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Use of the SREB Leadership Development Framework in Preservice
Principal Preparation Programs: A Qualitative Investigation

A dissertation

presented to

the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Doctor of Education

by

Robert C. Vick

December 2004

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Keywords: 13 Critical Success Factors, Instructional Leader, SREB, School Culture,
Preprincipalship Preparation, Distance Education

ABSTRACT

Use of the SREB Leadership Development Framework in Preservice Principal Preparation Programs: A Qualitative Investigation

by

Robert C. Vick

Although nearly everyone agrees that principals need formal training to prepare for their positions, few agree on what the nature of this training should be. Advanced university education may teach examples of leadership behaviors, but is it likely to transmit the practical knowledge and behaviors that are the hallmarks of successful principals?

This study focused on the 13 critical success factors for school leaders as created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB, 2002). The purpose of the study was to identify the extent to which these 13 standards have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. Data were collected using an open-ended interview guide while interviewing principals.

The findings from this study suggested that the use of scenarios, cohort groups, experienced staff, and using current research were strategies that universities can use to develop a strong principal training program and support effective teaching of the 13 critical success factors. Two university training limitations became evident during the interview process: (a) lack of some type of internship or hands-on programs and (b) not having experienced instructors. In addition, the study's results led to recommendations that the following critical success factors, although they are currently addressed, should be addressed more effectively. Those factors are time organization, current instructional practices, parent involvement, understanding data, use of resources, obtaining support from central office, and increased use of professional development.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the many friends and special people whom God has placed in my life.

Through their encouragement and love, they have raised me up to more than I can be.

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I wish to thank my children, Tori, Andrew, and Emily, for their patience during this study and I apologize for the time it took away from them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In the 1920s, the Department of Secondary School Principals was established within the National Education Association. The creation of this department signaled the official recognition of the position of school principal by a national body of professional educators (Beck & Murphy, 1993). This act opened the door for many university-based training programs to prepare candidates for administrative positions. Are universities adequately preparing principals for their first assignments in administration? This study explored possible gaps between the actual knowledge and skills needed by principals in their first years in administration and the knowledge and skills taught in their formal principals' preparation programs. The role of the principal has changed just as the role of public schools has changed. Principals no longer deal only with students' discipline and teachers' evaluations; they are accountable to parents, community groups, politicians, and other stakeholders.

Are principals prepared for this workload or are they learning on the job? DePree (1989) considered on-the-job experience as an important element for training leaders. He acknowledged that leadership is an art; it is something to be learned over time, not simply to be read in books. Leadership is more tribal than scientific, more a weaving of relationships than an amassing of information. In another study, Bolt, (as cited in Beckard, Goldsmith, & Hesselbein, 1996), chairman and founder of Executive Development Associates, considered preparation from another prospective; he addressed two training and development factors that could create a crisis in leadership development: (a) traditional methods used to train and educate leaders have not kept pace with the monumental changes taking place in the world and (b) on-the-job experience and development does not produce the leadership that organizations need.

Principals in the 21st Century must have energy, tact, common sense, administrative knowledge, and a willingness to spend extra time preparing to overcome a variety of obstacles. There are several concerns with administrators and their role within the education setting; one aspect is wasteful spending at the administration level. Education critics often complain about unnecessary costs for administrators in education but such complaints cannot be supported for education as a whole. Across the country, principals, assistant principals, and other supervisors in the schools make up 2.9% of the staff. Nationally, administrators in education constitute a mere 4.5% of the total staffing of the public schools. By comparison with other sectors of the economy, this figure is remarkably small. The average for all sectors is 7.1 employees per administrator. In contrast, education has twice that rate with 14.5 employees per administrator. The private sector employs far more administrators than public education does (Berliner & Biddle, 1995). Because of this discrepancy, principals are often overworked and they encounter many people who demand their attention throughout the day.

Principals face the challenge of coping with a changing society. American society is diverse with changes occurring racially, linguistically, and culturally. For many children and their families, the social fabric is unraveling and poverty is increasing. Indexes of physical, mental, and moral well being are declining (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 1996). It is apparent that these challenges will require new types of leadership in schools. Are principals going into their first assignments trained and prepared for the circumstances they are likely to face? Hale and Moorman (2003) reported:

Principals across the nation agree that administrator-training programs deserve an “F.” In a survey of educational leaders conducted by Public Agenda, 69% of the principals responding indicated that traditional leadership preparation programs were out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s schools. (p. 5)

Statement of the Problem

Beckard et al. (1996) recommended that the focus of training for principals should shift from directing and instructing to facilitating and enabling. To become proficient, the principal

must be a facilitator, appraiser, forecaster, advisor, and enabler. Is there a problem with the training of principals? Beckard et al. acknowledged that there is a leadership crisis--not just in schools but also throughout society. Formal leadership in schools requires complex, multifaceted skills. The principal's day might be perceived as being routine; however, an impartial observer of a school setting will quickly realize the principal's day is filled with unexpected events including concerns from staff and students, numerous contacts with parents and community members, and student-behavioral issues. Early in the day, the principal might encounter problems that deal with students' behavior on the bus, tardy students and faculty, sudden illness of a faculty member, or an angry parent. As the day progresses, the principal must attend meetings, conduct teacher evaluations, handle custodial concerns, deal with students' misbehaviors, return phone calls, sign purchase orders and checks, and perhaps help locate a missing student who did not get off the bus at the correct stop. For many principals, the end of the school day is just the beginning of more obligations such as after-school inservice and staff meetings, athletic events, and, possibly, their own continuing education classes. Although principals may have a planned daily routine, at any moment in the day the routine can turn to chaos.

