaknesses, a committee moved forward and provided the superintendent with additional information. Adding the teacher perspective allowed superintendents additional insight. Central office personnel as well as school board members were asked to meet and talk with the potential school leaders. Mr. Green explained:

I started the interview process. I also decided that I would ask the teachers to select a committee of 3 or 4 teachers to work with me and I would give them the opportunity to interview semi-finalists and to give me their input. Not necessarily to let them make the selection, but to let them react to and meet, ask questions and react to the applicants. I also asked our instructional assistant to interview the candidates as well, so there would be two of us here interviewing as well as a committee of teachers. I also decided to ask our elementary supervisor to interview the finalists. I also asked two school board members to meet and talk to the finalists and give me some impressions. I arranged for the candidates to meet with the committee of teachers from the school. They came here, sat in the conference room, and I wasn't anywhere around. They prepared their own questions. Their job was to talk to the candidates and certainly give them information about what they thought at the same time to ascertain something about their philosophy of education, administration and get a feel for it. I asked them not to tell me who to hire, but to give me strengths and weaknesses of the candidates, and they did. They met with

each of them for probably at least an hour, hour and a half, and asked a lot of good questions.

Community input through service on a selection committee allowed valuable information to reach the superintendent. The information gained through permitting the community perspective to be included gave the superintendent a view of the candidate that could be seen through the eyes of the community only. This information greatly impacted the decision to favor one candidate over another and ultimately recommend a candidate to the school board for hire.

Mr. Dooley explained:

I recall now that I did have a second choice. He was very experienced as a principal, but they didn't like that particular individual because they said that he's too slick, just too slick and to me it was just telling me that he doesn't fit the culture of our community. The way he answered the questions and his mannerisms did not impress the community. He had a strong background, but he did not impress the community too much. Which is good. It helped me to have a community representative so that I could get into the nuances of what type of person they were looking for. How does this person act, talk, and what kind of accent does he have?

#### Informal Involvement of Others

The decision to select and ultimately hire a certain individual to be principal of a school involved the superintendent in discussions with not only school board members, local people on committees, listed references on an application, former employers, and college professors, but people the applicant may have known at one time and may have had the opportunity to only casually have met and known. Mr. Green stated:

As I will do anytime, thinking about a principalship, I talk to school board members about what they were looking for in the new principal, and especially two or three county board members in particular were really interested in this school. This is not unusual. Some who live in other parts of the county weren't quite as concerned about this school as they were in the schools in the town or section they represented. That's not unusual either. I wanted to get some input from them about what they would like to see and the process that I generally use. Obviously, as superintendent, it is my responsibility and our board accepts this is very much my responsibility to make the final recommendation. I make sure that I keep them informed. I also knew someone else who had taught in that community and retired, an outstanding educator, and I knew that we had a mutual friend here in the county. So I asked her to give her a call and just say what do you know about

this person? What's her reputation like in the community and in the school? In all cases what I got back was very positive.

Phone calls and double-checking all references was not an unusual task for superintendents when they were looking to fill a principalship position in their schools.

Principals are key individuals for schools and school districts. Although it may be quite time consuming making a good decision about the person to select was a high priority for superintendents. Mr. Powell explained:

It was a long process. We double-checked all references. Not only did we take those that were written, we made phone calls, we thought that the impact that these individuals would make on our schools over the next years would be great. We wanted to make as good of an informed decision that we could possibly make. After the first set of interviews we told them (the school board) who our final candidates would be. They didn't interview and were not in on that part of it. They were just supportive of it. They wanted change within their schools and that's one of the mandates they gave us. When you hire new principals, look at some people that can be change agents. They were extremely supportive during the process. Basically, I met with them, I went to them and told them from my research and talking with professors I had at Virginia Tech asking for their input, the size of our schools, our needs within our schools, that this was the best configuration that we could do with the funding we have for administration to align these positions in that particular order. It was important to me. The school board supported that. I kept them informed totally.

Through the involvement of others in the decision-making process from simply supplying information regarding perceived needs of the school and strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, to openly supporting a local candidate the involvement of others was of key importance to the superintendent. Mr. Bull explained:

The politics of it? You try to neutralize it, you can't, but you try to neutralize it. The best way to neutralize the political aspect of it, I guess, is to make sure that in your interview processes and so forth that you bring out what you are looking for and let them make a judgment there.

Whether the superintendent sought input from school board members was many times a result of the needs of the school board to be directly involved in the selection process. Not that

the superintendent was not open to school board involvement, but at times the board demanded more direct involvement. Mr. Owens related:

This is starting the second year that this school board has been in office. They still are a little more hands on than other school boards that are elected. So, they like to hear about these people, they like to know what is happening that sometimes they also like to know these people to know that they are respected in the community and that they are respected by other teachers, and they have done things before that may lead to the job. Since this is an elected school board people in the community feel comfortable going to them and saying well you know this is what we'd like to have.

Many times recommendations for a favorite candidate abounded. Difficult as it might have been to choose another individual, superintendents moved forward to make a balanced decision. With a thorough understanding of the needs of the community and the school along with knowing what it was like to be a principal coupled with input from several sources assisted the superintendent. Mr. Dooley related:

There is going to be a political side of hiring that gets into the principals end. There may be a favorite candidate out there, a local candidate who is not the best candidate. You have got to deal with that issue. For me, I know what I will do. I intend to hire the best principal. I don't think it is that hard to select principals if you have someone experienced doing it. By experience, I mean someone who has been a principal. You can study it, think about it, talk about it, but you need to be one before you can understand what it is like.

With the focus on hiring the best person for the job, together a committee reached a united decision in the midst of local candidate support. Mr. Powell explained:

There was some [opposition] and that was an important factor. It did serve us some. We only had three people apply from within. Probably in some particular areas it was probably thought that maybe we should have hired someone that was in that particular situation. The committee felt that wasn't the person that we needed.

There was, for superintendents, the opportunity to talk with people outside of the school district that may have had the occasion to have worked with and to have knowledge of the individual candidates. College professors who had worked with individuals in class were asked for input into the decision to select one individual over another. At times when the interview was

completed, superintendents continued to make calls to solicit information about the candidate.

Mr. Hauge stated:

You naturally talk to college professors. I haven't lost all of my ties at Tech. I call them and ask what can you tell me about this individual? The superintendents network, you talk to the current superintendent and the former superintendent. We do the usual checks and try to ask the usual questions like how they got along with people and how the school ran. I remember I had a friend who had left the superintendency and joined a college staff at a university. I had interviewed for a principal an individual who had every attribute. He answered every question in the interview process perfectly he was perfectly dressed. Everything. I called him up and told him I was calling to check on an individual that has applied for a position and who worked in your school system. I am calling because he almost seems too good to be true. He said, "Well, what is his name?" I told him the name. He said, "I have somebody in my office and I can't talk with you right now, but it is." He said, "I'll call you later." I said, "You don't need to call me later, thank you and good day." If we had gone on how he performed in the interview and his selected references, he was fantastic.

Superintendents investigate the potential principal to make certain that the qualities seen in the interview process have actually been practiced in the past. A need seen for the local school poses a concern for superintendents and interview teams. A quick phone call to the candidate's superintendent can confirm what a team thought it saw in an interview. Mr. Lopez explained:

I asked the interview team, "What are some of the question marks in your mind about this candidate?" I took notes from that and then in this case we had a very strong front-runner candidate, the one that was eventually the successful candidate. I took that information and called the superintendent and asked about those very specific things. This particular person had some of the same kind of strengths in dealing with similar issues when they took a position in that district seven years ago. So that was one of those things that was appealing to us. There were similar issues and so in that conversation with the superintendent I was able to say here are some of the things that I would like to know more about. How does this person perform in this particular situation? One of them, for example, was a personnel or human relations kind of issue in that two of the other people were already assistant principals in that building. I wanted to know how the superintendent would evaluate this person's ability to come in and the work with two assistants who had unsuccessfully tried for the job. She was able to tell me that was a similar situation before and that this candidate had worked very closely with those people to bring them in and make them a real part and that she had great sensitivity to the person in that district and actually brought them in and made them feel more at ease. That was good to hear because that was one of the concerns that we had.

### Qualities Superintendents Look for in a Principal

What do you need to have to be a principal? What knowledge, skills, and abilities lend themselves to be an advantage for one person over another? What qualities do superintendents look for when selecting a principal?

Superintendents focused on looking for a principal with experience. Experience included having been a principal or assistant principal and having teaching experience at the level of the school where the vacancy existed. Only experience in being a principal was many times not enough. The needs of schools dictated that more than experience was needed. Individuals many times had to be able to move into a school in turmoil or a successful school with a united and forward moving staff. The ability to do that was part of the personal relationship skills of candidates as superintendents, screening committees and school board members worked to select the ideal person to fit their school.

Adding to experience, superintendents found that highly tuned decision-making skills were of key importance in running a school. Informed decisions made with knowledge as well as an understanding of circumstances, individuals, school and community needs were expected. Realizing that all decisions made are not given time for consideration of alternatives, superintendents expected principals to be able to make fair decisions quickly.

Being able to relate well with all members of a community was seen by superintendents as an important quality for school principals to possess. Given that principals set the tone within their school, it was important for superintendents to select an individual with the ability to talk with as well as listen to students, teachers, parents, and community members. High quality communication skills and personal relationship skills were expected to be an integral part of the selected principal.

The newly selected principal needed to have a focus on instruction. An instructional focus involved for superintendents the candidate's ability to weigh the needs of the student population as well as the faculty. Armed with that information, the newly selected principal was expected to see to it that high quality instruction would be provided and student success achieved. With a focus on instruction the principal was able to provide the leadership needed to move the school forward.

Superintendents expected the principalship of their schools to be filled with individuals who acted ethically and with integrity, and fairness. Proven success as an educator and as a professional as well as a community reputation for having a sense of justice and fair play was seen by superintendents as important aspects of the personality of the chosen candidate.

### Experience

Certainly credentials are a must, but experience in running a school or, at a minimum, experience teaching at the level of the school where the principalship vacancy existed was in many cases a high priority. Experience for superintendents also included proven success in more than one setting. It must be noted also that experience was only one factor considered when a school principal was selected. Experience did not stand alone as a sole determining factor, but it did play a powerful role. Giving an individual an assignment at the high school and middle school levels can be a prescription for failure if administrative experience is not considered seriously. Mr. Owens explained:

Most of the people that we interview have been a principal or assistant principal before. I think that you cannot put a high school principal in who has not had any experience. We would set them up to fail if we do that so they need some kind of experience when they get there. The same is true of the middle school person. Normally, we would look for a strong person who can take the brutality of everyday. The key word is a total of 180 days plus whatever else they have to take.

Administrative experience coupled with experience working with students at the level of the school with the administrative vacancy was for Mr. Santino one of the things he was looking for as he searched for a principal. The experience of teaching at the level of the school, along with administrative experience was seen to be an asset for individual candidates. Mr. Santino related:

One of the things I was looking for was experience, administrative experience. I felt that was a positive so we selected people that had administrative experience of some kind and also at the level of the school. They had taught or administered at that level.

Experience for many did not necessarily mean that the candidate previously had to have been a principal or assistant principal. Experience with the age group of students in the school where the vacancy existed was of great importance. Previous experience working with and an understanding of the needs and expectations of students and parents at the level of the principalship vacancy were considered to be necessary. Mr. Milton explained:

We try to look at if a person has taught in a secondary situation for fifteen or twenty years, has never been in elementary school, then really look to be careful that we do not put the person where they are not suited as far as not having any past experiences to deal with any situations that might come up. Of course, vice versa, a person that's just been in elementary, you need to be real careful about putting them in a secondary situation.

Mr. Rutter agreed. The administrator needs to be familiar with the needs of students at the level for which the vacancy exists and be endorsed as an administrator. He explained:

It was based on their experiences and their endorsement as administrators. For elementary schools they had both met the requirements for proper certification. Then their experience, both of them had experience working in elementary school. That was a very important factor in their selection. I don't think that either of them had been assistant principals. If they had it had been that a principal had designated them as such in their schools. They neither had been administrators before.

Prior experience as a principal or assistant principal can give the newly selected principal an advantage when particularly difficult situations that arise. Knowing how to handle



emergencies is an area that is often not taught in principal preparation programs. However, it is an area that is learned on the job. Mr. Roe explained:

I'll give you an example. Last year we had new principals. One was a middle school principal the other was one of our assistant principals that we transferred to another school. The middle school principal in his third day dealt with a bomb threat. He did an excellent job of that. The other principal on her very first day, she lost [electrical] power. You are having to deal with no bathrooms, no food, first day of school confusion and they both did exceptional jobs. It was fun to watch brand new first year principals navigating that. They did it as well as veteran principals would have. I think they were well trained. The experience as an assistant principal was really important to them because they did have a basis from which to work. We are seeing teachers being directly put into administration positions, sometimes into a principalship. That creates hardships for them.

Replacing a principal who had an excellent rapport with the faculty as well as the community can create for the superintendent the need to be particularly careful about finding a replacement. Being able to enter a school where there had been a strong administrator who had served for several years can be a difficult task for the new administrator. However, the experience of having been a principal would serve the newly selected principal well. In many cases experience was not only seen to be an asset, but a requirement. Mr. Green stated:

So, as I said, we knew he was going to be difficult to replace. This principal and the school, the faculty had just an excellent rapport, worked together well, he built a lot of good teamwork. So, it was going to be difficult, I think that was the first thought that came into my mind, that it was going to be very difficult to replace him. He had a long and very successful tenure. He was very popular, certainly well liked in the community by parents, by teachers, by students, and I think had built the school into a good school, an excellent school. I give him a lot of credit for that. I guess my preliminary thoughts were, first of all, I probably did not want just a rookie that didn't have much experience, at least a good bit of experience in education, and certainly a fairly strong background in administration and supervision.

Mr. Hague agreed with Mr. Green in that stepping into a successful school with an experienced staff would be difficult for an experienced school administrator to say the least. Therefore, the need to find a suitable replacement could be not only difficult, but particularly important. It was important the selected individual have the personality to accept the school and

staff the way it was and move forward slowly with full knowledge of how well liked the previous administrator was. He explained,

We were looking for someone with experience, and someone we thought possessed the experience, knowledge and personality traits necessary to be successful as a high school principal. We wanted someone who could come in and be able to get on with what we were doing. We had an experienced staff. We had a principal who was liked or respected by the staff and so sometimes it is difficult to follow behind someone like that. So I give the new principal credit. He didn't come in and try to change. His idea was this is a great high school and we just want to keep on trying to get better.

Many superintendents required the candidates to be experienced as a principal. However just being a principal was not enough. Experience in a community similar to the one for which the candidate had applied was seen to be an advantage by superintendents. Mr. Cole related,

We talked about their experiences in their last position. All candidates were very talkative about their situation. The situation that they described, in one case was exactly like the situation that we had and were advertising for and what we needed. The situation of the principal that we singled out here, his experience in the community that he worked for was exactly like he came to. He came here and fit right in within a month. He understood that this school had high expectations. He had just come under that North Carolina system, their evaluation system down there where they have those high expectations as well. So as far as SOLs and other things that are important objectives, he was very familiar even with some of the strategies that are used to help SOL scores. So, it was a perfect match.

Regardless of the size of the applicant pool and the need to select a principal, a sense of urgency did not dampen the desire to select an individual with experience as a school administrator as well as experience at the level for which the vacancy existed. Mr. Dooley stated:

I was not looking for someone brand new, unless we just had to have someone who was inexperienced. It was clear in my mind what I was looking for. Number one it needed to be someone who had some experience working in high school, both as a teacher and certainly as an assistant principal or principal preferably. We had to get people in and squared away. I got the message across to everybody, especially the board. I said, "Guys you may not be pleased with the applicant pool of about seven, but we really do need to get a principal selected." "We cannot start school without a principal." I said, "That is absolutely the worst thing we could do." There was some degree of need to have a good start. The board obviously, the change in administration did not indicate that there was complete satisfaction with what had been going on at all levels in all of the schools.