This study investigated principals' training before their first assignments. I reviewed current literature pertaining to principals' leadership and educational preparation prior to their first assignments. In addition, I also interviewed 20 beginning principals from the three regions of Tennessee to determine what they encountered during their first assignments and how and if their experiences related to what they were taught.

This study focused on the standards for school leaders created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The SREB, the nation's first interstate compact for education, was created in 1948 by southern governors. The SREB helps educational and governmental leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, to improve the region's social and economic life (SREB, 2002). The SREB examined the difference between "certified principal"

and “qualified principal” (p. 8). From this concern with certification and qualification, the SREB developed 13 critical success factors of school leaders (Bottoms & O’Neil, 2001). SREB defined a “qualified principal” as one who:

1. Creates a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
2. Sets high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
3. Recognizes and encourages implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.
4. Creates a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
5. Uses data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
6. Keeps everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
7. Makes parents partners in students’ education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
8. Understands the change process and has the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
9. Understands how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality, sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.
10. Uses and organizes time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
11. Acquires and uses resources wisely to support high levels of student and staff performance.
12. Obtains support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.
13. Continuously learns and seeks out colleagues who are abreast of new research and proven practices. (pp. 2-20)

The purpose of the study was to identify the extent to which the 13 critical success factors have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose was to identify significant opportunities for

addressing the critical success factors in preservice courses and preservice field experiences development programs.

Research Questions

Principals were interviewed and asked open-ended questions guided by the following inquiries:

1. What are the greatest challenges facing beginning school principals?
2. In what areas do beginning school principals feel the most and least confident?
3. What do principals identify as the greatest strengths and limitations of university-based principal preparation programs?
4. To what extent are the 13 critical success factors of school leaders being addressed in university-based principal-preparation programs (coursework and field experiences); what types of learning experiences occur, and how might they be addressed more effectively?
5. What role might distance learning play in helping preservice school leaders acquire the 13 critical success factors?

Significance of the Study

This study examined existing preservice principal training procedures, current literature about principal leadership, and the current practices of principals in school settings. The results of this study might assist universities in redesigning curriculum for principals' programs to better meet the needs of future principals. Current principals must fulfill many roles. Principals have the responsibility for overseeing the teaching of the three R's of reading, writing, and arithmetic; at the same time, societal pressure on principals has resulted in a long list of additional areas for which they are responsible. School principals must acquire leadership styles that include the

ability to successfully orchestrate managing human and material resources, supporting instruction, assessing and evaluating teachers, and understanding school law.

Principals need to enter the profession trained in all aspects of the educational process. Finance, law, curriculum, students' discipline, personnel relations, and special education regulations are only part of the background knowledge required. The principal is more than the legal, moral, and ethical representative of the school; he or she is in the public's eye and is the spokesperson for the school. Therefore, it is important that principals have adequate training to be successful in their first assignments. The results of this study might assist principals with their first assignments by reducing stress from the overwhelming responsibility and mystery of a new principal's job. Interviews with experienced principals might provide significant information that could be helpful for a first-time principal.

Design of the Study

The data for this qualitative study were obtained by interviewing 20 principals with fewer than two years of experience in administration. The study was conducted over a six-month period and it focused on each principal's first year of leadership assignment. The information was gathered through interviews using a general interview guide and tape-recording the responses. The responses were grouped and coded using the Nudist program. The data were analyzed and the researcher attempted to identify constructs, themes, and patterns through reflective analysis.

Limitations

The study was limited to principals within the state of Tennessee. In addition, because principals lead very active days, interviews might have been conducted at a time when some principals felt rushed or preoccupied. Also, I have served as an administrator for the past seven years and have that perspective on principals' training.

Definitions of Terms

1. *Community Relationship* refers to the act of being responsive to parents and other members of the community (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000).
2. *Instructional leader* is a person who promotes, supervises, evaluates, and coordinates the curriculum within a school setting (Lunenburg & Ornstein).
3. *Middle-tier schools* are those that are functioning just above the lowest performing, but their performance is not in the top half of schools in the state (Bottoms, O'Neil, Fry, & Hill, 2003).
4. "*Redesign*" *leadership program* requires a new curriculum framework and new courses aimed at producing principals who can lead schools to excellence (Bottoms et al.).
5. *School culture* defines the shared values, rituals, and symbols within a school setting (Lunenburg & Ornstein).
6. *Visionary* is a buzzword in the educational setting. It refers to a person who has a capacity of seeing, anticipating, and imagining (Lunenburg & Ornstein).

Overview of the Study

Chapter 1 includes an introduction, background of the problem, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, design of the study, limitations, definitions of terms, and an overview. Chapter 2 contains the review of relevant literature including educational journals, periodicals, and books related to leadership and effective principalship. Chapter 3 describes the methodology that was used in conducting the study. Chapter 4 contains a presentation of the data collected. Chapter 5 presents conclusions, recommendations to improve practice, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature addresses procedures used for training beginning principals to determine if these methods effectively correlated to experiences from current principals during their first assignments. The review of literature focuses on two main topics. The first part addresses the history of school leadership reforms and the qualifications and standards situated to becoming a school principal. This includes a review of universities' programs for training future principals. Additionally, the literature reviewed includes topics that fall under a school principal's leadership such as vision, instructional leadership, maintaining a safe and effective environment, assessing, evaluating, and understanding the impact that politics, society, and economics can have on education.

Historical Overview of Reforming School Leadership

Murphy (2003), Vanderbilt professor and chairperson of the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), wrote:

Over the last quarter century, the field of school administration has experienced considerable turmoil as it has struggled to grow out of its adolescence. During the last half of that time period, in ways that were rarely seen earlier in our profession, a good deal of energy has been invested in coming to grips with the question of what ideas should shape school administration in a posttheory era inside the academy and a postindustrial world for education writ large. (p. 1)

Young (as cited in Norton, 2002a), executive director of the University Council for Educational Administration, conceded that university programs have been slow to change and that facilities are not connected to the field and often have a laissez-faire attitude about the need to adopt standards. A commonly held principle was that the accumulation of knowledge served to prepare those with innate ability to become successful leaders. That myth was debunked, which

in turn introduced new and exciting frameworks for preservice principal preparation-- frameworks based on knowledge grounded in experience (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2003). Hoachlander, Alt, and Beltranena (2001) acknowledged:

If improving educational leadership is a major obstacle to accelerating the pace of school improvement in the United States, it is not because the issue has been neglected in the last decade or two. There has been no shortage on national commissions, critical scholarships, or demonstrations programs. (p. 4)

Hale and Moorman (2003) concurred:

Nearly 20 years of efforts to reform administrator preparation programs have produced little progress. The reforms prompted by such well known national initiatives as the U.S. Department of Education's Administration Development (LEAD) Program (1987-1993) and the Danforth Foundation's Principals Preparation Program achieved rather limited success. (p. 5)

The National Commission on Excellence in Education (1987) published *Leaders for America's Schools* that was widely acknowledged as a pivotal document calling for reform in preparing educational leaders. The report blasted recruitment practices, inattention to instructional leadership, shoddy professional development, low licensure standards, and inattention to real-world problems and experiences. The commission called for shutting down 300 of the approximately 500 educational leadership programs in college and universities nationwide, saying that they lacked the "resources or commitment to provide the excellence called for by the commission" (p. 4).

According to Hoachlander et al. (2001), the Danforth Principal Preparation Foundation and the Danforth Professors Program, both sponsored by the Danforth Foundation, were started around the same time as the commission's report. Twenty-two universities were involved with the programs that stressed intellectual and moral development, field mentorships, clinical experience, and heavy recruitment of women and minorities among practicing classroom teachers (Hoachlander et al.).

In 1994, the ISLLC, a program of the Council of Chief State School Officers (Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium, 1996), began creating model standards for school leaders.

Based on research and the wisdom of educators, the standards were drafted by colleagues from 24 stated education agencies and representatives from various professional associations.

The standards were approved in final form at the end of 1996. Murphy (2003) wrote concerning the standards:

Since that time, they have exerted considerable pull on the profession of school administration, considerably more than almost anyone could have anticipated. Part of this influence could be attributed to timing. A 20-year struggle beginning with the first studies of productive schools and effective leaders had positioned the profession to accept the mantle of leadership for learning. Concomitantly, a related 20-year struggle to answer the charge thrown down by Greenfield in 1975 about a profession unhinged from its moral foundation had produced a fraternity of sentiment about the value-based dimensions of administrative work. Part of the influence can also be traced to the fact that the ISLLC strategy of standards-driven reform was isomorphic with the larger school reform agenda in play in the U.S. Additional variance can be attributed to the use of a broad-based, inclusive, professional anchored strategy of crafting the Standards. Still more of the impact can be connected to an explicit and quite proactive plan to bring the Standards to life. And, of course, when all is said and done, much of the influence can be traced to the appeal of the vision embedded in the Standards, a vision of a profession rooted in learning and committed to the well-being of youngsters and their families. (p. 33)

As stated by Murphy (2002), the ISLLC set the following standards for an educational leader to promote the success of all students:

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 students' learning and staffs' 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. (§ 15)

Hale and Moorman (2003) stated, “In 2002, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education aligned its accreditation standards for educational leadership training programs with the ISLLC standards” (p. 3).

Founded in 1921, The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) (2001) is an organization that is constantly looking at principal standards. The 28,500 members provide leadership for administrators throughout the United States. The NAESP, with the help of principals throughout the association, identified six standards that principals should know and be able to do. These standards serve as a definition of what constitutes instructional leadership.

According to the NAESP, effective leaders should:

1. Lead schools in a way that places students and adults' learning at the center.
2. Set high expectations and standards for the academic and social development of all students and the performance of adults.
3. Demand content and instruction that ensures students' achievement of agreed-upon academic standards.
4. Use multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools to assess, identify, and apply instructional improvement.
5. Actively engage the community to create shared responsibility for students and schools' success. (p. 2)

As cited by Hale and Moorman (2003), another organization taking action with school leadership is the Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL). The researchers explained, “Since 1964, IEL has been at the heart of an impartial, dynamic, nationwide network of people and organizations from many walks of life who share a passionate conviction that excellent education is critical to nurturing healthy individuals, families, and communities” (p. 20). Through IEL’s work, stakeholders in educational leadership have had the opportunity to learn from one another

and to collaborate closely. Developing and supporting leaders is one of three program areas that IEL uses to provide services to stakeholders (Hale & Moorman).

This research focused on the standards created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The SREB, the nation's first interstate compact for education, was created in 1948 by southern governors. SREB helps educational and governmental leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, to improve the region's social and economic life (SREB, 2002). SREB examined the difference between "certified principal" and "qualified principal" (p. 8).

In the 16 SREB states, school district leaders frequently reported that the supply of principals was diminishing rapidly; yet, the problem was not a lack of *certified* principals but a lack of *qualified* principals (SREB, 2002). Every state has plenty of people with certificates as school administrators. No state has plenty of people with the knowledge and skills to lead schools to excellence.