Experience for Mr. Santino included consideration of not only teaching experience but the quality of the candidates teaching experience. This was high priority. The area of teaching skills coupled with the ability to command respect while encouraging cooperation plays a strong role in a principal's ability to lead a school. He explained:

Probably the considerations, qualities or criteria for the principalship that I am most interested in are number one, someone who has proven skill as a teacher. I think that you have to be a good teacher if you are going to encourage others to be good teachers. You have to be able to command the respect of and encourage the cooperation of young people yourself if you are going to, in my opinion, be successful in bringing this about in others. I am not saying that the best administrators are always the best teachers, but I believe that if a teacher were to say to a principal, "I want you to model this behavior." That principal had better be able to model that behavior in terms of teaching.

Experience also included having served special populations and different grade levels in addition to administrative experience. The need to have the school leader well versed in multiple areas was for Mr. Powell and his school system a top priority. He explained:

We wanted these people to have some special education background. That was an issue with us. We have a relatively high level of, for a school division our size, students who have special needs. Both of these principals we hired had some special education background. We were concerned that we got people who had been administrators before, either a principal or assistant principal.

Teaching different subjects or grade levels added to the experience superintendents found to be valuable. Additionally, having been a teacher for several years was considered to complement the potential principal's professional background. Again, superintendents looked to individuals with proven success in more than one setting. Mr. Santino related:

I want someone that is a proven successful teacher. I am looking for experience, someone who has been successful in more than one setting. I don't mean that they have to be in different schools. It is good to see that they have taught several different grade levels or different subject areas and been at this more than a year or two.

Experience in teaching and administration in school systems outside the local district was also a consideration for some superintendents. Candidates with teaching and administrative experience in other school systems are in many cases able to provide a new look at what had

become familiar. This can be a valuable asset for the school as well as the school system. Mr. Powell stated:

Both were from outside the school division. That was not totally a factor, but we looked at that, because we were looking for a different perspective on what we were doing. We thought that some people that had some outside experiences, outside this school division could bring that to us, so even though that was not a factor whether we hired or not, it was an issue that we looked at.

A high priority as seen by superintendents was selecting an individual with prior administrative experience. Most superintendents preferred that the newly selected administrator have teaching experience teaching the grade level of students at the school where the vacancy existed. Superintendents viewed experience teaching different grade levels as well as subjects as a positive attribute of the candidate.

Prior experience as an administrator can give the principal familiarity with the daily expectations of the job as well as an advantage when emergency situations arise. Often times the needs of the school were such that the new administrator was replacing a highly respected administrator with a very successful tenure. Superintendents explained that the need to continue with the programs and customs of the school required that the newly appointed principal have in place administrative experiences to call upon. Additionally, superintendents stated that having served as principal in a community similar to the one for which the administrative vacancy existed gave the newly selected administrator valuable knowledge upon which to draw.

### Highly Tuned Decision-making Skills

In the life of a public school principal, decisions are made everyday. Alternatives are weighed and choices made. There are those decisions that might be termed informed decisions; these are decisions that can be reached after the principal has the time and opportunity to reflect or seek input from others. At the other end of the spectrum are those decisions that have to be made on the part of the principal with no deliberation time.

The importance of decisions is not necessarily whether they require little effort or great thought. Importance lies in administrator effectiveness. High quality decision making as a desired characteristic of the individual to be selected for the position as principal was for Mr. Dooley one that defined an effective administrator. He explained:

My experience in effective administrators in the high school is there is frequently one characteristic you find. That is they are wishy-washy. They make one decision one day and somebody else comes into their office with a different version of what ought to be done and they agree with that, too. So, I was looking for someone I thought would be strong willed and follow a straight path in making decisions. I mean I didn't want a John Wayne, somebody that's big, strong and that would intimidate and that type of thing, but somebody who had that innate characteristic I feel you have to have for leadership and that again is being strong in character and decisive.

The impact of decisions made by principals has unexpected consequences at times especially for the new principal. Anticipating repercussions from a decision is one factor principals think about. However, unexpected problems present themselves as the result of a decision made by the principal. Everyone will not be happy as the result of a decision, and this is a difficult lesson new principals must learn. Mr. Roe explained:

Sometimes they will make a decision and think there is going to be a lot of repercussion from it and there is no repercussion whatsoever. Other times a principal will make a decision and they don't give it a second or third thought and the next day your building is full of parents that are upset with what you have done. It is a real awakening to our new principals after they are hired and they go in and they are enjoying a honeymoon period and everything is just wonderful. As a matter of fact, I talked with one today that had read me a letter that a parent had written. A three-page letter. He was so upset with it. After he read it to me, I can understand why he was so upset with it. It is one of those that everyone thinks you are wonderful when you first come in and then reality sets in. A parent comes in and climbs you or you have a major, major problem then the reality of the job settles in. You are not going to make everybody happy. Every time you make a decision, that's your decisiveness, they have to understand that chances are they are making someone angry. They are making some people happy and they are making some people not happy.

Being a good decision maker was considered by superintendents to be a critical component of strong leadership. Coupled with making good decisions, was confidence in oneself and being grounded in effective instructional procedures. Mr. Santino explained:

We don't micro manage the schools. If you are going to operate like that you have to have strong leadership. It won't work if you have people in the principalship who aren't decisive, who aren't confident, and who aren't well grounded in effective instructional procedures.

Principals must be able to look at all the facts, evaluate the situation, and understand all possible solutions. In so doing it was important that the school leader include opinions of others in final decisions. This included having the ability to be a team player. Mr. Powell explained:

A good decision maker looks at all the facts and can understand solutions, can see that this is the best route that we are going to go and we are going to steady this path and we are going to go there. Being able to include others in decision-making and being a team player.

Being a team player and searching for additional input when making a decision were necessary components for high quality decision-making. Superintendents expected that a principal would call to discuss problems. Superintendents, however, do not expect to tell the principal what to do, but rather express opinions and give advice after the principal has chosen a possible solution. Mr. Santino related:

Sometimes they'll call and say, we have this situation and I could do A, B, or C. I am thinking about doing B, what do you think? What are the pros and cons? I am happy to help them in any way. They know that I'm not going to make the decision for them. They're not going to call up and say, "Tell me what to do." They know not to do that.

Running a school from the central office is difficult, inefficient, and the least productive method for administrators, teachers, and, most importantly, students. School leadership by a decisive and sound decision maker was of paramount importance. The principal must be able to think on his or her feet, make the hard calls, and approach situations with knowledge of the students. Mr. Milton explained:

If they are not afraid to make decisions, whether they be the tough ones, or whatever. I guess to be able to call a spade a spade if that's what it comes down to. So, if you are going to put somebody out in the schools, you want someone you feel like will run the school and not have to try to do it from the central office, because it is tough to make calls from in here. I really believe that someone has to be able to make the hard calls and not want someone in the central office to make them for them. When that happens that's

not good because neither I nor anyone else here knows the whole situation. Suppose that they had found a kid with drugs in their locker. The kid says that someone else put the drugs there. They call down here to find out what they should do. I don't know the kid, I don't know whether they are being honest or whether they are being dishonest. I don't have access to talk to any other kids to find out. So, if he doesn't know, how would someone down here know? He just needs to make a call and stick with it, with whatever he thinks is right.

When important decisions are made by the principal, it is important that the superintendent be made aware of situations that lead to the need for a decision as well as the logic used in coming to a particular decision. Mr. Powell related, "We think that they will be good decision makers. They aren't going to hang the superintendent out to dry. They are going to keep him informed."

Mr. Milton stated that being able to make difficult decisions and yet at the same time knowing yourself well enough to know when to ask for help in areas of need was an important aspect in the consideration of one candidate over another. He explained:

Are you willing to make the hard calls if you go into the classroom and you see a teacher that is not doing a good job? Now, what skills have you had at going into a classroom and actually looking at a teacher's class and talking with a teacher afterward about the good and the bad? Naturally, if they say none we would just try to work with them and have some workshops to help in that category. That's the kind of things you actually look for. Everybody's not going to have the skills to go in there and say this is what I saw, but at least if they say I can make the hard calls, but I'm going to have to have some help in exactly what to look for, then I think you can always help them from that standpoint.

When considering effectiveness of decisions, several factors weighed heavily in the principal selection process. Decisiveness was not a consideration held in isolation. Superintendents expect that the principal will use problem analysis skills by injecting good judgment and sensitivity. However, overall personality traits played a role for Mr. Hauge. He explained:

We were looking for someone who has good problem analysis skills, shows good judgment, and is decisive and sensitive. Of course, you have to be careful because you can get someone who is very decisive, but uses poor judgment. It is a combination.

Patience when making a decision was a quality expected of effective administrators. Making decisions simply to move the day along will not produce the results superintendents expect. Principals must be prompt at gathering the information they need, use patience when analyzing the information, and respond to the issue at hand. Principals must use care in seeing to it that patience in decision-making is not masked by procrastination. Mr. Santino related:

Yes, I want them to be decisive but also I want to see some patience. I don't want to see them make a decision just to get something off their desks. I want them to promptly get the information they need, attempt to analyze that information and based on that make a reasonable response to whatever issue is on the table. Patience yes, but procrastination, no. How you determine that is probably a case by case thing.

When considering the differences among needs of a high school, a middle school, and an elementary school, decisiveness was once again a consideration in the selection of a principal. Students, parents, and faculty members at different levels in the school system vary in their needs and expectations. Mr. Dooley went on to say:

I think that the same characteristics are needed by the middle and elementary principal that is needed by the high school principal. Again, being decisive and strong. I think that it takes a special talent to work with the younger kids. I think that you need to be certain as principal not to frighten to death the young kids because you can do that if you are too much of a drill sergeant, marine or whatever. I think that is a danger, but I still think as a leader the principal has to be decisive. If you can't make decisions on your feet, if you can't stick by them, then you have no business being in the job.

Given the fact that all decisions made are not good ones, superintendents hold to the hope that they, as well as their principals, make more good decisions than bad ones. Mr. Dooley explained:

I have seen it more than one time where administrators were not effective because they were too interested in being popular, didn't want to tell somebody no, or you agree with one person who comes in your office then you agree with the next person who comes in and has exactly the opposite position yet you agree with them, too. You have to sort information and then weigh it and make a decision and hope you have made more good decisions than you have made bad decisions. You make them both. We can't always make good decisions, no way.



Sound decision-making should yield consistent decisions. The life of a public school principal seems to constantly demand decision. There are factors that impact decision-making.

Mr. Dooley stated:

When you get tired you quit making decisions or you make bad decisions. Often you just quit making decisions. You just don't see a problem or you don't interpret that fight between two boys in the hallway as a problem. You just look at it and say, "Ah, they are just boys, and boys will be boys." I wanted someone I thought would be strong willed and follow a straight path in making decisions. I wanted somebody with an overall personality trait . . . one of decisiveness. I wanted a person who looked like a leader, acted like a leader and projected that I am a decision maker and I am in charge.

Decision making coupled with the needs of the school and community influenced superintendents when selecting principals. The need for good decisions was paramount. However, schools and communities required differing styles of decision-making on the part of a school leader. Matching the principal's decision making style to the needs of the community was critical. Mr. Cole explained:

He'll give you decisions, if you ask him a question, he'll think about it and give you a decision within 10 seconds. He gives good decisions within 10 seconds and it makes the people there feel comfortable because they felt like before they couldn't get any answers. He'll want to give out an answer. The first community I described to you, they appreciated a 24 or 48-hour answer. This community that we are talking about now wants an answer now. They want to know what is going on.

Mr. Eisner agreed with Mr. Cole and Mr. Hauge that decision-making is complex and there are many factors that weigh into the equation. However, decisiveness was again of primary importance and needed by school leaders today. He stated:

I think it is important to work with people, at the same time it is important to make decisions and say this is where we are and this is where we want to be. Now, this is how we are going to get there. By continuing to find ways to work with both so that they can feel that they are part of and participants in what is being accomplished and what is trying to be accomplished.

Being a good decision-maker was considered as a critical component of high quality school leadership. It was important that the principal have confidence in his/her decision-making

ability. Superintendents expected principals to make decisions daily; however, they expected as well that the principal would seek input from others when drawing a conclusion. Included in the equation is good judgment. Superintendents explained that good judgment is a vital component in the decision-making process.

### A Sense of Justice and Fair Play

Certainly, decision-making was important. Its complexity was appreciated through the realization by participants that a decision that might be considered good for one individual may very well be questioned as to its worth by another. This problem or realization for principals and superintendents brought into focus the basis for quality decisions. That basis or foundation was good judgment, a sense of justice, and fair play.

Mr. Bull, in his evaluation of principals and certainly in his search for building administrators, looked for evidence of good judgment, a sense of justice, and fair play. He stated:

Does this person have a sense of justice about them? Do they know what is fair play? Do they seem willing to assume responsibility for themselves and require others to assume responsibility? You help them in the process. It is hard to measure, but we watch that going on. If I see a person I feel is acting arbitrarily or capriciously and they let their emotions get involved in the decisions and they punish the child more severely than they did this other child just because they didn't particularly like this child and had a run in with mommies and daddies. I have a real problem with that. Because here again we are getting indicators that this person lacks a sense of justice.

Mr. Santino agreed with Mr. Bull in his belief that principals need to be guided by a sense of integrity during the decision making process. Being fair and just required the ability to stand strong with courage rooted in these principles. He maintained:

One of the questions we asked gets at a situation where you might have to take a stand against a teacher in favor of a student, especially if the teacher is clearly wrong and if the student is clearly right. I want someone who has the courage to do that. I am looking for someone who has, I guess I say fit under the category of what I call integrity and who is institutionally centered, but also recognizes that right is right, just is just, and fair is fair, and is willing to be guided by those principles.

Mr. Santino goes on to relate that which is considered fair and just to high quality human relations in schools. He stated:

You need good human relations in schools. You need an atmosphere of trust. You need an atmosphere of honesty and support, but also a commitment to what's good for students, what promotes learning and safety, also what is fair and just, and what is the truth. I think that if you have those things highest and above all you'll do fine. If you begin compromising on student learning, student safety and losing sight of what's comfortable for us versus what's right, true and just you will have problems.

A sense of justice and fair play requires a principal to keep his or her feelings about a student or a student's parents out of the decision-making process. In an effort to determine if an individual has a sense of justice and fair play, it was important to gain an understanding of how the candidate would handle situations as they arise. Mr. Bull went on to explain:

I give them a hypothetical situation that is highly emotional. If you had to physically break this fight up, one kid quit automatically and the other kid wanted to continue fighting and you had to physically restrain this kid and take him to the office, what are you going to do after that? What I am looking for hopefully is somebody who's going to say, well first of all I am going to separate the two combatants and get them in different areas where I am going to let them chill out for awhile. In the process, I am going to chill out myself. I look for things like this. You want to keep your feelings toward that kid as an individual or his parents out of it. You want to discipline the kid for what he did in the situation. All too often people will fly off the handle, so to speak, and they will say, "You just get out of this school and don't you come back for a week." Well, it would have been better to say, "You go set in my office and I'll be in there to see you in a few minutes." Those are the things you look for when you deal with and work with principals. How well did you handle that situation?

The need to look inward at oneself was an important component of a sense of justice. Being able to evaluate a personal response the principal or prospective principal may have had in a situation lends itself to being able to admit that perhaps there was a contribution on his or her part to the problem. Mr. Bull maintained:

You give them a hypothetical so they may be able to work through it. Well, that's a game, but you are looking for certain things. What I'm looking for is somebody that demonstrates a sense of justice. Does this person have the ability to look at themselves a lot of times and ask, "Did I contribute?" "What did I do wrong?" Let's look at ourselves first and see what we are doing. It is very difficult to get people to do that because they have to admit that maybe they are wrong. A principal must be able to ask themselves,

“What have I been doing or what have I been emphasizing that is wrong?” This is difficult for many because it requires change.

Superintendents don't expect that all decisions made by principals will be the best possible decisions. However, they do expect that the school administrator will have the strength of character to be able to admit that an error had been made. Added to the ability to admit there had been a mistake, the principal must also be able to seek help. Mr. Milton added, “Around here, you hope you make the right decisions, but if you don't you can't be afraid or hesitant to say, well, I messed up and I need help.”

Superintendents expected school administrators to be grounded in a sense of justice and fair play in order to effectively move a school forward. In everyday dealings with faculty members, students, parents, and the community in general, principals must overlook socioeconomic background, gender, and ethnicity to name but a few. Superintendents searched for school leaders who more than just understand the importance of justice and fairness to all. They expected the school's principal to practice justice and fairness as well.

#### A Focus on Community

Public school principals today have to have the sharp skills necessary for bringing out the best in teachers, parents, students, and the community. Overall community response to the principal was an important consideration for superintendents when selecting a principal. Schools serve communities. Therefore, it was important to understand that schools do not do their work in isolation. Additionally, principals must work to more than just understand the community they serve. They must be willing and able to relate well to all within the community. Mr. Roe explained:

People skills are the first thing. People skills were just exemplary. His working knowledge of academic programs was right there. His work ethic was right there. The first thing was human relations. His people skills were right there and then his desire to

strengthen the academic program. We have not looked back and second guessed ourselves on this at all. As a matter of fact, we wish we could find more like him.

High quality people skills include the willingness to listen to gain understanding of students, parents, teachers, and all other individuals. This listening requires that a principal be able to create a supportive atmosphere in which another person can talk without being defensive. There must be shown a genuine concern about the other person and respect for his or her point of view in order to work through tasks, projects, or problems as they are presented. Mr. Eisner explained:

The issue of presence in terms of how the community receives a person is also extremely important. You have to try to as best you can during the process of an interview, get a sense of how a person would encounter issues that come up as they relate to the community or issues that come up as they relate to individual students and their parents interaction with the school. You have to be able to interact with folks. Being able to hear what they have to say, to listen for understanding and try to work through situations that arise. Certainly they are communication skills, people skills and listening skills.

Truly listening and talking with parents and focusing on what can be done together, how to make decisions together, and how together they could get things the school needed certainly required that the candidate be able to present more than a philosophical foundation for parent involvement. Mr. Lane stated:

I think it was the perceived needs of the school at the time were such that they needed a leader that could listen and talk with them to help get to where that vision would be. That was, I still believe the deciding factor. The other two candidates philosophically presented those kinds of things. Here is a view I have, here's what I want to do. This gentleman talked about more how he would work with parents, what they would do together, how they could get things and of whatever decisions were going to be reached. He was putting together all the pieces of leadership.

Superintendents as well as principals must truly understand where the school fits within the community. What is the role of the school within a particular community? What are the expectations of the community for students and education? It is necessary for the superintendent to select a particular individual to serve as principal of one of the district's school that has the

ability and is willing to work to seek understanding of the desires of the community for education of their youth. Mr. Eisner went on to say:

I think that we've got to understand our mission in the context of the communities that we serve. I guess what I mean by that is, yes, we are a high school and yes, that means that we are working toward having students to finish school and to graduate, but beyond that, how does what we are doing fit into the context of the community either give indication, give light to how we have to approach things and need to push things. We were looking for someone we felt could do that. We do our work in a context. There are a lot of things that define context. I mean a lot of things help to define the context that we operate in. For example, laws, regulations, policies and the local curriculum to name a few. It is important for the principal to understand the community and its desires and try to seek out what the community desires are for the school and for education in the community. This is an important part as we seek to develop programs and opportunities that speak to the needs of the kids and speak to the needs of the community as well.

Prior experience of having worked in the school community where the principalship vacancy existed was not always seen as an advantage by superintendents searching for a building administrator. For many it was considered to be a disadvantage. Mr. Milton explained:

We try to look for as well in the interview, how the person would work with the community. We look to see if it is a person that has taught in that particular school, and that's the one that they have applied as a principal for. A lot of times, that can be a problem for the person. It makes it doubly hard on them. So, unless it is an unusual situation, you probably don't want to put that person back as a principal of the school that they are presently a faculty member in.

Meeting the needs of differing communities was seen as a challenge for the superintendents. Community voice in principal selection was seen not so much in pressure for the selection of a particular individual as it was in giving the superintendent an understanding of the needs of that particular community and school. Searching for and selecting as best possible the individual who had the personality and leadership style that matched the perceived needs of the school and community was very important. It was for many the concept of fit. Community input in the selection process allowed the superintendent to understand better if the selected individual would fit within the culture of the community. Mr. Cole explained:

There had been a lot of disharmony in the community, faculty, and everyone. The community felt that the school was out of control. He came in and he is a task master. For example, one of the first things that he did was get a new football coach. Where they had won three games and lost 40, since then, I think that they have won a lot more games than they lost. He turned that around. Since he turned that around, a lot of people in the community feel like he is the answer. He knows how to win. He is a winner. You know that's felt. There is an old saying in school administration, the principalship, win your first football game and you'll have a good year, lose your first one, and it's a rough year. Never heard that before, have you? Yes, there is no doubt he has excellent people skills.

The school is a reflection of the community, and if there is turmoil within the school it is also a reflection of that which is in the community. The culture of the school is also a reflection of the culture of the larger community. When placing an individual in a principalship position Mr. Dooley found it to be of considerable value to look to the community. When doing so great insight into what the community felt was acceptable was the result. Mr. Dooley explained:

In most of the situations I've been in, just about every situation I've been in as a principal, the school was in turmoil. If you have a change in the principalship, you can almost count on there being turmoil in there somewhere. Not always, but my experience in the jobs that I've been in there were problems and that is probably why the position was opened up. Either the individual left, retired and there is a need to understand that this is not a criticism of the person who leaves under pressure that somehow or another they are not a good person or a good leader. You can be a leader in one situation and fall flat on your face in another situation. You have got to match the style and talents a particular leader has and what an organization needs. Sometimes you get a match and sometimes you don't. I think that it is very important to have a feeling for what type of individual you need in a particular school. That may be more important than anything else. Does that particular individual fit into the particular organization? Certainly he was a very experienced principal, but the community didn't like him. They said that he's just too slick, just too slick. This was telling me that he did not fit the culture of our region or community.

Mr. Rutter found a similar yet different situation when looking at the needs of the community and the candidates he interviewed. He stated:

Well, the one community is a female dominated community. There is a high incidence of single-family situations and all the contributions to the school and the parental relationships with the students is female. This is the first female that has ever been principal of that school. She did a fabulous job of getting all those women to support her and she has done a marvelous job with parental involvement, community involvement, and that type of thing.

Often times the needs of the school and community are seen and agreed to by the superintendent, as well as the community. However, the choice of a particular individual to be principal in the local school created vocal community opposition. Local support for a favorite son created for the superintendent the opportunity to weigh carefully his/her decision. It was then that the superintendent considered the qualities of the selected individual and the needs of the community even more carefully, as well as decide whether or not to push forward with the selection and hope that the right decision had been made. Mr. Bull related:

We were looking for someone that demonstrated the ability to get along with others, to work as a team and be a team player. While they still maintain their independence, they would not forget they are part of the system. Another thing we were looking for there was a person that had demonstrated that they can get along with the community people and could deal with situations where children could be difficult, yet they could be disciplined constructively. We also look for people who can provide moral and ethical leadership in the community and in the school. I think that is very important. We felt that the person we found had the moral and ethical standards that we wanted the school to be role modeling. Subsequently, we hired the person. The politics of it? You try to neutralize it. You can't, but you try to neutralize it. Initially, a lot of people in this community were real vocal in opposition to what had to be done for that particular school. But now those people who were very vocal and opposed see that what we have done is to correct things that should have been done. That depends on the qualities of the person that enters. That's why I mentioned about the moral and ethical standards, the ability to relate to others, the ability to work as a team member, the ability to just get along with people.

Mr. Austin found local support for a particular candidate to be strong. For him, not unlike other superintendents, there existed the need to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate to his perceived needs of the local community. This in itself was a critical component in the decision to select a principal. He explained:

I guess this might be called a favorite son community. That was a negative when I evaluated the candidates because my concern was whether this person could go into this community where they reside and deal with people in a professional way (and I don't mean that in a bad way) when you have personnel issues, student behavior issues, it sometimes makes it difficult to deal with people you shop with, go to church with and all those sorts of things. I am also convinced that this person can do that.



Mr. Austin explained that the selected individual's personality and background was a good match for the student body of the school and the parent group that had their children going to the school. This was seen as an important detail to consider when selecting a principal. He explained:

This person is very businesslike, very matter of fact and the approach to education will be a supporter of high standards (and I am not just talking about standards of learning) which is high expectations for achievement for all of the children and will set a tone within the school that I think has been missing. That was very critical to me. Had the school been operating exactly as I wanted it and exactly as I would have expected it to in the past, I might have chosen a different person. I needed a change agent. I needed someone who in fact has a vision of what a middle school should be for all children, not just some, and has confidence that children even from the lowest socio-economic groups can be successful, that parents from the lowest socio-economic status have one thing that they really need and that is for their children to be successful in school. I think the community, once they get to know the person, will be very supportive of what this person is trying to do.

A master of community relations is needed for schools today. With knowledge that schools are different, a well-founded understanding of community difference was a consideration as well for the superintendent as decisions were made to choose individuals for the principalship. The overall personality of the school faculty and expectations of parents weighed into the decision and created for the superintendent the need to find a match between the new school leader and the community. Mr. Green explained:

I wanted someone who could work well with the community, who had mastered community relations and had shown evidence of that. There are a lot of ramifications in community relations, whether it is working with business, industry, the civic clubs and just individual people, town government, county government, whatever it is. I think you look at each school when you start searching and evaluating what you really want in a principal of your school. You really want to try to fit the person to what is needed, what the community sees, what the teachers see, what the students would see. You look at the school the way it is. Let's say sometimes especially at the high school, you say, oh my goodness it seems that the last principal's discipline wasn't quite what we wanted, it didn't turn out well. I really think that we need someone who's going to be a little stronger in discipline so teachers really can have a chance to teach. You might want someone that is more instructionally oriented. You are always looking for the perfect person who's strong in all areas. You rarely find that, I've found. What you wind up doing, I think, is you first of all decide what are the real things you really need in this

school because of the uniqueness. Every school is unique. The faculty is different. The faculty's personality as a whole will be different from one school to another. The community will be different. The parent's expectations may be different, will be different, from one school to another. So, you really try to map out what they are and hopefully match. You don't always get it right that's one thing I've learned. I don't think anybody will tell you that you always get it right.

Communities differ. For Mr. Rutter this understanding weighed heavily in the decision to place certain individuals in school leadership positions. Communities are not unlike people.

There are certain dominant traits for one that just do not exist in the other. A firm respect for the differences allowed superintendents to aim for a compatible relationship between the school leader and the community he or she serves. Mr. Rutter explained:

I would think that in both cases you have to involve the community. They just demand that. The one community would be more negotiable toward what a principal would want and what they would want. The other one can be much more demanding, having their own input. Every community is different and these are just different.

In order for schools to be held in high regard within a community, it is the responsibility of the principal to create a relationship with community. The schools belong to the community, and the principal is the overseer of the school. Quality relationships are quite beneficial for the school to be seen as an inviting place. This was for Mr. Powell's school district an important consideration. He related:

Things that we really look for in that process are one, that the people we hire would have good community relations. Our schools have not been as user friendly, as community friendly. We want to be perceived as being an inviting place for students to learn, an inviting place for our parents, and also our people in the community. That was a big issue with us, it really was.

Being able to relate to the community was for the superintendent a quality that made the difference during selection. Realizing that community included everyone and excluded no one, the superintendent pressed forward with a firm stand and belief in doing what was best for the overall community. This was not done in isolation but with support from the community. Having been given the opportunity to spend time with the candidates, overwhelming support for an

individual was gained. A candidate from outside the system left an outstanding impression especially when reference checks supported what the interview team thought they saw. Mr. Lane explained:

All three were qualified. Two of the three were internal candidates and the person that was chosen was not, which is somewhat unusual for a small school division. The qualities that the person brought to it in his interview and in what we found about the individual was his ability to relate with a diverse population. He had a track history of treating all people the same. It was the diversity and the ability to deal with all kinds of folks and not necessarily come in with an air of I'm better than you. I guess that everything that we found on the person in the personnel research and what the final factor was that if your family had a million dollars he treated your child in the same manner that he did the child that was on free and reduced priced lunch. That was the distinguishing characteristic that we found with him. I don't know if I am expressing it very well, but the most common discussion when we looked at the candidates was, you know this guy could set and talk to (so and so) he can also set and talk to (so and so). Our selection panel that time very clearly was made up of the top and the bottom socio-economically, based on the parents we invited and the teachers and the other folks that were part of the interview team. He was able to set and talk with them in the interview process very well. He talked with them, not at them is probably the best way to describe and probably why he came out as the top candidate.

Strength in the area of instruction and school management was not enough to win selection to a principalship for even an energetic and experienced local candidate. The proven ability to work with and relate well to the community at large placed an outside candidate in the school leadership position. Mr. Green related:

She [the inside candidate] definitely had strengths and there is no question she could run the school. The question was, how many of the people, the different groups respond to her. People just didn't feel comfortable with her. I wanted someone who could work well with the community and who has shown evidence of that.

The bottom line for superintendents was matching the needs of a specific school with the qualities of the candidate. This was a foundation for superintendents as well as interview teams. Certainly, standard expectations existed in all school districts. However, extra attention was given by superintendents and interviewing teams to matching the candidate to the specific school culture and climate. Mr. Lopez explained:

I think that when hiring particularly principals that there are certain things that are standard that you look for. Above and beyond that there are things that are specific to each school that you need to pay attention to because you may have a very strong candidate who is generally strong but needs some added skills in other areas that are specific to that school's climate and culture.

Schools are comprised of children of the community. Superintendents acknowledged and respected each community and its individual identity as seen through the local culture, customs, and expectations. It was important that the principal be able to fit into the community. The needs of each school varied and there was not a "one-size" principal that would fit all schools. When searching for a principal to lead a local school, superintendents were many times faced with considering the qualities of local candidates as well as those from outside the school district. In the decision to select a particular individual to lead a community school, superintendents were cognizant of local culture, customs, and individual needs of the school as well.

It was important to all superintendents that the principal be able to work well with the community. It was necessary for the superintendent to select an individual who had the ability and was willing to work to understand the community and its expectations for its children. Searching for and selecting a principal who had the personality and leadership style that matched the community was a key component of their decision.

#### Management Skills are Important, but a Focus on Instruction is Preferred

A day in the life of a principal involves taking care of the management of the building. The details of budget, signing checks, seeing to it that custodians have needed supplies, and meeting with parents certainly are important aspects of being a building administrator. However, having a focus on instruction was of importance to superintendents. Leadership in the area of instruction was expected of all principals. An instructional focus involved consideration of the needs of the student population as well as the faculty. What was needed instructionally to make certain that the school was moving forward? Superintendents explained that the ability to meet

the needs of the school and help the school move from point A to point B was a great task for principals. It involved a great deal of planning and goal setting.

In Mr. Eisner's story, a principal must be more than a key carrier. To promote student success, building administrators must have a focus on student achievement and the ability of the school to help them achieve. When this was done, all the other things would fall into place. He explained:

We believe that our high school can be a flagship school, and that it can be a model school for almost any part of the state. We most certainly have kids that are capable and we believe in them and we believe in our ability to help them achieve. That is the primary focus that we have, our children, that we work with students and help them to achieve and then all the other things take care of themselves. When we started looking for an administrator, in my mind anyway, and in the mind of the board and others as we talked about it, and we did talk about what we were looking for. We were looking for someone who sees a big picture, not a key carrier, not someone who was single focus. That is we believed that the person had to have a perspective of what the school is like and what they would like for it to be like.

Knowing the difference between management and leadership was necessary for school administrators. Involved in that equation was a working knowledge of curriculum.

Superintendents expected that principals would provide teachers with the level of instructional support they need. Principals may not be able to provide all that is needed through direct assistance, but they must know how to get done what is needed. Mr. Lopez related:

Ultimately what we are all looking for in our instructional leaders is someone who can lead. I am looking for someone who knows the difference between management and leadership, and someone who knows and understands curriculum. I am not necessarily expecting that they can provide everything by way of direct assistance to teachers, but that they know how to get teachers lined up with the right level of instructional support and that they have thought that through and they have tricks in their bag to get that done. I think each school then has its own set of things that are important in that regard. I mentioned instructional leadership. That's one of the real strengths that I am looking for when selecting a principal. Someone who knows curriculum and instruction and who provides evidence that they know how to monitor the daily instruction.