As reported by Bottoms and O'Neil (2001), in the last four years, Texas had certified more than 7,000 school administrators--enough to replace every school principal in the state. Georgia, with 1,946 schools, had 3,200 people who were certified as principals but who did not hold that position. Other SREB states also were oversupplied with principal candidates. Yet, one large urban district had recently reviewed 35 certified applicants for a principal's vacancy at a high school and not one met the published criteria and needs. As clarified by Bottoms and O'Neil, "Certification, as it exists today, is not proof of quality" (pp. 1-2).

From this concern with certification and qualification, the SREB developed the 13 critical success factors of school leaders (Bottoms & O'Neil, 2001). SREB (2002) defined a "qualified principal" as one who:

1. Creates a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum, and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
 - a. Understands mission, vision, and the essential elements of a school that contribute to their accomplishments.

- b. Leads development or refinement of mission and vision and their operation in the school.
- 2. Sets high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
 - a. Understands culture and climate and how to shape them in a school.
 - b. Demonstrates knowledge and skill in organizing and leading a school to high expectations.
- 3. Recognizes and encourages implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase students' achievement.
 - a. Knows the literature on and most recent development in standards, instruction, professional development, and learning theory.
 - b. Develops and implements a system for ensuring good instructional practices.
- 4. Creates a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
 - a. Understands the need for student-support systems and how to develop them.
 - b. Develops support systems for students that involve multiple stakeholders (faculty, staff, parents/caregivers, guidance personnel, and caring adults).
- 5. Uses data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and students' achievement.
 - a. Understands how to acquire, access, utilize, and communicate data.
 - b. Leads the school community in collecting, analyzing, and using data as the basis for improvement of students' achievement and school/classroom practices.
- 6. Keeps everyone informed and focused on students' achievement.
 - a. Understands the role of the school leader in establishing and maintaining communication processes that foster students' achievement.
 - b. Demonstrates skill in communication.
- 7. Makes parents partners in students' education and creates a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
 - a. Understands the relationship between parent involvement and student success.
 - b. Creates a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
- 8. Understands the change process and has the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
 - a. Understands change.
 - b. Demonstrates leadership and facilitation skills.
 - c. Manages change effectively.
- 9. Understands how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality, sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.
 - a. Understands how adults learn.

- b. Focuses professional development and staff development activities on improvement of students' learning and achievement.
 - c. Takes a leadership role in school wide professional and staff development.
- 10. Uses and organizes time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
 - a. Understands the relationship between time utilization and school improvement.
 - b. Demonstrates skill in leading processes resulting in time utilization that facilitates school improvement.
- 11. Acquires and uses resources wisely to support high levels of student and staff performance.
 - a. Understands how to acquire needed fiscal, technological, and human resources.
 - b. Manages fiscal and technological resources efficiently.
 - c. Organizes the school to maximize the use of personnel to bring about desired improvements in student achievement and school performance.
 - d. Creates a safe, secure learning environment in which achievement of students and staff is celebrated.
- 12. Obtains support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.
 - a. Understands the role of central office administrators in school improvement.
 - b. Demonstrates skill in eliciting support of central office personnel in school improvement.
 - c. Understands the role of community and parent leaders in school improvement.
 - d. Demonstrates skill in engaging parents and community leaders in school improvement efforts.
- 13. Continuously learns and seeks out colleagues who are abreast of new research and proven practices.
 - a. Develops a system for identifying and networking with colleagues who can contribute to knowledge of research and best practice.
 - b. Applies knowledge of research and best practice learned from and with colleagues. (pp. 2-20)

Standards for Principals' Preparation

Not too many years ago, job postings for school administrators garnered hundreds of applications from highly qualified candidates. Today, the flood of applicants for school administrative openings has diminished to a trickle. Worse, the applicants who are available and interested do not always possess high-quality leadership skills (Ramsey, 1999). What does it

take to be a qualified principal? To be considered for a principalship, an applicant must first complete a state-approved master's program at a university or college. The course work varies at each university.

According to Glasman, Cibulka, and Ashby (2002), "Those who seek entrance to leadership programs gravitate toward programs based on convenience and ease of completions; quality of program is hardly a leading criterion" (p. 262). Hale and Moorman (2003) added:

Admission standards to most accredited programs are too low and few, if any, efforts are made to identify high potential applicants, to target women and minorities for inclusion, or to identify individuals interested in working in high-needs rural or urban environments. (p. 6)

Where do schools find candidates who meet the qualifications of becoming a school principal? Do classroom teachers have the prerequisites for an administrative appointment? According to Dunklee (2000), classroom teachers do if they have been keen observers of the way the school functions beyond the confines of their particular classrooms. Have teachers studied their principals and observed how their fellow teachers react to the multitude of events that take place during a typical school day? Have they tried to understand the rationale behind administrative decisions and examined the effects of politics on their school and school district? Have they attempted to move their sphere of practical knowledge from the classroom to the principal's office and beyond? Did they develop a strong résumé that would give any reader a picture of them as potential professional managers or leaders who demonstrate, on paper, the kinds of experiences that merit consideration for the principalship position?

The SREB leadership initiative summer conference recommended that universities and school systems work together to find the right individuals for leadership preparation. According to Norton (2002b), SREB recommended the following criteria to identify teachers who:

1. can demonstrate success in raising achievement for all students;
2. have shown leadership in coaching other teachers to raise student achievement;
3. are recommended by high-performing principals;
4. have implemented innovative learning strategies in their classrooms;
5. can challenge all students through rigorous, standards-based teaching;
6. can integrate technology into daily teaching;

7. have good communications, human relations, and organizational skills;
8. have the ability to motivate;
9. are National Board Certified;
10. have won awards and recognition;
11. have earned a master's degree in content area;
12. are active in professional organizations;
13. have provided professional development for other teachers;
14. have worked collaboratively on teaching/learning issues;
15. have written successfully on teaching teams;
16. can analyze research and apply it to practice;
17. can use student data and work samples to make instructional decisions;
18. have shown leadership in the larger community;
19. can articulate and implement a vision; and
20. are committed to continuous improvement. (p. 9)

As stated in the Tennessee Code 49-5-412 (TSBA Legal Reference, 2003), "Each school having nine or more teachers shall have at least one full-time supervising principal" (p. 252).

Tennessee Code 49-5-101 (TSBA Legal Reference) added that the basic requirements for administrative positions include:

(a) The candidate must have a valid license for term of employment, (b) he or she must be over the age of 18 and must have had more than eight months of teaching experience, and (c) he or she must have good moral character and not be addicted to intoxicants and narcotics. No license shall be issued unless the work is done at a university or college approved by the state board of education. Licensing shall be uniform for all the local school systems and shall be issued by the state board of education (pp. 232-233).

After achieving a license, there are limits and requirements for maintaining the license. Terms and renewal of principal certificates are set by the state. The initial certificate is good for 10 years and shall be renewable for additional periods of 10 years (TSBA Legal Reference).

The state of Tennessee has created an academy for training principals before they begin their first assignments. The purpose and duty of academy is to provide training opportunities for principals and to instill and reinforce instructional leadership of educational effectiveness. The academy trains principals in teacher evaluation and reviews the various needs of children with behavioral and emotional disorders as they relate to discipline policies and procedures (TSBA Legal Reference, 2003).

Are the current college requirements adequate to train a principal? Daresh and Playko (1995) stated that such training often lacked a serious attempt to teach about the principalship as an art (How am I supposed to act? How do I look?). The three main categories of skills (minimum competencies) that new or prospective administrators and principals need to master to be successful are: (a) technical skills related to new roles (What do I do?), (b) socialization skills (How am I supposed to look and act?), and (c) self-awareness skills (How do I look? How do I appear to others?).

In an April 2001 report, *Preparing a New Breed of School Principals: It's Time for Action*, Bottoms and O'Neil (2001) listed SREB proposed actions that every state and every school district could take to secure an ample supply of highly qualified principals. A separate report defined six strategies that state and local leaders could use to achieve that result. In this separate report, Bottoms et al. (2003) stated that SREB drew from research and, most importantly, from direct experiences in helping schools, universities, and state agencies rethink and redesign leadership programs in order to compile the following strategies:

Strategy 1: Single out high-performers. Stop relying on the questionable pool of "self-selected" people with administrative credentials but little inclination or talent of leadership. Instead, develop criteria and methods to choose high-quality candidates for leadership preparation. Tap those with demonstrated knowledge of curriculum and instruction as well as a passion for helping students meet high standards.

Strategy 2: Recalibrate preparation programs. Redesign leadership preparation programs to emphasize the core functions of the high-achieving school: curriculum, instruction, and student achievement.

Strategy 3: Emphasize real-world training. Make field-based experiences a high priority and a central focus of principal-preparation programs.

Strategy 4: Link principals' licensure to performance. Create a two-tier licensure system for school principals. For initial licensure, candidates would have to complete a preparation program focused on the core functions of successful schools. Within a specified time, those with initial licenses would have to earn a professional license by demonstrating that they can lead improvements in school and classroom practices and in student achievement.

Strategy 5: Move accomplished teachers into school leadership positions. Create an alternative certification program that provides a high level of support for accomplished teachers who are interested in becoming principals. This program would enable them to

bypass traditional preparation and to prove themselves on the job. Limit participation in such programs to teachers with master's degrees, demonstrated leadership skills, and proven records of increasing student achievement.

Strategy 6: Use state academies to cultivate leadership teams in middle-tier schools. Schools that rely on leadership teams, rather than on single-leader models, are more likely to improve student learning and “grow” future principals. Create state leadership academies that will cultivate school-based leadership teams and will help raise student achievement. Concentrate on serving middle-tier schools that have lagging academic performance but rarely qualify for special assistance from state and federal programs. (pp. 2-3)

Balanced Management and Leadership Roles

Developing a clear vision is a key to good leadership. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001), there is considerable debate about how this vision is created. There are two views. One view considers the principal as the creator of the vision who works to have the staff support his or her vision. Others see the creation of vision as coming only from the members of the school community. It is then the principal's responsibility to carry out the school's vision. Barth, (as cited in SREB, 2002) author of *Learning From the Heart*, stated:

Things in school have changed dramatically over the past few years. Now “they” not only permit us to proceed with a new idea; they expect and demand that we do so. As one principal recently put it, “If I had shared my vision of a school 10 years ago, I would have been locked up. Now, I can't get a job without a vision.” (p. 3)

Principals' expectations affect the creation of a school's vision and these expectations are influenced by leadership styles.

What are the current leadership styles, written and discussed, concerning principals? It should come as no surprise that the best leaders align themselves somewhere around the middle of the continuum; they try to balance direction with freedom. Sometimes they lead people by the hand into the future; other times they merely point people in the right direction and get out of their way. There are reasons why the middle of the road is the best path to follow. Laissez-faire leadership is an oxymoron. Allowing too much permissiveness is not leadership at all; it is

chaos. Likewise, attempts at autocratic management do not work well with today's independent minded, unionized, and rights-conscious professionals (Ramsey, 1999).