A central focus for superintendents was instruction. School administrators must be instructional leaders in schools. Therefore, instructional leadership and instructional knowledge

for Mr. Eisner and Mr. Green were major components for keeping a school moving in the right direction. Mr. Green stated:

Several teachers have commented that they really are pleased with the new principal. They think that she has done an excellent job. I know of her interest in instruction. I know from being in the building today that she was in the process of evaluating teachers who are up for full evaluation this year. She has been in their classrooms already. I think her instructional knowledge is excellent.

Instruction plays the key role in student achievement. Instructional issues in a school must be addressed in order for the students to experience success. Faculty members must be brought on board as the principal works to implement changes needed to move a school forward. For superintendents this involved being able to do whatever is needed to see to it that the students were successful. Mr. Eisner went on to explain:

To me very clearly the task of a school is achievement. I'll say that several times during the course of this, because that is what I believe. So, as we looked for an administrator who had this big picture view, we also were looking for someone who understood what it meant to be and could express their thoughts about how they could view leadership to addressing instructional issues in the school. As we well know in Virginia now, that part of that is being able to know how to help a faculty that is in the case of ours much of them were experienced and have been there a while and in a human way of reacting to changes that come down the way, we say well, it is either going to go away or I won't have to do this very long, and not put the energy and effort into it. So you have to find someone who can expect that we are going to do the things we need to do to help the kids be successful while trying to invite the participation of everyone in the process. Instruction is the primary part.

A focus on instruction was the most important aspect of school leadership for Mr. Owens. Student success and academic achievement rely on quality instruction. The principal is the key person in creating excitement about instruction and student learning within the school. Once high quality instruction is provided a pride in the school and all the extra activities will follow closely behind. He explained:

I know that we think that instruction is the most important. Once you deal with instruction then the other things come along with it. When you deal with instruction and there is good instruction then there will follow people who are proud of their school and when they are proud of the school they will want to do for the children and the other

things will follow. The cleanliness of the building will be important, if they are in high school the athletics, forensics, the one act play and the spring concert and the band concerts will all be important because the children, parents and faculty have a pride in their school. If the principal is excited about it then they are going to be excited about it. That person, whether it is a he or she, will make the big difference.

Certainly proven skills as a teacher were important, and a focus on instruction lies at the heart of school leadership for superintendents. Indeed, there may be a focus on instruction in schools; however, the school leader, in Mr. Santino's view, must be able to communicate ideas for instructional improvement. This was a quality searched for during the process of selecting a school principal in his school system. Mr. Santino stated:

I am looking for people who can articulate their ideas about instructional improvement. The matters that were discussed in the interview ranged from dealing with colleagues to discipline to content and methods of instruction and all the rest. But I am looking for someone who can clearly articulate his ideas about instructional matters.

It is not enough for candidates to only talk about the importance of instructional leadership to superintendents and interview teams. The proof was in the evidence provided by the candidate. Mr. Lopez explained:

One of the standard things that I look for is evidence of strong instructional leadership. What I am talking about there is someone who can understand what curriculum alignment is, that the written curriculum, the taught curriculum, the learned curriculum, and the assessed curriculum are all one in the same. I like to hear them talk about how they will affect that.

School leadership certainly entailed taking care of all of the details of management such as building maintenance. However, for superintendents searching for and finding principals with a primary focus on instruction was of greater importance. Many superintendents stated that with a focus on high quality instruction, all other aspects of the school would fall into place. Principals must know as well as understand what is needed instructionally for students to achieve and experience success. Superintendents expected that with attention to the details of the curriculum principals would lead the school forward.

## ISLLC Standards and Superintendent Perceptions

Is there congruence between the ISLLC Standards and the qualities superintendents maintain are needed by principals they select? None of the superintendents made mention of the ISLLC Standards. However, after a careful examination of stories related and a review of the Standards it became evident that some of the same qualities superintendents were looking for in the individuals they were planning to select would be found as Knowledge, Disposition, and Performance indicators that are components of each Standard.

There are six ISLLC Standards. However each Standard is approached from the point of view that a school administrator is an educational leader promoting the success of students through a variety of activities. The Standards are broad as given, yet the true definition of each that promotes real understanding is found in the Knowledge, Disposition, and Performance indicators that accompany each Standard (See Appendix F).

All Standards were indirectly touched upon by superintendents during the interview process. The importance of each to superintendents is not given in this analysis. What is reported is indirect referral by superintendents to the knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators that are parts of each Standard (See Appendix G).

Although interview questions did not directly relate to superintendent support of or belief in the quality of ISLLC Standards, the researcher identified themes that correlate to specific knowledge, dispositions, and performances that are indicators within each Standard. Through careful analysis, the following Standards were all touched upon by superintendents:

- Standard 1: 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 of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

- Standard 2: 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.
- Standard 3: 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.
- Standard 4: 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, and mobilizing community resources.
- Standard 5: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner.
- Standard 6: A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context. (CCSSO, 1996)

Disposition and Performance indicators of all Standards were in my view most prominent in what was stated by superintendents as needed qualities for principals selected to lead schools in their school divisions. Knowledge indicators appear to have played a minor role for superintendents in determining who would be selected principal. There is most certainly an

overlapping of Standards to emerging themes. Found in each theme are disposition and performance indicators from more than one Standard.

When relating superintendent interviews to the ISLLC Standards, it was found that principals must be able to effectively communicate with a diverse population, value and foster high quality relationships and community relations, and be well grounded in a professional code of ethics.

#### Communication, a Vision and School Principals

Communication lies at the heart of developing relationships with other people. Principals who have the ability to articulate a vision of a forward moving school were very much in demand. Added to the ability to articulate ideas for such things as instructional improvement, parental involvement, and discipline to name a few was listening. The ability to listen to students, teachers, parents, and the community in general was a quality needed by a principal in order to be able to lead a school that ultimately produces success and achievement for students.

Certainly, finely tuned communication skills were needed by principals. Communities are diverse, and the principal must be more than able to articulate an idea and listen to others. He or she must believe in and value input by a diverse school and community population. Serving the needs of the school population requires that principals have the ability to relate well with all. Effective communication allows the principal to get his or her ideas out to people as well as allow input from those individuals that are served by the schools.

A vision of student success and achievement can be realized through teamwork and commitment. In order to enlist the support of teachers, students, parents, and the community, the superintendents stated that a principal must both speak and listen to a diverse school and

community. The sharing of a vision and enlisting the support of all stakeholders in the process was necessary in order to ultimately bring that vision to fruition.

The Standard 1 Knowledge indicator most supported through superintendent interview was “The administrator has knowledge and understanding of effective communication.” The Standard 1 Dispositions indicators most supported were “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: a school vision of high standards of learning and the inclusion of all members of the school community.” Performance indicators of Standard 1 that were supported herein are “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members, and the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders.”

In addition to supporting the need for school principals to communicate a vision, effective communication was a Standard 3 Performance indicator, “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that effective communication skills are used.”

Standard 4 indicators addressed during interviews two Disposition indicators: “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: collaboration and communication with families and an informed public.” “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority.” is a Performance indicator of Standard 4 that is included.

Supporting communicating a vision and effective communication were Performance indicators. “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate, there is an ongoing dialogue with

representatives of diverse community groups, and lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community” are part of Standard 6.

Superintendents interviewed touched upon Standards 1, 3, 4, and 6 when they discussed the need for the selected principal to be able to communicate effectively. Whether it was communicating a vision or communicating with a diverse population, superintendents in Region 7 explained that communication skills were an important component of principal effectiveness. For superintendents in Region 7 a vision standing alone was only that. In order for the vision to become a reality it needed to be effectively communicated to students, faculty, parents, and the community.

Mr. Bull explained his feelings about the importance of effective communication, getting the word out, and making certain that the information that goes to the community is what the principal intended. He stated:

A lot of times leadership is taking a situation and being able to communicate that situation to somebody in a way that is positive rather than negative. You’ve got to make sure you get the right kind of information out there. You can’t set back and let it happen. You’ve got to make it happen. If you let it happen, what will happen is it will probably be the message that somebody else wants to send and not necessarily the one you want.

Effective communication fell under the category of people skills as related by Mr. Hague. People skills certainly included being able to listen as well as share information necessary for leaders to be successful in moving a school forward. People skills alone would not take a principal to the point of being a successful administrator. There was more involved. It takes a knowledge base as well. Mr. Hague related:

You can be the best theorist in the world and have the best ideas, but if you don’t have the people skills to implement it you are going to be unsuccessful. You can have the best people skills in the world, but if you don’t have the knowledge and the other aspects to go with it, you are going to be unsuccessful over the long run. It takes professional qualifications, it takes the personal qualifications, and it takes a commitment.

Mr. Milton agreed with Mr. Hague in that being a people person was key to relationships that promote a positive learning environment. Being able to relate well with the general public and teachers as well as parents was an important quality seen by superintendents as a necessity for school principals. Mr. Milton stated:

I think the key to it is if they are a people person, if they are able to relate well with the community. When they go down town to pick up the mail, if they go to the bank, if they will speak to people or whatever, just in general terms if they will just be able to talk and communicate well with the public as well as the teachers and parents that might come in. I think that is important, probably more important than it has ever been.

Being able to articulate ideas about instructional improvement was a quality that superintendents found to be a necessity for principals. Speaking clearly and distinctly allowed the principal an advantage when explaining what is seen as possibilities for the future as well as what is happening in the present. Superintendents looked for this quality Mr. Santino related:

I am looking for people who can articulate their ideas about instructional improvement. The matters that were discussed in the interview ranged from dealing with colleagues to discipline to content and methods of instruction and all the rest. But, I am looking for someone who can clearly articulate his ideas about instructional matters.

Communication certainly involved more than just speaking and writing. Effective communication was seen as a two way street, and for superintendents the ability for the principal to listen to people may well be the most important aspect of communication. Mr. Owens stated, “We look at whether or not they can talk to parents, whether or not they can set and listen to parents is probably the most important thing.”

Listening skills are particularly important when working with students, parents, faculty, and the general public. If the ability to communicate effectively to all parties concerned was not an aspect seriously considered by superintendents, as a quality needed by the newly selected principal then a vision for what a school can be and the steps needed to take the school there

instructionally were lost. Included in the effective communication mix are listening skills. These skills are particularly important when working with students. Mr. Eisner explained:

As we looked for an administrator who had this big picture view, we also were looking for someone who understood what it meant to be and could express their thoughts about how they could view leadership to addressing instructional issues in the school. I mean just being able to interact with folks, being able to hear what they have to say, to listen for understanding and to try to work through situations that arise.

Certainly, listening skills are an important part of communication. However, when principals listen and speak to parents, teachers, students, and the general public what it is they would like to do for the school or where they would like to see the school in the future a vision for the school takes life. According to Mr. Lane, this vision must be shared. Realizing that, it was important that principals involve all stakeholders. Mr. Lane explained:

I think it was the perceived needs of the school at the time were such that they needed a leader that could listen and talk with them to help get to where that vision would be. That was, I still believe, the deciding factor. The other two candidates philosophically presented those kinds of things. Here is a view I have, here's what I want to do. This gentleman talked about more how he would work with parents, what they would do together, how they could get things and of whatever decisions were going to be reached.

Getting along well with people and having a vision for the school and the ability to communicate that vision was of primary importance for Mr. Austin. He explained:

Upon meeting with them and hearing what their vision is for the school, I give them total reign on how long they want to talk about that vision. I don't put any parameters on that so it really gives me a clear perspective of how much they have thought about the school, how much they have thought about the culture within which that school is located and how much they have thought about the entire job of doing their job as a principal. The person who has tenure within the position they currently have as an assistant principal has shown a lot of leadership and is very able to speak what their vision is for the school they are going into. This is someone I know who gets along well with people, who communicates well with children at all levels.

Involving the faculty with plans for vision development requires the administrator to be able to communicate effectively with the faculty. With a focus on where the selected principal wants to take a school, the vision and the steps necessary for getting the school there begin to

happen as the newly selected principal seeks to involve teachers, parents, and students in the planning process. Mr. Bull related:

The focus to me is where do you want to take this school. Then, I'll start asking, where are you, then the next question is how are you going to get from A to B? We are mixing a little systemic planning along with it. What I am looking for there is not only their ability to analyze and focus in on those critical areas, but also the involvement of the teachers, to sell them on the concept, to say, "Hey look here, this is what we are doing, and maybe we should be doing something differently here." If you're the principal and you can't help the teachers focus on it, you've lost already. Selling the teachers on it is only part of it. You've got to let the parents know. Let the team know this is important and let the kids know it's important.

Looking for an individual with a vision of where he or she would like to see a school in the future may entail being able to look at situations in ways that have not been thought about yet. It does still nonetheless involve working with people to get the school where it needs to be in the view of the school principal, faculty, students, and community. Mr. Eisner maintained that this shared vision involves many individuals, and its importance was primary. Mr. Eisner explained:

Well, this being able to see the big picture I think that is a characteristic. Being able to have a vision and being able to look at things in perhaps ways that maybe we haven't even thought of yet. What you need is someone who can both vision where they would like to see the school be, and then you have to believe and look for characteristics of people who you think can help lead them there. What their tendencies are in working with people. I think it is important to work with people, at the same time it is important to make decisions and say this is where we are and this is where we want to be, and this is how we are going to get there.

Communication involves listening as well as effectively expressing an opinion, a thought, or a vision. According to superintendents, principals must be able to articulate their vision for learning to several different groups. Communities are comprised of diverse groups of individuals, and schools belong to the community. Therefore, principals must be able to speak to all groups effectively, and this requires placing a high value on personal relationships.

Superintendents expressed that the faculty must have input and be motivated to assist in bringing the vision to fruition. Students must understand as well experience success within the school environment. Parents, business, community organizations, and community members in general must support the school and its efforts to improve student learning. In order for all stakeholders to understand and feel they are an important part of the school, principals must be able to effectively relate to all of them.

### Communities and Principals

Communities differ. Each community supporting a local school deals with issues it shares in common with other communities and some that are unique to it. Because schools serve students living in those communities, it is important to realize that schools differ as well. Superintendents included in decisions to select a particular individual the needs of a particular school.

It was important that principals have the ability and work to foster high quality relationships with members of the school community and the community at large. The principal has the power to mobilize a community. Projecting an attitude of working together with parents and community members to positively impact student success and achievement brings the principal together with a vast array of people. The desire coupled with ability of a principal to collaborate with family and community members was a quality searched for by superintendents when selecting principals to lead their schools.

The Standard 4 Knowledge indicators most supported through superintendent interviews were, “The administrator has knowledge and understanding of: community relations and marketing strategies and processes, and community resources.” Disposition indicators that were supported herein are, “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: schools



operating as an integral part of the larger community, collaboration and communication with families, involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes, families as partners in the education of their children, the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind, resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students, and an informed public.” Performance indicators of Standard 4 most supported were: “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict, the school and community serve one another as resources, community stakeholders are treated equitably, diversity is recognized and valued, and high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority.”

Other Standards were also included in superintendent stories as related to the researcher. All indicators of each Standard were not touched upon. However, within each Standard at the least one indicator was given. An indicator as related by superintendent story was Standard 1 Disposition indicator, “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: the inclusion of all members of the school community.” A Standard 1 Performance indicator, “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated.” was included in the discussion.

Of the remaining Standards included there was only one disposition indicator given. A Standard 2 Disposition indicator was found to be included in superintendent interviews. It was a Disposition that reads: “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: the benefits that diversity brings to the school community.”

Superintendent stories included information that related to four more specific Performance indicators of Standards 3, 5 and 6. Neither Knowledge nor Disposition indicators were included. Included in superintendent interviews was a Standard 3 Performance indicator that reads: “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools.” Included in superintendent interviews were two Standard 5 Performance indicators. The following performance indicators included were: “The administrator: demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community and opens the school to public scrutiny.” Within Standard 6, one performance indicator was touched upon by superintendents. It reads: “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups.”

During the interview process, superintendents discussed the importance of choosing carefully the principal to serve in schools because schools and communities differ. Therefore, the need for a particular personality type would vary. The role played by the community in assisting with giving information to the superintendent during the selections process gives credence to the statement that community is a primary consideration when placing leaders in schools. The importance of families’ being partners in the education of their children, an informed public, demonstrating that the school and community serve one another and high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community were priorities.