Covey (1989) identified seven habits of successful people that can be keys for successful school principals:

1. Be proactive
2. Begin with the end in mind
3. Put first things first
4. Think win/win
5. Seek first to understand, then be understood
6. Synergize
7. Sharpen the saw. (p. 53)

Principals should be proactive. Effective people recognize the need to change from the inside out and constantly strive to create their own destinies. Being proactive is the act of having personal vision. Proactive people take responsibility for their attitudes and actions. Proactive people make their responses a product of their values and decisions rather than their moods and conditions. The key is to be a light, not a judge; a model, not a critic; a programmer, not a program; feed opportunities, not starve problems; keep promises, not make excuses; and focus upon the immediate circle of influence, not upon the larger circle of concern (Covey, 1989).

Good principals should begin with the end in mind. Successful principals will begin each day with a clear understanding of their desired direction and destination. They will realize that things are created mentally before they are created physically. They will have clarified values and set priorities before selecting goals and going about their work. Effective people forgo quick fixes and evaluate the significance of their actions in relation to how much they move the organization toward its vision. That is why successful school leaders do not buy into every fad that comes along. Real leaders are not trendy. They are more interested in timeless goals with lasting results (Covey, 1989).

Successful principals will have the ability to organize priorities. They should put first things first. Effective people manage their time so that they can put important things first and say "no" to other things. They make a habit of thinking about values first. They "walk the talk"

and incorporate belief statements into the school's long-range plans. Effective school leadership has always been value based and principle centered (Covey, 1989).

Successful principals will be mediators when dealing with conflict situations. They should think win/win. Effective principals seek mutually beneficial solutions, whether it is making curriculum decisions, resolving discipline problems, or negotiating a master contract. In effective schools, there are no winners or losers and it is the leader's job to see that it works out that way (Covey, 1989).

Successful principals will have good listening skills. They should seek first to understand and then to be understood. Effective school leaders diagnose before they prescribe. Successful and admired school leaders think first about what the other person has to say and then about what they want to say. They listen more and talk less (Covey, 1989).

Staff members should feel energy from their leader. The term synergy, as used by Covey (1989), is the ability to get more than expected when one adds two factors. Effective people habitually think about making new connections, combinations, and creating new alternatives so that the whole can function as more than the sum of its parts. Successful principals will have synergy. Piece-meal thinking yields only partial answers. That is why interdisciplinary teams in many schools are replacing departmental organizations (Covey).

Successful principals will continue to improve their skills. They must continue to sharpen the saw. Effective people make it a habit to think about and care for themselves first in order to make all the other habits possible. They invest in renewing themselves physically, mentally, professionally, and spiritually. They watch TV less and exercise, read, write, meditate, and perform community service more than most people do. Outstanding school executives have followed these leadership principles all along. Workaholics do not make the best principals--well-rounded and healthy individuals do. Leaders with these habits are more effective than are leaders without them (Covey, 1989).

Greenleaf (2002) coined the phrase "servant-leadership" (n. p.). Greenleaf stated that an effective leader should first be a servant to people with a desire and dedication to serve and help other people. His theory is very simple and to the point: A leader is a servant. His idea is very different from that of many principals found in the school setting. Many times principals and central office staff are viewed as boss managers. A boss manager powers the school from the top. There is usually one way to do things and that is his or her way. Greenleaf sees leadership as a different role; it is one of participating and delegating duties.

Glasser (1998) considered successful leadership as being able to help with the needs of constituents. He stated the needs that should be satisfied are love and belonging, power, freedom, fun, and survival. Everyone wants to be loved and to have a feeling of belonging. Everyone should have an opportunity to be a part of the team. Constituents should have a feeling of power. The level of power will vary from each individual but everyone wants to be involved in the decision-making process. Even if they do not want to be involved, they should have the power to say they do not want to have that authority. Freedom is an important need, especially the freedom to make choices. Glasser stated if people are going to be productive in life there needs to be some type of enjoyment or a fun aspect to their lives. Finally, Glasser considered survival as an essential need. People are like animals; when they are backed into a corner there are usually two options, fight or flee. There is an instinct in every individual to survive and leaders should try not to back people into corners.

Hersey and Blanchard (1997) described successful leaders as those who can adapt their behavior to meet the demands of their own unique situation. The Situational Leadership Model is based on the amount of direction (task behavior) and the amount of socioemotional support (relationship behavior) a leader must provide given the situation and the level of readiness of the follower or group. Hersey and Blanchard's theory allows a leader to employ different levels of leadership. The levels are determined by three factors: the task, relationship between leader and

follower, and the readiness of the subordinate. Hersey and Blanchard addressed four levels of leading: telling, selling, participating, and delegating.

No matter which leadership styles principals use, they must be prepared to be able to adjust to change. Johnson (1998) wrote about effective leaders and what they should understand concerning change. A principal should be prepared for change. The goals and vision of an organization are going to change; therefore, an effective leader should understand that change will happen. Principals must understand that methods and procedures must change to keep up to date. A good leader should anticipate change. An effective leader must be able to see the need for change and have a vision of what change will look like in the organization. Principals must be able to have a vision and allow their staff to share in that vision. A principal should always monitor and evaluate every aspect of the school. Change should be monitored so that everyone has an understanding of its importance. Leaders must be able to adapt to change quickly. One of the hardest changes to make is for someone to change himself or herself. Leaders must be able to change themselves, not just change the organization. The staff will be watching the attitude of their leader; they must see the principal enjoying the change. An effective leader should be able to enjoy the adventure that change brings to the organization and be a positive role model for change. Finally, the principal must be ready to change quickly again. An effective leader cannot be content because change will happen again and often. Principals should remain open minded. New ideas will continue to come and principals must be willing to be a change agent for the school (Johnson).

Communication

Effective leadership requires effective communication . If one cannot communicate adequately, one cannot lead. Of all the essential tools of leadership, communication skills are the most important by far. According to Ramsey (1999), leaders need to ask and answer the following key questions concerning communication: (a) What do you want to communicate? (b)

Why do you want to communicate this message? (c) Who needs to get the message? (d) How should the message be communicated? and (e) When is the best time to communicate it?

Blasé and Kirby (2000) offered suggestions for principals concerning communication with teachers. One of the most important types of communication is praising teachers. Principals should use praise sincerely. Teachers view praise from effective principals as genuine; rather than perceiving it only as an influence strategy, teachers see this expression as comfortable and natural for their principals. Praise is not contrived or awkward; it is congruent with other behaviors and personal characteristics of principals. Principals should maximize the use of nonverbal communication such as smiles, nods, and other gestures of approval. Principals should schedule time for teacher recognition. Some principals choose the beginning or the end of faculty meetings. Recognition of faculty at student assemblies is common. Others choose to announce faculty accomplishments over the public address system at the end of each week. Many principals routinely praise teachers during their tours of schools. It is clear that open and effective principals build time for praise into their busy schedules. Although the use of praise seems natural, the neophyte might become more adept at the use of these strategies by consciously scheduling opportunities for recognition. As the practice becomes automatic and comfortable, additional forums for praise might be added. Good leaders should write brief personal notes to compliment individuals. To praise individual teachers, effective principals often rely on written messages; these brief notes should always be handwritten and personalized. Principals can show pride in teachers by boasting as teachers often learn of judgment of their work from others. Successful principals will express pride in their teachers to parents, colleagues, and others in the community. To be effective, praise need not be formal or lengthy because teachers appreciate many forms of recognition including those that last only seconds. Thus, short accolades delivered in a variety of forums using both verbal and nonverbal techniques can be effective without placing excessive demands on the principal's time. Because of the isolation and uncertainties that are characteristic of the profession, teachers are most

responsive to praise bestowed for school-related success. Whenever possible, principals should commend specific professional accomplishments of individual teachers. Group praise can be used to increase the opportunities for recognition, but it too should be tied to specific achievement (Blasé & Kirby).

The modern school administrator wears many hats; one is worn as a school spokesperson. The principal represents the programs, staff, and students. Comments that he or she makes will have a tremendously beneficial effect on acceptance of the school's initiatives or a similarly devastating effect if they are not well thought out.

Maintaining a Safe and Effective Environment

Administrative skills focus primarily on harnessing human energies so students have the best opportunity to become successful learners. However, it is also extremely important for an administrator to secure the school as a safe, enjoyable place.

When driving by homes in a neighborhood, there are some that appear attractive enough to live in and others unattractive; this is also true with schools. When driving by a school, the school should promote a feeling of pride by its appearance. High quality instruction occurring in the classroom is more important than a great looking school on the outside, but there must be a balance. First impressions do count. When there is trash blown up against the school's fence, it gives the message that the principal or school community does not care; also, old messages or dates on a school marquee communicate a lack of attention to detail (Callison & McAllister, 1999).

To maintain a building's integrity, there is a need for frequent inspections during the school year. Inspections can come from different sources. Local, state, and federal inspectors may arrive at any time to inspect for fire, safety, health, or other mandated items. It is important that the principal become familiar with the safety requirements of his or her school district (Stevens, 2001).

An effective principal will communicate to the staff and faculty the need and importance of maintaining a well-kept school campus. The National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National School Public Relations Association (2000) made the following recommendations to use as a checklist to assure that the campus presents a good first impression. The Association suggested that the inspection should begin at the main entrance and that the following questions be addressed:

1. Any litter and trash at your entrance area?
2. Any old weeds? Any old leaves?
3. Have the shrubs been trimmed and attractively sized?
4. Any dangerous cracks in sidewalks or steps?
5. Graffiti on front entrance or surrounding area?
6. Is there evidence of "old litter" around doors and corners?
7. Are there work needs that require the help of central facilities staff?
8. Are the entrance halls clear of cartons and unused furniture?
9. Are the drinking fountains clean and inviting?
10. Are lighting fixtures working properly?
11. Are the mop closets and equipment supply rooms tidy and clean?
12. Is the custodians' office clean and orderly? (p. 191)

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (1999), as listed in its standard of excellence checklist for a school, recommended that play equipment be inspected monthly by a certified safety professional and the school building and grounds should be clean, pleasing, safe, and well maintained.

Be an Instructional Leader

The principal should be a supporter of instruction in the school. What and how to do instruction is a big decision in the school's setting. Blanchard and Johnson (1982) told a story of Blanchard observing his son's fifth-grade classroom. The teacher was giving a test on state capitals and she removed all the atlases from the room during the test. When he asked her why she did not use them during the test, she said, "I couldn't do that because all the kids would get 100%," as though it would be bad for everyone to do well. Blanchard also told the story of Einstein being asked for his telephone number. Einstein went to the phone book and looked it

up. He commented that he never cluttered his mind with information he could find somewhere else. A principal will have to decide what and how instruction will be delivered at the school.