With the realization that all communities have some common traits as well as those that are unique to it, superintendents worked to place individuals in school leadership positions. Superintendents looked for more than just the certification and endorsements that are needed by school administrators. Superintendents explained that communities have unique personalities and

social systems, and it was important to look beyond paper qualifications to find a match between the future administrator and the community at large. Mr. Bull stated, “Every community has its own personality, its own social system. Every school has its own social system. You are making a terrible mistake if you go out and get someone that just meets the paper qualifications.”

Certainly administrator certification was a consideration when superintendents selected individuals to serve as building administrators. Because communities vary and groups within communities vary, superintendents looked for individuals who had not only the knowledge but the ability to relate well with people. Being able to get along with a diverse population was a quality seen by superintendents as being needed by individuals selected to serve in principalship positions. A diverse population can include many times a large number of students who are not achieving and parents that can be quite difficult for principals, as well as those of a lower socio-economic lifestyle. Being able to relate to these populations was a needed asset for principals.

Mr. Austin related:

Another factor that was very important was this person’s ability to get along with what I am going to call the non-achiever and the ability to work with some of the toughest kids in the county as well as some of the toughest parents in the county and do that successfully. Therefore, I believe that person has the knowledge and personality to work in this middle school and do a good job.

Responding positively to different groups in a community was for Mr. Green a needed strength for the principal he intended to select to lead a school in his district. Strengths in other areas such as instruction can be overshadowed by the inability of an individual to relate positively to a diverse population. Mr. Green explained:

She had some real strengths. As I said, an instructional person, very energetic, aggressive in the right ways when you need to be aggressive about what you need to get for your school or program. She wrote some grants for additional funding because she didn’t think we had enough funds to properly purchase materials for a newly implemented program. We had to have more, so she went out and made sure she got more. Which good administrators, I find, will do in a very positive way and not an offensive way. So she

definitely had strengths and there is no question she could run the school. The question was how many of the people, the different groups respond to her.

Local candidates for a principalship position were passed over for a candidate from outside the school system. The inability to relate positively to the community and particularly the entire community caused many local candidates not to be selected as school leaders. For Mr. Lane in the decision to select a particular individual the deciding factor was this individual's ability to relate with a diverse population. He stated:

Two of the three were internal candidates and the person that was chosen was not, which was somewhat unusual for a small school division. The qualities that the person brought to it in this interview and in what we found out about the individual is their ability to relate with a diverse population.

The effort to determine how candidates for the position of principal would work with the community was an aspect of the interview process for Mr. Milton. Questions asked of reported references by the candidate concerned past and current community relationships. Questions of others concerned the principalship candidate's ability to work with a diverse population. For Mr. Milton it was important that during the interview process he gained an understanding of how the individual would work with the community. He stated, "We try to look for as well in the interview, how the person would work with the community."

Communities are different. This was acknowledged several times during the interview process. There rested as part of the superintendent's responsibility the need to understand even the demographics of a community. Many times the acceptance of one community to a newly selected principal would result in even a more successful tenure for the newly selected principal than originally expected. Mr. Rutter explained:

Well, the one community that I can think of where I think the person has been most successful is a community, and this as pointed out as we considered sending someone there, is a female dominated community. There is a high incidence of single-family situations and all the contributions to the school and the parental relationships with the students is female. This is the first female that has ever been principal of that school. She

just did a fabulous job of getting all those women to support her and she has done a marvelous job with parental involvement, community involvement and that type of thing.

Considering demographics included looking at the community and its past experience with school leaders. Communities had input in the selection of an individual to be principal.

Whether directly or indirectly, communities expressed preferences. Mr. Rutter went on to say:

In fact the other situation is one of the more difficult communities to work with. It is mainly because of parents and lack of parental support. She has had a little tougher go of it but she's going to survive it, but it has been a little bit different. The one community welcomed with open arms for a female and this other one did not. It has a history, in fact, the one community that questioned placement of a female in there it really was instrumental probably causing a female to leave that school as principal. It is just one of those things. Every community is different and these are just different and they are both very small schools. It has been an interesting thing that the one lady has really been very successful and the other hasn't been because of that stigma of a female principal.

Often times, community turmoil created for the principal situations that are less than desirable. When schools go through a crisis, communities react. There existed for Mr. Lopez the need to select an individual who had the ability to bring stability to the school and ultimately to the community. Mr. Lopez stated:

For example, if a school had gone through some sort of crisis and a lot of folks were up in the air, we would look for someone who had some qualities that can bring people together more so than typical. We would try to find someone who would be stabilizing.

Bringing stability to a school and community was an important factor for many of the superintendents. Adding to stability was the need to present the schools as being user friendly. The importance of schools' being user friendly was stressed by Mr. Powell when he described the need for schools to be inviting places for students, parents and the community in general. He stated:

Things that we really look for in that process is that the people we hire would have good community relations. Our schools have not been as user friendly, as community friendly. We wanted to be perceived as being an inviting place for students to learn, an inviting place for our parents, and also our people in the community. That was a big issue with us, it really was.

Being an inviting place to learn as well as helping students be successful required that principals have the ability to invite participation of everyone in the process. Superintendents looked for building administrators who could speak to the community, parents, teachers, and students in such a way as to solicit their support and participation in student success. Mr. Eisner explained, “You have to find someone who can expect that we are going to do the things we need to do to help the kids be successful while trying to invite the participation of everyone in the process.”

Student success and being able to relate to the community were points discussed by superintendents. In so doing, all Standards were touched upon either through their Knowledge, Disposition or Performance indicators. Superintendents acknowledged the fact that communities are diverse through actively working to place in their schools individuals that had the ability to work with all groups within that community. Seen as important was the building administrator’s willingness as well as ability to open the school to the public, include the community in decisions affecting the school, and actively pursue high quality community relations. Being able to bring people together to work toward common goals was seen by superintendents as a desired quality to be possessed by the selected school principals.

#### Ethics, Integrity, Fairness and School Principals

Superintendents explained that quality communication with students, parents, faculty members, and the community in general, developing sound community relationships, decision-making, and a vision for the school as well as the various management details of school leadership are grounded in a code of ethics. Believing in and valuing individuals for whom they are and treating all individuals fairly demonstrates a sense of justice that is a necessary quality for school leaders.

Superintendents spoke to a Standard 1 Disposition indicator. “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: a willingness to continuously examine one’s own assumptions, beliefs, and practices.”

Treating individuals with fairness and holding high expectations for one’s self and others were specific to Standard 2 Performance indicators. “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: All individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect, and there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance.”

When discussing decision-making, superintendents touched upon Standard 3 Disposition and Performance indicators. Specific Disposition indicators include: “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching, high-quality standards, expectations, and performances.” A Performance indicator discussed was: “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used.”

As superintendents spoke of fairness and treating individuals equitably they touched Standard 4. It contained a Performance indicator, “The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that: community stakeholders are treated equitably.”

Specific to Standard 5 was the Disposition indicator which reads: “The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to: bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process.” Superintendents spoke at length of the need for principals to have high quality decision-making skills. Performance indicators addressed included: “The administrator: demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics, demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance, serves as a role model, accepts responsibility for school operations, treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect,

expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior, and applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerately.”

The need for principals to conduct themselves with integrity and fairness speaks to their basic ethical foundation. Superintendents saw as important the placement of individuals that had high ethical standards in school leadership positions. High standards impacted all areas of the school leaders professional lives as seen by superintendents.

Mr. Bull explained the importance of the need to have principals with high standards, values, and the ability to provide a school and community with moral and ethical leadership. For Mr. Bull, it was important for a principal to adhere to the standards he or she expects of everyone else. The ability to do this is grounded in high moral and ethical standards. Mr. Bull explained:

We also look for people who can provide moral and ethical leadership in the community and in the school. I think that is very important. These are things that show up through observation that you can't quantify. A lot of times we felt that the person we found had the moral and ethical standards that we wanted the school to be role modeling. Subsequently, we hired the person. You know, people talk with you and you start reading recommendations, but the thing you are looking for in a lot of cases is, does this person have a value system that they can define for you? Do they practice that? As the ole' boy says, do they not only talk the talk, but do they walk the walk? So, I put a lot of emphasis on that. I am looking for the moral and ethical aspects because I am firmly convinced that if you don't feel good about yourself, if you don't have a good set of values that you deal with everyday, it's very difficult to relate to other people.

Grounded in a personal as well as professional code of ethics are honesty, dependability, and loyalty. These three characteristics were important to Mr. Milton in his search for a principal. He stated, “The other qualities you look for, you know, are they honest. With everything you can find out, do you feel like they are honest? Are they dependable? Are they loyal?”

Conducting oneself daily by being grounded in a well-founded code of ethics includes having high standards for oneself as well as for all students. These high standards speak volumes to students and when coupled with enthusiasm help to create a high quality learning



environment. Enthusiasm coupled with the ability to set high standards for all students was seen by Mr. Austin as being a necessary quality for the selected principal to possess. He stated, “The things that person brings to the job that I absolutely believe are necessary is a great deal of enthusiasm and very high standards for all children, not just those who are easy to educate.”

Having high standards for self as well as all students was a quality superintendents looked for. However, added to that was the need for the principal to be able to make fair and just decisions. Acting with integrity was seen by superintendents as a quality needed by individuals serving as principals. During interviews and the reading of recommendations, superintendents and screening committees worked to gain an understanding of the applicant. Questions abounded. However with a focus on the need for principals to display fairness the superintendents looked for evidence of that. Mr. Bull related, “Does this person have a sense of justice about them of what’s fair play? What’s fair? Do they seem willing to assume responsibility for themselves and require others to assume responsibility?”

Being fair and just was a component of school leadership that superintendents expected of principals chosen to lead schools. Added to this was a commitment to what is good for students and promotes learning and safety. Mr. Santino related:

You need an atmosphere of honesty and support, but also a commitment to what’s good for students, what promotes learning and safety, and also what is fair and just, and what is the truth. I think that if you have those things highest above all you’ll do fine.

Looking for evidence of integrity was for superintendents an important aspect of being a school leader. A principal that demonstrated integrity coupled with independence gave superintendents confidence that what happened in schools is what should be happening. Mr. Santino related, “Integrity is a big part of it and I think the other part of it is independence and the ability to function as a leader.”

Independence and integrity on the part of the principal certainly gave the superintendent confidence that good things are happening in the schools. However, added to the equation was the principal's ability and willingness to stop, look, and listen to himself or herself.

Superintendents spoke of the need for the principal to be able to continuously examine his or her own practices, assumptions, and beliefs. Superintendents explained that the principal be able to look inward and evaluate personally what role he/she may have played in making a problem worse. Mr. Bull explained:

What I'm looking for is somebody that demonstrates a sense of justice and fair play and has the ability to look at themselves a lot of times [and ask]: Did I contribute? What did I do wrong? Let's look at ourselves first and see what we are doing.

The ability to look at one's role in decision-making is enhanced by the use of integrity, a sense of justice, and fair play. This was viewed by superintendents as an integral part of the decision-making process. This requires that the principal keep his/her personal feelings about a student or a student's parents out of the decision-making process. Superintendents explained that it is important to gain an understanding of how a prospective principal would handle situations as they arise. Mr. Bull explained:

I give them a hypothetical situation that is highly emotional. If you had to physically break this fight up, one kid quit automatically and the other kid wanted to continue fighting and you had to physically restrain this kid and take him to the office, what are you going to do after that? What I am looking for hopefully is somebody who's going to say, well first of all I am going to separate the two combatants and get them in different areas where I am going to let them chill out for awhile. In the process, I am going to chill out myself. I look for things like this. You want to keep your feelings toward that kid as an individual or his parents out of it. You want to discipline the kid for what he did in the situation. All too often people will fly off the handle, so to speak, and they will say, "You just get out of this school and don't you come back for a week." Well, it would have been better to say, "You go set in my office and I'll be there to see you in a few minutes." Those are the things you look for when you deal with and work with principals. "How well did you handle that situation?"

Certainly, superintendents searched for an individual who had the realization that situations arise daily that are unexpected. It was seen as important for the selected principals to have the ability to stand ethically rooted in fairness and justice. Mr. Santino explained:

One of the questions we asked gets at a situation where you might have to take a stand against a teacher in favor of a student, especially if the teacher is clearly wrong and if the student is clearly right. I want someone who has the courage to do that. I am looking for someone who has, I guess I say fit under the category of what I call integrity and who is institutionally centered, but also recognizes that right is right, just is just, and fair is fair, and is willing to be guided by those principles.

Superintendents addressed Standards 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 when discussing the need for principals to lead with integrity. Demonstrated use of integrity, a sense of justice, and fair play were viewed as integral components of high quality school leadership searched for by superintendents. It was important that the superintendents were able to gain an understanding of and be provided evidence of the guiding principles of fairness and justice to all were indeed guiding principles for the candidates seeking leadership positions in their schools.

Superintendents also looked for individuals to lead their schools who could provide the schools and communities with moral and ethical leadership and had high standards and values. Decisions driven by a sound professional code of ethics were seen by superintendents as the foundation for interacting with all stakeholders.

#### Needs for the Future – Principals?

Why is the principalship of a school such an important position? What is it about the individuals who carry that title that impacts schools and ultimately the learning environment? Many superintendents addressed the importance of the building administrator in schools today as they told the stories of their most recent principal selection. Included in explanations were descriptions of an impending shortage of building administrators in the near future. For some, the pool of candidates was adequate, for most there existed the desire on the part of the

superintendent and selection committee that there be more applicants from which to choose. Several school districts have developed plans to get local people endorsed in administration and supervision. This was an effort by school systems to address an impending administrator shortage.

Superintendents explained that without high quality leadership, schools are not able to produce the kind of learning that is expected of the youth of America today. Principals take care of the business of running the schools. They manage the details of budget and reports, but they also provide moral and instructional leadership. In so doing there is created a vision for the school and it is the principal who focuses teachers and students on the goals and objectives needed in order to fulfill the vision. Superintendents stated that all along the way the principal guides the work of teachers to the ultimate goal of student achievement and success.

Certainly, a variety of leadership styles exist in schools. Regardless of the style the principal uses, he or she sets the tone for learning and much of the human interaction among teachers and students. Relationships built with teachers, students, parents, and the community have the potential to impact the school positively or negatively. Because the principal touches the lives of students, parents, teachers, and the entire community served by the school, superintendents explained that, it is important that the school leader has the skills needed to build high quality relationships. It was always the hope that the school leader will foster quality relationships in an effort to enhance community support for the school, teacher morale, and ultimately student achievement and success.

#### The Key Role in Schools – The Principal

Superintendents elaborated on the importance of placing the right person in a school. Indeed there was not a “one size fits all” attitude on the part of superintendents regarding the

principalship. Certainly, there are school administrator qualities needed by one school that would not be needed by another. There was no dispute, no disagreement, no debate among the superintendents when it was said that the principal is more than just a building manager. The person in this leadership role inspires the faculty, staff, parents, students, and the community to believe in and work toward common goals. The ultimate goal for superintendents was student achievement, success, and safety. Mr. Austin explained:

It is my believe that a great deal of the focus that students need to have on the learning that we ask them to do is enhanced by principals who have a similar matter of fact, businesslike focus on maintenance of the building, on students being where they need to be when it is time to learn, and teachers being on task when it is time to be teaching. I think that all goes hand in hand. It all sounds rather conservative, but if I were to choose a place to put my own child, I would want them in a school that was focused on education.

Strong leadership in schools is the responsibility of the principal. Strong leadership filters throughout the school. A school can experience great success and be all that it can be in a school that has at its helm a strong administrator. Mr. Powell explained:

I don't think that there is any question that leadership is at the top and filters down. Schools can function and go along with probably some inferior administrators, but a school is never (or I have never seen it) what it can be without strong leadership.

Important as well as difficult describes the principalship. It is necessary for the principal to have high expectations for student achievement as well as faculty performance. High expectations held by a principal with integrity creates an environment that promotes great things to be accomplished within schools. Mr. Santino explained:

I would say that the principalship is absolutely one of the most difficult and most important jobs in education. If you have a principal with high expectations and again who has integrity they can do great things in a school. If you have somebody who lacks those qualities you talk about the biggest mess you have ever seen.

Effective leadership for the principal does not involve setting standards and high expectations, but instead leading the students and faculty to believe in standards and high

expectations. The principal sets the tone in the school building and the result is pride in the school and pride in accomplishments. Mr. Austin explained:

The principal doesn't set those in reality. The principal leads the staff and the students in the school to believe that those values are the most important so that students, teachers and parents take pride in the way their building looks. So the children who have the opportunity to complain, complain about how hard the teachers require them to work and they complain about how hard tests are, but they also celebrate successes that they have. The principal sets that tone in the building. Without that happening you have a lot of people going in different directions, all well intentioned, but not very effective.

Principals set an example for students, faculty, parents, students, and the community.

This example is powerful. His or her demeanor sets the tone for the school as well as being passed to others as an example of human relation skills to be shared and copied. Mr. Santino explained:

I think the principal's demeanor and the way that he interacts with faculty is passed on to kids. The longer he's there the more that's the case. Some people have the ability to project warmth and acceptance and those are not just good places to be because they are warm and accepting, they are productive also. People have to feel trusted, they have to feel secure, and they have to feel appreciated. If they don't they can't do well what it is you want them to do. Over a period of time, the principal is the symbol of the organization and the behaviors seen somehow get transferred subconsciously probably.

Pride in a school and excitement about programs begins with the principal. Creating high quality instructional programs lends itself to pride in the school. The pride is then carried over into all areas of the school. The principal is the person who will make a difference according to Mr. Owens. He explained:

Once you deal with instruction then the other things come along with it. When you deal with instruction and there is good instruction then there will follow people who are proud of their school and when they are proud of the school they will want to do for the children and the other things will follow. The cleanliness of the building will be important, if they are in high school the athletics, forensics, the one act play and the spring concert and the band concerts will all be important because the children, parents and the faculty have a pride in their school. If the principal is excited about it then they are going to be excited about it. That person, whether it is a he or she, will make the big difference.

Seeing the principal allows the school visitor a bird's eye view as to what is going on in the school, what is going on in the classrooms, and what is going on in the halls. Through the example they set, principals transfer feelings of warmth and support to the school population.

Mr. Santino explained:

The example that they set when you go in a school and meet the principal you are going to see in those classrooms, especially if the principal's been there for a while. If you see the principal walk down the hall and students don't speak to him, I don't mean in a lack of discipline kind of setting. If they aren't smiling when they see him and happy to see him, now there are some kids that won't because he has had to discipline them, but I mean if they aren't glad to see him you are going to find teachers handling kids in a way that is very similar to the way they are handled. If the principal is warm and supportive of faculty, then they will be warm and supportive of kids. If a principal is distant and aloof, they are going to be distant and aloof. I am not saying that they all get together in the faculty lounge and say let's all be like the principal. It doesn't happen like that.

The importance of selecting and ultimately hiring high quality principals who fit well within the school and community cannot be overstated. For Mr. Austin hiring good principals is the most important thing that he does as superintendent. He stated:

Before I tell a principal or potential principal that I am going to offer them the job I tell them that the most important thing that I do is to hire good principals for the schools, because the principal is the person that makes or breaks the program at the school. Teachers are absolutely necessary, but without a principal that is leading them to cause them to all work together, it is not going to happen. So, the most important thing that I do is hire principals. Everything else is fluff.

Mr. Lopez agreed with Mr. Austin regarding the importance of hiring principals. The importance of selecting someone who has the skills and intellect and the determination to make everything work is one of the most important tasks of superintendents today. Mr. Lopez explained:

Selecting a principal is one of the most important decisions that you can make because that is the person at the helm of that school. You want someone who has the skills and the intellect and the where with all to make it all work. You want to get the best person for that, and you have to do a little homework on the front end to try to figure out above and beyond what you consider standard that's in addition so that school can be successful.

Principals set the tone in schools. They are in a position to directly impact instruction. The principal's role, which is of prime importance, is to lead students and faculty members to believe in and strive for high standards. Mr. Dooley summed it up when he stated, "I think the principal's position is extremely important, second only to the superintendent and maybe more important than the superintendent in the sense of really getting something done in the school."

Superintendents explained that building administrators have the power to truly make a difference in schools. Their demeanor and people skills set the tone in the building. The ability of principals to lead students, faculty, and parents to believe in and work toward high standards with expectations for student achievement makes the difference in schools. When all of their work is done in an atmosphere of integrity and excitement, great things happen for schools.

### Supply and Demand

As stories were related, superintendents included with the stories explanations about the importance of the principal in schools today as well as the need for high quality principals. For three superintendents the candidate pool for their most recent selection was adequate. They stated that the individuals they had to choose from were well qualified and the number of applicants provided them with a satisfactory choice. Four of the superintendents explained that the pool of candidates was satisfactory for this selection; however, they held strong reservations for what they saw in the future as a true need for administrators. The remaining superintendents detailed that the candidate pool for their most recent selection was far from adequate. Their concern for the school district they serve was being able to find individuals to serve their schools as principals.

Considering the majority of superintendents interviewed related that the applicant pool for their most recent principal selection was no more than adequate, Mr. Austin was the



exception and in an ideal position for his last principal selection. With a large cadre of teachers within his division currently certified as administrators and a large number who are in the process of being certified he explained that he was quite comfortable with the recent selection. With candidates from inside his district as well as outside his district Mr. Austin was able to choose the best of the best. He explained:

I can't imagine being in a better position to be able to pick administrators than we are in here. In previous divisions that I have been in the selection possibilities have not been as rich. We have a large cadre of teachers within our division who currently are certified as administrators and we also have a significant cadre who are in the process of becoming certified. I think there is a wealth of talent here and a wealth of opportunity to place competent, successful individuals into leadership roles within the schools. So, it is very good, very good at this point. We are getting outside applicants for our administrative jobs. In our interview process for the positions we just determined to fill, we interviewed one from outside the county and five were in-house candidates. Quite honestly, with any of those five in other divisions where I have been, I would have been safe picking any one of those five. So, I really got to choose the best and that's pretty exciting to do.

The applicant pool for Mr. Green was adequate, and he explained that there wasn't a problem finding quality administrators in his division. He attributes this to the fact that a large number of teachers hold administrative certification and several others are currently enrolled in degree programs. He explained:

It is really difficult getting, in a lot of states and a lot of areas, really difficult getting top administrators, principals and superintendents. Now, I don't think we have a bad problem with that here yet. I don't see it, because we have several people in programs right now. It seems that in this area at least we have more candidates than we would have had in the past. I think overall we have a better prepared, better trained group of candidates.

Mr. Owens found dozens of applicants to choose from for his most recent selection. Those interested individuals came from inside the school district as well as outside and provided a wonderful pool of candidates. He stated, "We had dozens apply. It was wonderful for the candidate pool to be so deep and wide. It was."

Large applicant and candidate pools were not the experience other superintendents expressed. An adequate pool for this selection was seen, but concern was expressed for the

future. Shrinking candidate pools and the expected retirement of several administrators in the near future was a concern for Mr. Hague. He stated:

I received 12 applications, the three of us reviewed the 12 applications, selected six for interview, and from that six selected two that the board interviewed. [There will be a problem] down the road. Principal preparation of good administrators, and being able to hire good administrators is becoming more difficult. The candidate pool is smaller, and the work load is increasing.

Once again an adequate pool of applicants for the most recent selection did not serve to console Mr. Lane in his concern for the future need for principals in his school district. He stated:

As a matter of fact that's why I made mention to you that the last principal we did not go through a normal hiring process. We had posted an assistant principal's job and have very few applicants, five for that and the board was in a position where they had confidence in one of their assistant principals and decided through some other assignment that it was in our best interest to just go ahead and just make a transfer position. So there were about three or four things that we did, including moving the existing principal into a central office position and then moving the assistant principal in the principalship. We have 12 administrators in the system. Of those twelve, eight will be gone in three years, or at least have the potential to be gone. Of the eight, four could walk out today if they so chose based on retirement requirements.

Mr. Santino echoed Mr. Hague's concern for the future. An adequate pool for this selection was seen; however, there are impending needs for the future. The reality of the existence of shrinking candidate pools was a concern for Mr. Santino. Phone calls from individuals in other school divisions requesting information as to where potential school administrators could be found was not unusual for him. Mr. Santino explained:

The candidate pool is shrinking. Shrinking and I think that down the road something is going to have to be done or it is going to be very difficult to find leadership for the public schools of America. In our area, which is pretty rich with people with advanced degrees and people with aspirations, we've done okay, but I think that the field of candidates is definitely shrinking. I'd like to see broader applicant pools than are out there right now. I have friends that call me that say do you know anybody in your system that is teaching and would like to be a principal? There is just such a shortage and I can see why.

Mr. Powell was quite shocked at the size of the pool of applicants for a recent principalship position within his system. Discussions with other division superintendents regarding the difficulty they were having finding administrators left Mr. Powell surprised with the number of applicants and the quality of the applicant pool. He explained:

We really did [have an excellent candidate pool]. We had excellent candidates. I was shocked at the other superintendents in Region 7 in our discussions and conversations we had they were pretty shocked that we had the number of applicants we had. I was really surprised at the quality of the people that we interviewed. If I were to put a percentage on it, I would say that somewhere between 60% and 70% of the people we interviewed will be good administrators. Being a rural county, not being able to pay as much as some of the other school divisions, I was somewhat shocked at the number of people we had. I think we were fortunate during this particular time. There will definitely be an administrator shortage as far as building level, especially at the secondary level.

A small number of applicants for the principalship was also witnessed by Mr. Lopez. Advertising the vacancy in local newspapers, within school systems, and on-line brought only nine applicants for two administrative positions. Of the original applicants, several withdrew which left the school system with even fewer individuals to consider. As the years have passed, fewer and fewer applications have been received by the school district Mr. Lopez serves. He explained:

There definitely is a shortage. We hired two middle school principals a year ago. We advertised it educationally, we posted the jobs on-line with different places, and we did local advertisements in newspapers. In other words, we advertised pretty far and wide. To get five candidates to interview we had to take everybody that was an applicant. So we drew, I think initially nine applicants for two positions. When we got to the interview phase and we got everyone to the point where they had their application packets complete, four of them withdrew.

Mr. Rutter mirrored Mr. Lopez in his statement that there is going to be a vast shortage of people to serve as principals. During the most recent selection there were only two applicants for each of two principalship vacancies. He explained:

I think there is going to be a vast shortage of people. I think as I told you there were just a handful of people apply for both those jobs. In the ones at the two small elementary

schools we had not more than two each. We don't have a lot of interest in principalships any more for some reason or another.

Mr. Roe continued the story when he expressed concern for finding individuals to serve in administrative positions for his school division. The near future forecasts the loss of experienced administrators. Small applicant pools caused him concern for the present as well as the future. Replacing individuals was a dilemma that faced Mr. Roe head on. He stated:

For the last principalship we advertised there were only four applicants. There was one applicant from within and the other three were from outside. We have only one person, to my knowledge, to my knowledge, one person with administrative credentials and she doesn't aspire to be a principal. There is right now a real shortage of administrators and it is growing. We are looking within the next five years we will probably have two more of our principals retire and maybe three. This is my fourth year and I only have two principals left in the same buildings they were I when I came. That's the tremendous turnover that we are having here. Both of those principals that are remaining there will within the next three years retire.

Interviewing almost all applicants was done by Mr. Dooley's school district because the applicant pool was neither deep nor wide. Acknowledging that the principalship is a difficult job, he has concern for the future and obtaining people to serve as school leaders. He stated:

I screened the applications and decided who would be interviewed. I think we invited almost everyone who had applied because we did not have a very deep applicant pool. There weren't very many applications. I'm not sure any principalship is a fun job or an easy job. It is going to be difficult in the future getting people in principalships that can do the job.

The majority of superintendents included in their stories of their most recent principal selection their concern with finding individuals to serve as principals in the near future. Although applicant pools were considered by several to be adequate at this time, there were those that had as few as two individuals apply. Most superintendents have seen a definite shrinking of the applicant pools. Accenting the concern expressed by superintendents was the fact that for most school districts there will be numerous retirements in the next three to five years.

## Fewer Applicants

Most superintendents expressed concern that the applicant pool for the principalship is lessening. When asked to present their view as to why this was happening, responses varied. For some the explanation began with geographic location. The geographic location of their systems impacted the availability of principalship programs for their teachers. For others, geographic location was not a factor, but compensation for principals was the immediate response given. Superintendents agree that there is a high level of responsibility for school principals. The explanations of many is that salary and benefits do not seem to match the level of responsibility held by school administrators today. Superintendents explained there are many problems associated with the principalship as seen by teachers. These problems factored in with compensation do not present an attractive picture to teachers. Therefore, fewer teachers are seeking positions of school administration.

Geographic location seems to be one reason that Mr. Roe stated there are fewer applicants. Institutions of higher learning that are offering advanced degrees in administration and supervision do not seem to be effectively impacting the most rural areas. Mr. Roe stated, “Programs really are not turning out especially in your very rural southwest Virginia sections, I think, enough administrators that are really going to fill the need.”

Mr. Milton agreed that location impacts the ability of individuals interested in advanced degrees in administration and supervision to be able to obtain them. He stated:

Yes [there are people in preparation programs]. Probably not as many as you would like to have. Simply because of our location sometimes there is a lot of travel involved in getting into a specific program that might be done reasonably quickly as well as not having to be done on the college campus.

Geographic location for some was considered a factor that kept individuals from pursuing needed credentials to assume a principalship. However, Mr. Santino explained what he has seen

as well as heard from individuals regarding the principalship. Part of the reason was compensation. He stated:

I don't think that principals are paid anywhere near what they should be paid for the scope of responsibility and the risk that's involved in the occupation that they have chosen. I think the shortage of principals that's being addressed, but it's not being addressed because it is right to pay them for what they are doing. It is only being addressed because there are so few of them. I guess that's the market place at work. We have had people who would say on a per diem basis it would be a cut in pay, which it would be. We've had people who say, "I just don't need the hassle, I'm here at the top of the teaching scale, I get two months off in the summer, I go home at night, nobody bothers me, I don't have to cover an athletic event, I'm just not interested." We haven't offered them a position, they haven't turned it down, they just haven't applied.

Salary and benefits are a great consideration for individuals pursuing a career as a public school principal. Certainly, the quality of life a school district has to offer is a draw for many. However, Mr. Roe found that principals come to his district and serve for a few years. Then they are drawn to other school divisions that pay higher wages and offer better benefits. It has been difficult for Mr. Roe's school district to compete. He stated:

The quality of life here is great, the taxes are low and until recently you'd get a pretty decent buy on a house and that kind of stuff. You probably still can do that. That comes into play for your principal recruitment, too. We wouldn't have a shot at recruiting principals from too far out. They would basically have to be in here because unless you are looking at quality of life, which I think is substantial to me, we are not offering the salary or benefits package that would entice them to leave another district. We are getting young administrators coming in and getting their start here and then going somewhere else.

Salary and benefits make a difference, and Mr. Hauge stated that the difference between teacher salary and administrator salary was not enough to warrant moving into administration for the majority of teachers. He explained that the financial incentive was not there. He stated, "The salary differential is coming to the point that there is not a financial incentive necessarily to go into administration."

Being a principal is like being the CEO in a school building. The sentiments of Mr. Hauge and Mr. Roe were echoed by other superintendents. Mr. Powell explained that it is

important to pay building administrators a competitive wage in order to attract individuals to do the work. He stated:

People are just not going to do this. We are going to have to pay people. Basically you are the CEO in the building and we are going to have to pay people a competitive wage to attract people to do these jobs.

The level of responsibility carried by principals today is not adequately compensated.

Salary scales throughout the school districts were found to be similar in that teachers with 20 years of experience are making more money working 9 or 10 months than an entering principal working 11 or 12 months. The incentive to move into administration is then lost. Mr. Lopez explained:

I hear people say things like I can make as much money as a teacher on the upper end of the pay scale when you consider the daily rate. That is a shortage on many of the salary scales. If you have a teacher with a master's degree and twenty years experience and you compare that with an entry level principal's position, sometimes you have teachers who work nine months who have as high or higher daily rate than a principal who is entering working 12 months or 11 months. Teachers are pretty good at math and they figure that out. The salary scale for principals is a problem, too. The bottom line there is principal salaries are a problem for the level of responsibility, I say in attracting good potential candidates to want to be principals.

The pay difference between classroom and administrative responsibilities deters teachers in Mr. Rutter's school division from pursuing administrative positions. The responsibilities held by building administrators are not adequately compensated and teachers just do not want the problems and headaches. He stated, "They don't feel that they are adequately paid the difference between the classroom and an administrative role. Many times for the lack of a better term, they just don't want the headaches."

Mr. Lopez has found through conversations with strong teachers that he thought would make good administrators that the position of building administrator is not worth the headaches involved. They have seen the work done and time taken to adequately administer in schools. Mr. Lopez stated:

I think that there are fewer people interested in being principal because they may evaluate it that it is not worth the headache, these are from conversations with good teachers who are strong and I would consider to be good material to be administrators. They say things like, you know, I just don't want the headaches. I don't want to have to deal with the parent issues, the discipline issues, I see what my principal does and that's not what I want.

Mr. Lane agreed that there is a problem with compensation. However, he acknowledged that there was more to it than just pay. The demands of the job as well as the accountability scare associated with the Standards of Learning are contributing to the lack of interest in pursuing principalship positions. He stated:

We have found that people just aren't interested in getting into administrative roles. The perception of teacher pay having increased, certainly not excessively, but teacher pay moving up, headaches associated with administration and quite honestly the accountability scare of the SOL assessment.

Certainly, the demands and responsibilities of school leadership today are very different from what was experienced by a principal in the past. Mr. Owens, as superintendent, faces decisions on a daily basis that were but five years ago approached only on a rare occasion. He brought to the surface during interview, issues that were considered to be serious by teachers and administrators. In so doing, the complexity of school leadership was appreciated. He stated:

I think that today's child is so different from the child I taught ten years ago. We have to be very child oriented and parent oriented to be able to deal with those kinds of things. So must it be in for the teachers who are in the classroom everyday. The problems are much, much different now than they were five years ago. I deal with expulsions everyday or at least every week, whereas 10 years ago they had to do something dreadful to be expelled. We've seen a great increase in the number of students that we are suspending and expelling from even kindergarten and first grade. It is a tougher world for teachers and administrators.

Mr. Santino agreed with other superintendents that the pool of candidates for principalship positions is definitely shrinking. Living in a community that has a large number of people with advanced degrees has been an asset for his school division. He attributed regulation, bureaucracy, as well as compensation as being factors that contribute to the shrinking pool of



principalship candidates. The complexity of the principalship was summarized by Mr. Santino when he said:

First of all the job is becoming very, very complex, incredibly so. I can recall when I first started teaching. My principal took me down to my classroom and he said this is your classroom, here are your books, if you need anything let me know. We didn't have any curriculum guide. We didn't have any tests for accountability or whatever. So, I had to decide and I was glad to do it, about what I thought the students needed to learn and what to emphasize and so on. Now we have come from that to a time where the students are tested, the scores are printed in the paper and we send them home with every student. Then we get a school report card that the department of education does for us that tells everybody what percentage of kids pass the math test, the science test and so on. The accountability for the faculty, schools and the principalship is a significant change. One other thing is the extent to which regulation and bureaucracy have entered into the process. You now have a four inch thick policy manual which is as you know, policy is just decisions made in advance that you go by not to mention all the laws and regulations and all the rest. The third problem that I see is compensation. I don't think principals are paid anywhere near what they should be paid for the scope of responsibility and the risk that's involved in the occupation that they have chosen.

A majority of superintendents stated that there is a shrinking pool of individuals interested in serving in principalship positions. Over the years fewer applications are being received and fewer candidates interviewed. Fewer teachers were interested in becoming principals according to superintendents. The primary reason for this was given as compensation. Teachers stated to superintendents that they could make just as much money on a per diem basis by staying in the classroom and they would have fewer problems with which to contend.

Superintendents explained that the principalship is a key position in schools. The person serving in that position impacts what is going on in the schools to a higher degree than any other individual. The majority of superintendents interviewed stated that the pool of potential candidates has gotten smaller over time. This was a concern for superintendents as they related stories of their most recent principal selections. One factor contributing less interest in pursuing a career as a school administrator was compensation. Superintendents reported that teachers seem

to feel that there is not enough financial incentive for the amount of work required. They are, therefore, more interested in staying in the classroom.

### Chapter Summary/Closing

When asked to share the story of their most recent principal selection, 15 superintendents in Region 7 spoke of the process they followed to select a principal as well as the qualities they felt the selected individual needed to possess in order to be a school leader in their districts. Superintendents explained the selection process used in their most recent principal selection and included in their stories the role played by the community. In an atmosphere of confidentiality, superintendents expressed their thoughts and views. Themes emerging from the interviews included experience, decision-making, community, instruction, and a sense of integrity, justice, and fair play. Interviews were then related to the ISSLC Standards and themes including communication, community, and ethics emerged. As superintendents completed their stories, the importance of the role of the principal in schools was explained as well as the impending shortage of individuals to serve as principals. They also offered up explanations as to why the pool of potential principals is shrinking.

Selection processes varied somewhat throughout the region. Many superintendents established formal committees, teams, panels, or workgroups to assist with the process of selecting a principal. Membership on committees included most certainly central office personnel. However, for some superintendents inclusion of school board members, teachers, and community members was a common practice. Informal discussions with listed references, former employers, college professors, and community members at large took place in order for the superintendent to gain a better understanding of the candidates.

Previous experience as an assistant principal or principal or at least at teaching at the level of the school for which the selection was occurring was explained by superintendents to be an important aspect to consider when selecting a new principal. Whether the new principal was to be replacing a well-respected principal with a long tenure in a school that was moving forward or if the school was in turmoil, superintendents preferred to place experience at the helm.

Superintendents spoke to the need for principals to be able to make decisions. Decision-making skills of candidates interviewed was a component considered by superintendents. Weighing into the process was good judgment. Superintendents expected that the selected principal would employ good judgment when making decisions that impact the school, students, teachers, parents, and the general community.

Superintendents expected a sense of justice and fair play on the part of the newly selected principal. Principals must be guided by integrity during their daily interactions with all individuals. Additionally, superintendents maintained that it was important for the principal to look inward at himself or herself and to evaluate responses given. Superintendents stated that the ability of the principal to admit that a mistake had been made and seek assistance was a required characteristic.

Relating well to the community at large as well as the school community was seen by superintendents as a quality required of administrators. Superintendents spoke at length of the importance for principals not only to be able to articulate ideas and thoughts, but to be able to listen for understanding. They stated that the understanding gained allows the principal insight into the expectations held by the community for the school and students. The ability of the principal to work well with the community was a strong consideration for superintendents during their most recent principal selection. Whether or not the candidates were from within the school

system or from outside, consideration was always given to matching the qualities and characteristics of the potential administrator to the culture and customs of the community.

Focusing on instruction while tending to the management details of the school was a requirement for selection. Superintendents expressed the need for the principal to be able to address instructional issues in order for students to experience success. A focus on student success and academic achievement was expected of the newly selected principal. Certainly management of the daily tasks was to be considered; however, the view held by superintendents was that the newly selected principal must be able to provide attention to the details of instruction to move the school forward.

Driving principal preparation programs today are the ISLLC Standards. With this fact in mind, superintendent stories were related to the Standards. After careful examination, it was found that there was an overlapping of standards as well as knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators as emerging themes were identified. Effective communication, valuing and fostering high quality relationships and community relations, and being well grounded in a professional code of ethics were identified as themes common to the Standards as well as the superintendents.

Superintendents explained that fine tuned communication skills were necessary for principals selected to lead their schools. The Standards speak to the need for principals to have an understanding of effective communication. Together the superintendent's desire for the principal to relate well with a diverse population and effective communication skills provides the school leader with some of the tools needed to move the school forward. Whether it is communicating a vision for the school, interacting with students and faculty, or influencing the political and social context within which the school operates superintendents agreed that in order

for all stakeholders to feel they are an important part of the school, principals must be able to effectively relate.

Schools are part of the larger community and superintendents looked for an administrator with the belief that it is important to involve the community in the education of its children. The Standards speak to the importance of community relations and the benefits of diversity. Superintendents actively looked for potential principals that had the ability to relate well with a diverse community. Involving the community whether formally or informally in selecting individuals to serve as principal of the local school spoke of the importance superintendents maintained that it is to place the right person in each school. There was not a “one size” principal fits all schools explanation on the part of superintendents. Communities and schools varied as far as their culture. Therefore, it was important for superintendents to select an individual that had the ability to fit within the community as well as work with a diverse population.

Being grounded in a strong code of ethics was an aspect of the potential principal that superintendents stated was necessary. The Standards relate to the need of the principal to act with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner. Superintendents looked for individuals to serve their schools that were honest, dependable, and loyal. Additionally, they wanted the selected principal to make decisions that were fair and just. A sound professional code of ethics on the part of the selected principal was necessary in the eyes of superintendents.

Superintendents spoke of the importance of the principal in schools. Their role is complex. It requires that the principal foster high quality relationships with students, teachers, parents, and the general public. These relationships together with a focus on instruction help to yield student success. According to superintendents it was necessary that the selected individual be able to manage the details of budget and required reports. However, superintendents

explained that the principal is the one individual in the school who truly makes a difference. Therefore, it was important to the superintendents that they choose the right person for their schools.

The right person may be difficult to find in the future. Superintendents expressed concern for the future. The near future will bring numerous retirements from principalship positions. As the need for principals has increased, superintendents have been seeing a shrinking candidate pool. Many superintendents explained that a concern for their school district was finding individuals to serve as school leaders. Considered an adequate candidate pool today by many superintendents is seen as less than adequate for the future.

Superintendents addressed the potential of a shortage of principal candidates with explanations of why the shortage has happened. Geographic location of certain school districts has played a role in the availability of principal preparation programs to teachers. Superintendents went on to explain that responsibilities associated with the principalship far outweigh compensation. The financial incentive is not there for teachers to pursue the coursework needed in order to become certified as school administrators. Additionally, superintendents related after speaking with teachers that the headaches related to the job were just not worth giving up their teaching assignment.

Superintendents related that the key individual in schools is the principal. This person is charged with uniting students, faculty, parents, and the community at large to provide students with the tools needed for success. In order to move schools forward it was important that principals were selected who had previous administrative experience, teaching experience with students at the level of the vacancy, were able to effectively communicate with a diverse population, foster high quality relationships, possess fine tuned decision-making skills, and be

well grounded in a professional code of ethics. All of these expectations are part of the ISLLC Standards as well. Even though specific standards were not addressed directly by superintendents, several knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators were found within superintendent interviews.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There are particular qualities and personal characteristics in addition to certification and licensure that superintendents are looking for when selecting an individual to serve as principal. Given the environment of fewer principal applicants and projected need for principals, it was important to explore the superintendent's point of view as to the reasoning behind the selection of particular individuals to better understand the qualities expected of newly hired principals. The study explored the factors that came into play as individuals were selected for principalships through an examination of the perceptions of superintendents who were responsible for hiring decisions. Additionally, the study sought to explore the congruence between the ideals advocated through the ISLLC Standards (CCSSO, 1996) that drive principal preparation programs and those employed by superintendents in making their choices.

#### Summary

The process of choosing a school principal began with advertising. Advertising only within the school district was customary practice for some, while advertising within as well as outside the division was done in many others. Selection processes varied somewhat throughout the region studied. All school divisions included central office personnel on the selection committee. However, school board members, teachers, and principals participated either formally or informally in the superintendent's final decision. Informal input was given through casual conversations with teachers, parents, and the community at large. Superintendents also requested information about candidates from former employers as well as college professors.

What were the qualities superintendents looked for when superintendents selected a principal? Superintendents spoke at length about what they were looking for in particular



individuals to lead their schools. Superintendents looked for an individual who could fit into the culture of the school and the community. The personality characteristics of the selected principal were looked at in such a way as to determine if there would be a fit between the school, community, and the principal. Finding a school leader that could fit in the community and meet the needs of the school was important.

Unless it absolutely had to be, superintendents were not interested in hiring an individual with no experience in administration. Both experienced and inexperienced leaders face unique challenges and a number of common problems during their first year in a new school (Buckner, 1999). Whether the school was in turmoil and needed a change agent to get it focused and back on track, or if the school had been successful and under the leadership of a well-respected principal, the need was the same. They needed a school leader who would step into the school and employ the needed skills to either get it on track or keep it on track.

Added to the experience equation was teaching. Superintendents wanted selected individuals to have had teaching experience at the level where the vacancy existed. For a candidate to have taught in several different grade levels was viewed by superintendents as a positive factor for the candidates. It was important that they had experience relating to students at the level of the vacancy. Superintendents detailed differing school situations that required particular background experience. Superintendents were looking for candidates with experience in schools that were similar to the school for which they were hiring a principal.

Superintendents explained that schools have different needs. Some schools needed a leader who could give an immediate answer. Others functioned best with a leader who would seek the input from others before making a decision. However, the need for high quality decisions was critical to superintendents. Superintendents agreed that all decisions made are not

good ones. They described their hope that more good decisions would be made than bad ones. According to superintendents, the selected principal must be able and willing to admit errors in decisions made and seek help to see to it that the same mistakes are not repeated.

A component of decision-making to which superintendents spoke at length was a sense of justice and fair play. This was a quality that superintendents stated should be practiced by principals in all interactions with students, parents, faculty, and the community. It was important that the principal model behaviors expected of others. If educators wish to encourage certain educational values in children, they should consider how those values are being played out, or not being played out, in the behavior of school leaders (Goldman, 1998). In their search for building administrators, superintendents looked for evidence from the candidate that he or she actively employed good judgment, a sense of justice, and fair play in dealings with people.

A community focus was also an important quality. Superintendents stated that the principal needed the skills to communicate effectively with a diverse group of individuals. Through valuing difference, school leaders communicate that diversity holds the key to learning and continuous improvement (Walker & Quong, 1998). A component of effective communication is listening. Superintendents said that the principal needed to be willing as well as able to listen to all stakeholders in the education of students. Communication allows school leaders to set expectations, motivate others, share their vision, and help the school community engage in a dialogue that can create a vision all can share (Buckner, 1999).

Superintendents expected the newly selected principal to have a focus on instruction. The principal needed to be able to provide students, faculty, parents, and the community with instructional leadership. Superintendents expected the principal to know what was needed instructionally to make certain that students were successful and the school was moving forward.

The themes of communication, community, and ethics emerged as superintendent interviews were compared to the ISLLC Standards. Interacting with the community to seek its input as well as to inform the community of school events was an important expectation that superintendents had for principals. Standard 4 speaks to the expectation that principals will collaborate with families and communities. Superintendents explained that the principal must fit the community and school culture. This ephemeral, taken-for-granted aspect of schools, too often overlooked or ignored, is actually one of the most significant features of any educational enterprise (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

Closely linked to community was communication. Superintendents explained that the principal must communicate clearly. Standard 1 centers on articulation of a vision for learning, Standard 3 includes communication in the use of conflict resolution and consensus building, Standard 4 touches upon communication as it refers to communication with the larger community, and Standard 6 includes communication as it centers around a dialogue with decision makers outside the school community. Superintendents explained that a principal must listen as well as articulate ideas. In this healthy system, communication is open as information is shared among all participants, and there is a high level of trust (Norris, 1994).

Ethical behavior was an emerging theme from superintendent interviews as compared to Standards. Standard 5 centers on acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner. Superintendents explained the importance of principals treating everyone with fairness. On the superficial level, the specific actions of the principal count more than the words the principal uses to espouse values; however, on a deeper level, values must be “designed” into actions, with constancy and consistency (Sashkin & Sashkin, 1993). Superintendents looked for a principal who could make fair and just decisions and model the behaviors expected of others.

Superintendents spoke to the future need for administrators in their school divisions. Most expressed concern that the pool of applicants and eventual candidate pool had been shrinking. The lower number of teachers interested in pursuing the coursework necessary to receive certification in administration is an indicator for many superintendents that there will be a problem in the near future. Teacher reluctance to enter administration coupled with the number of administrator retirements present a significant challenge to boards, superintendents, and communities (Cooley & Shen, 1999). Each division in Region 7 will, in the next three to five years, be losing administrators at the building level as well as in the central offices. The increasing need for administrators projected by superintendents, coupled with fewer applicants, created concern among the superintendents. With principals holding the key role in schools, superintendents spoke to the importance of placing the right person in each school.

Whether superintendents used formal selection committees or informally met with teachers, parents, and the community at large, there were several individuals involved and giving input to the superintendent prior to the selection of a principal. Superintendents amassed a great deal of information about the candidates. Then they compared the qualities of the candidate to the needs of the school and community. After much time and effort a selection was made. In order for the needs of a school to be met and ensure instruction was of the highest quality possible, superintendents looked for an individual with experience. Experience as an administrator was a need seen by all superintendents. Following experience superintendents looked for individuals possessing finely tuned decision-making skills, a sense of justice and fair play with a strong focus on community, and instruction.

## Conclusions

Selection processes varied throughout the region. The central office played a role in the selection; however, there were many individuals giving input to the superintendent. The references given by the applicant were important, as well as the perceptions of the faculty, school board, community members, and college professors. The needs of the school were carefully examined in an effort to match the principal and his/her qualities to the culture and needs of the school and community. There is not a one-size principal that fits all schools.

Superintendents looked for experienced administrators to lead their schools. Experience included having been a principal, assistant principal, and teaching experience with the age group student for which the principalship vacancy existed. The experience of having worked in a school community with similar characteristics was also an important consideration.

Experience as well as proven communication skills played a critical role in the selection of principals. Superintendents viewed favorably those candidates with demonstrated abilities to relate favorably with diverse populations. In dealings with all stakeholders, superintendents explained that principals must have a well-grounded sense of justice and fair play guiding their daily interactions with people. The ability for a principal to use problem-solving skills by injecting good judgment and sensitivity was an expectation of superintendents.

The ISLLC Standards that impact the curriculum of principal preparation programs contain in total 182 indicators. Superintendents touched approximately a quarter of these (n=48). Many indicators were not referenced. The indicators that superintendents spoke to were centered around the themes of communication, community, and ethics. It does not appear that the Standards strongly influence principal selection and decisions made by superintendents to select one individual over another.

There is an impending shortage of school administrators in Region 7. Applicant pools are smaller and expectations for administrator retirements are increasing. Fewer teachers view the position of principal as one to which they would aspire. Due to the increase in responsibility and accountability, the headaches associated with the position are not worth the difference in compensation they received as teachers. Added to compensation, as a deterrent to teachers was geographic location. The difficulty associated with time and travel to locations where programs are offered keeps teachers from enrolling in principal preparation programs.

#### Recommendations/Implications

A recommendation for further study would be to develop a quantitative research study. Survey questions relating to the ISLLC Standards and expectations of the superintendents regarding specific qualities expected of a principal would highlight and supplement the results herein. Additionally, replication of the study with superintendents from a geographically different area may further enhance understanding of superintendent perceptions as to the qualities needed by individuals selected to assume school leadership positions.

This study could provide insight to potential as well as current school principals and assistant principals. It would allow them to understand perceptions of superintendents when selecting individuals to serve as principals. Additionally, it could give college personnel valuable information as to what superintendents stated were qualities potential principals are expected to possess. Therefore, developing curriculum for principal preparation programs with a balance between knowledge expected, skills taught as well as dispositions of the potential administrator could be a benefit. It can assist current superintendents as well as aspiring superintendents by giving them information about what their colleagues considered to be important when selecting a

principal. Finally, it could inform researchers as to the impact of the ISLLC Standards in principal selection.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Debriefing Certification

I served as debriefer for the following study: Principal Selection and the Stories  
Superintendents Tell.

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Bonny Copenhaver

August 15, 2001

APPENDIX B

Auditor Certification

I served as auditor for the following study: Principal Selection and the Stories  
Superintendents Tell.

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Darrell Thompson

August 15, 2001

## APPENDIX C

### Interview Guide

1. Tell me about our most recent selection of an individual for a principalship.
2. What role did the community play in your decision to select this particular individual?
3. Was the ability for the principal to act with fairness an issue you explored prior to selection?
4. Were there external pressures from the community, community leaders, or colleagues to select a particular individual for the position?

APPENDIX D

Letter to Superintendents

**Linda L. Baker**  
14521 White Top View  
Abingdon, Virginia 24210  
(540) 628-7308  
lbaker@naxs.net

July 18, 2000

\_\_\_\_\_, Superintendent  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Public Schools

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

This letter comes to you as follow-up information to the introduction given to you at the Region 7 Superintendent's Meeting. I would like to arrange an interview with you on the topic of principal selection. I am interested in hearing the story of your most recent principal selection.

The interview will be tape-recorded. After transcription of the interview, I will send a copy to you. You are welcomed to review and comment on what you read. Additionally, you may add thoughts and comments that were not thought of during the interview. All interviews will be confidential and neither participants nor school divisions will be identified. All comments made could be used verbatim, and you may choose to withdraw from participation by contacting me.

Please complete the questions attached and return them to me in the enclosed self-addressed stamped envelope.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely:

Linda L. Baker

APPENDIX D

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Your name and name of the school system you serve:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you hired a principal within the last two years?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

3. How long have you served a school system as superintendent?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you served as superintendent in systems other than the one you now serve?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, where? \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

### Informed Consent

#### East Tennessee State University

##### INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Linda L. Baker

TITLE OF PROJECT: Principal Selection and the Stories Superintendents Tell

This Informed Consent will explain about being a research subject in an experiment. It is important that you read this material carefully and then decide if you wish to be a volunteer.

##### PURPOSE:

The purpose of this study is to explore the factors that come into play as individuals are selected for principalships through an examination of the perceptions of superintendents who are responsible for making hiring decisions. A secondary purpose is to explore the congruence between the ideals advocated in the national movement in the preparation of principals and those employed by superintendents in making their choices. Selected principals exemplify the qualities which superintendents perceive foster success for their schools, their systems, and ultimately, the public they serve.

##### DURATION:

Initial interview will range from one to three hours with follow-up time, when required, lasting approximately one hour.

##### PROCEDURES:

Interviews will be conducted and tape-recorded in the office of each participant. The need for a second abbreviated interview is a possibility as well as are phone calls to discuss themes emerging from interviews with other participants. The participant will review a transcript of the interview.

##### POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS:

There is a possibility that you may feel some discomfort when questioned.

##### POSSIBLE BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION:

Much research exists which examines the principalship and men and women who hold such positions. There are licensing requirements in place coupled with ongoing professional development. Colleges and universities have organized their curricula around standards having the endorsement of professional associations and state leaders. However, with an ever expanding body of knowledge affirming that certain skills are necessary for a principal to be effective, the stories of the hiring of new principals are fundamental to the effective understanding of the



position. Principals come to their positions with a set of experiences, beliefs, and values that integrate into the organizational culture. Whether an experienced or inexperienced principal, a no-nonsense disciplinarian or a strong instructional leader, what principals do to promote education, guide instruction, discipline fairly, and manage effectively impacts success in every classroom.

This study adds to the development of a comprehensive knowledge base of information regarding qualities possessed by individuals selected for a principalship. Additionally, this study may inform superintendents, principals, assistant principals, and other administrative personnel, potential school administrators, and college personnel who are teaching administrators in the improvement of leadership skills. Further, this study may aid superintendents in decisions made with regard to recruitment and selection of prospective principals.

#### CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS:

If you have any questions, problems or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Linda L. Baker at (540) 628-7308 or Hal Knight at 423/439-4159. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board at 423/439-6134 for any questions you may have about your rights as a research subject.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY:

Every attempt will be made to see that interview data from this study will be kept confidential. All records from this study will be stored in the researcher's home office in Abingdon, Virginia for at least 10 years after the end of this research. The results of this study will be published and or presented at meetings always without naming research participants. Although your rights and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the East Tennessee State University/V.A. Medical Center Institutional Review Board, the Food and Drug Administration, **\*V.A. Medical Center Research & Development, the \*\*Johnson City Medical Center Institutional Review Board, and the East Tennessee State University Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis** have access to the study records. My records will be kept completely confidential according to current legal requirements. They will not be revealed unless required by law, or as noted above.

#### COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT:

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury which may happen as a result of your being in this study. They will not pay for any other medical treatment. Claims against ETSU or any of its agents or employees may be submitted to the Tennessee Claims Commission. These claims will be settled to the extent allowable as provided under TCA Section 9-8-307. For more information about claims call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board of ETSU at 423-439-6134.

#### VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION:

The nature demands, risks, and benefits of the project have been explained to me as well as are known and available. I understand what my participation involves. Furthermore, I understand that I am free to ask questions and withdraw from the project at any time, without

penalty. I have read, or have had read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been give to me.

---

Signature of Volunteer

Date

---

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX F

ISLLC Standards and Emerging Themes

**INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM: STANDARDS FOR  
SCHOOL LEADERS AND EMERGING THEMES  
STANDARD 1**

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 of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Themes</b>		
	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communities</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b><u>Knowledge:</u> The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning goals in a pluralistic society</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The principles of developing and implementing strategic plans</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systems theory</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communication</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective consensus-building and negotiation skills</li> </ul>			
<b><u>Dispositions:</u> The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:</b>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A vision of high standards of learning</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The educability of all</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuous school improvement</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inclusion of all members of the school community</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A willingness to continuously examine one's own assumptions, beliefs, and practices</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Performances:</u> The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school community is involved in school improvement efforts</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified and addressed</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision and mission are developed with and among stakeholders</li> </ul>			

**INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM:  
STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND EMERGING THEMES  
STANDARD 2**

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.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Themes</b>		
	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communities</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b><u>Knowledge:</u> The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>			
• Student growth and development			
• Applied learning theories			
• Applied motivational theories			
• Curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement			
• Principles of effective instruction			
• Measurement, evaluation, and assessment strategies			
• Diversity and its meaning for educational programs			
• Adult learning and professional development models			
• The change process for systems, organizations, and individuals			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School cultures</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Dispositions:</u> The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposition that all students can learn</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The variety of ways in which students can learn</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life long learning for self and others</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development as an integral part of school improvement</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The benefits that diversity brings to the school community</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe and supportive learning environment</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing students to be contributing members of society</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Performances:</u> The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and staff feel valued and important</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity is considered in developing learning experiences</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Life long learning is encouraged and modeled</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technologies are used in teaching and learning</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is organized and aligned for success</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curricular, co-curricular, and extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis</li> </ul>			



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of sources of information is used to make decisions</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families</li> </ul>			

**INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM:  
STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND EMERGING THEMES  
STANDARD 3**

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.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Themes</b>		
	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communities</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b><u>Knowledge:</u> The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>			
• Theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development			
• Operational procedures at the school and district level			
• Principles and issues relating to school safety and security			
• Human resources management and development			
• Principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management			
• Principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space			
• Legal issues impacting school operations			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current technologies that support management functions</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Dispositions:</u> The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching</li> </ul>			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking risks to improve schools</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trusting people and their judgments</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting responsibility</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality standards, expectations, and performances</li> </ul>			X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involving stake holders in management processes</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe environment</li> </ul>			
<p><b><u>Performances:</u> The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of learning, teaching, and student development is used to inform management decisions</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging trends are recognized, studied, and applied as appropriate</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school plant, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential problems and opportunities are identified</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial, human and material resources are aligned to the goals of schools</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school acts entrepreneurally to support continuous improvement</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective conflict resolution skills are used</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective communications skills are used</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is effective use of technology to manage school operations</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human resources functions support the attainment of school goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained</li> </ul>			

**INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM:  
STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND EMERGING THEMES  
STANDARD 4**

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, and mobilizing community resources.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Themes</b>		
	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communities</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b><u>Knowledge:</u> The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community resources</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community relations and marketing strategies and processes</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships</li> </ul>			
<b><u>Dispositions:</u> The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools operating as an integral part of the larger community</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaboration and communication with families</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposition that diversity enriches the school</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families as partners in the education of their children</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An informed public</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<p><b><u>Performances:</u> The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school and community serve one another as resources</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community youth family services are integrated with school programs</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community stakeholders are treated equitably</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity is recognized and valued</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective media relations are developed and maintained</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A comprehensive program of community relations is established</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community collaboration is modeled for staff</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided</li> </ul>			



**INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM:  
STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND EMERGING THEMES  
STANDARD 5**

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

Indicators	Themes		
	Communication	Communities	Ethics
<b><u>Knowledge:</u> The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>			
• The purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society			
• Various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics			
• The values of the diverse school community			
• Professional code of ethics			
• The philosophy and history of education			
<b><u>Dispositions:</u> The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:</b>			
• The ideal of the common good			
• The principles in the Bill of Rights			
• The right of every student to a free, quality education			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subordinating one's own interest to the good of the school community</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepting the consequences for upholding one's principles and actions</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the influence of one's office constructively and productively in the service of all students and their families</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of a caring school community</li> </ul>			
<b><u>Performances: The administrator:</u></b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines personal and professional values</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves as a role model</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accepts responsibility for school operations</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considers the impact of one's administrative practices on others</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses the influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opens the school to public scrutiny</li> </ul>		<b>X</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fulfills legal and contractual obligations</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely and considerably</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates values, beliefs and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance</li> </ul>			<b>X</b>

**INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM:  
STANDARDS FOR SCHOOL LEADERS AND EMERGING THEMES  
STANDARD 6**

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Themes</b>		
	<b>Communication</b>	<b>Communities</b>	<b>Ethics</b>
<b><u>Knowledge:</u> The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Principles of representative governance that undergird the system of American schools</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The law as related to education and schooling</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The political, social, cultural and economic systems and processes that impact schools</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning</li> </ul>			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society</li> </ul>			
<b><u>Dispositions:</u> The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education as a key to opportunity and social mobility</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities</li> </ul>			
<b><u>Performances:</u> The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students</li> </ul>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community</li> </ul>	<b>X</b>		

APPENDIX G

Emerging Themes, Standards, and Numerical Comparison

Standard	Emerging Themes		
	Communication	Communities	Ethics
<b>1</b> number of indicators: K – 6 D – 7 P – 15	<b>K-1</b> <b>D-2</b> <b>P-2</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-1</b> <b>P-1</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-1</b> <b>P-0</b>
<b>2</b> number of indicators: K – 11 D – 8 P – 20	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-0</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-1</b> <b>P-0</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-2</b>
<b>3</b> number of indicators: K – 8 D – 7 P – 23	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-2</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-1</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-2</b> <b>P-1</b>
<b>4</b> number of indicators: K – 0 D – 2 P – 1	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-2</b> <b>P-1</b>	<b>K-2</b> <b>D-6</b> <b>P-6</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-1</b>
<b>5</b> number of indicators: K – 5 D – 8 P – 16	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-0</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-2</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-1</b> <b>P-6</b>
<b>6</b> number of indicators: K – 8 D – 5 P – 6	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-3</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-1</b>	<b>K-0</b> <b>D-0</b> <b>P-0</b>

K – Knowledge indicator    D – Disposition indicator    P – Performance indicator

APPENDIX G

**A Numerical Comparison:  
Total Indicators to the Themes Relating to Indicators**

<b>Standard</b>	<b>Total # of Indicators in each Standard</b>	<b>Communication Theme # of Related Indicators</b>	<b>Communities Theme # of Related Indicators</b>	<b>Ethics Theme # of Related Indicators</b>	<b>Total Theme # of Related Indicators</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>
	<b>182</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>48</b>

\* Total number of indicators includes knowledge, disposition and performance indicators for each Standard.



VITA

LINDA LAYNE BAKER

Personal Data: Date of Birth: January 24, 1948  
Place of Birth: Akron, Ohio

Education: Public School System, Green Township, Ohio  
University of Virginia College at Wise, Wise, Virginia,  
Education, B.S., 1979  
Union College, Barbourville, Kentucky,  
Education, M.A., 1994  
East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, Tennessee,  
Education Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.,  
2001

Professional Experience: Teacher, Dickenson County Public Schools, 1980—1996  
Adjunct Faculty, Mountain Empire Community College, 1994—1997  
Teacher/Gifted Coordinator, Smyth County Schools, 1999—2001  
Supervisor, Gifted Education, Smyth County Schools, 2001—present

Honors, Awards and Professional Organizations: Who's Who Among America's Teacher – 1995 & 1998  
Phi Kappa Phi National Honor Society  
Gamma Beta Phi Honor Society & Service Organization  
Kappa Delta Pi Honor Society  
Phi Delta Kappa  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development  
National Education Association  
Virginia Education Association  
Smyth County Education Association