A principal must be a change agent when dealing with instruction. The time has come for educators to rethink why and how they educate. Are students simply individuals who must take in basics to survive, consume, and produce, or is education about helping students enjoy life where they explore to their potential? Is it educational for students to sit and enjoy music by listening and playing, or is it only educational when they are taught the mechanics of music? These are the type questions principals must be able to think about to support instruction in their schools (Caine & Caine, 1997).

Everyone wants to improve instruction in public schools, but each wants to do it in his or her own way. Some want to strengthen basic skills--others, critical thinking. Some want to promote citizenship or character; others want to warn against the dangers of drugs and violence. Everyone recognizes that schools play an essential role in preparing children to become knowledgeable, responsible, caring adults. Each of these traits contains an educational challenge for principals (Elias, 1997).

Schools and communities are inextricably intertwined and the principal is the linchpin in creating a learning community that seamlessly integrates the work and expectations of students, teachers, parents, citizens, community and business leaders, and policymakers. Public schools are public institutions embodying the values and hopes of the community. Public schools play a key role as a model of democracy at work in society. They do so by demonstrating that all students should have the opportunity to learn at high levels, regardless of where they are born, and by preparing them for equal chances at success as citizens and in life (National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2001).

Attending school should be an adventure. The idea that the classroom is the only place where learning takes place defies logic. In truth, classroom learning often is not “real life” learning and much of what goes on there is ignored for good reason. Students learn constantly

and a good school uses all the resources on and off the campus to provide a practical, real-life learning environment. Whether it is a traveling school, a field trip, a maintenance man showing students how to fix a leaky pipe, or planting a tree, it is all learning (Schumaker & Sommers, 2001).

Kohn (1996) noted that a skillful principal should find a way to work instruction and academics into other tasks or discussions. She reported of a school that had numerous floods in the bathrooms; the problem became a science lesson for everyone. Students were asked to generate a hypothesis about why the floods were happening, and reading and writing lessons developed as the students recorded various proposals for solving the problems.

Glasser (1998) related criteria that a principal should seek to achieve a quality school with maximum instruction. The principal should work toward eliminating all disciplinary problems, not incidents, in two years. A significant drop should occur in year one. The principal should strive for achievement scores on state assessment tests to show improvement over what was achieved in the past. Instruction programs should contain high expectations, which translates to mean that all grades below competence will be eliminated. Students must demonstrate competence to their teachers or to teachers' assistants to get credit for their grades or courses. All schooling should be eliminated and replaced by useful education. Administrators should see that all students will do some quality work each year; that is, work that is significantly beyond competence. All such work will receive an A or higher grade

Assessing and Evaluating Using Integrity, Fairness, and Ethics

Effective school leaders are hunters, gatherers, and consumers of information. They use every bit of information to help assess where students are in relation to standards and learning goals. Skillful principals lead their school communities in collecting, interpreting, and using data to assess students' achievement and factors that affect it. They know how to communicate the meaning of data and can lead the school community in using materials constructively to improve

teaching and learning. According to the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001), effective principals should:

1. consider a variety of data to measure performance;
2. analyze data using a variety of strategies;
3. use data as tools to identify barriers to success, design strategies for improvement, and plan daily instruction;
4. benchmark successful schools with similar demographics to identify strategies for improving students' achievement; and
5. create a school environment that is comfortable using data. (p. 56)

Understanding Political, Social, and Economical Impacts on Education

If principals attempt to fool themselves into believing that education is not highly political, they hurt the educational chances of the children they are responsible for because they will not gather their fair share of resources. Some nations use force to divide resources; democratic nations tend to use politics to accomplish this job. A prime task of the school administrator is resource gathering for his or her staff and political skills are crucial in the competition.

Legal responsibility of the principal focuses on understanding the local school board policy as well as federal and state laws. Consideration is vital to the topic of due process and how it relates to the management of personnel as well as students and parents (Callison & McAllister, 1999).

The administrator needs to be familiar with the legal basis of federal and state authority over public schools. Political forces directly affect schools. Political involvement and a sound understanding of the democratic process is essential to running schools and is needed to reach education goals for the future. The principal needs an understanding of influence, control, attitudes and feelings, trust, discontent, and dissatisfaction (Callison & McAllister, 1999).

To be effective, the principal must focus on how issues become school policy and why policies are necessary. Understanding the differences between school policies, school regulations, and the education code is critical. The role, responsibility, and actions of the school

board in establishing and enforcing policy is significant as well as consequences that could develop if school board policy is not closely followed in a consistent manner (Callison & McAllister, 1999).

One area sometimes overlooked by the busy administrator is the community at large. Taxpayers, whether they are parents or not, can serve as vital supporters of school programs. Principals would be well advised to spread the news about successful programs, achievement on standardized tests, creative and innovative teaching techniques, and other positive school reports. Waiting to contact senior citizens and other nonparents until the bond issue is up for a vote or until budget time and a new building addition is needed, usually results in little, if any, support. Early communication to the public is critical to the success of any new proposal. One hopes that this communication, with continual nourishment, will grow into support for an improved educational system (Stevens, 2001).

Summary

The role of the principal has changed; principals no longer deal only with students' discipline and teachers' evaluations; they are now accountable to parents, community groups, politicians, and other stakeholders. To be proficient, today's principal must be a facilitator, an appraiser, a forecaster, an advisor, and an enabler. Are principals prepared for this workload when they leave university programs or are they learning on the job? This study explored possible gaps between the actual knowledge and skills needed by principals in their first year in administration and the knowledge and skills taught in their formal principals' preparation programs. The researcher focused on the 13 critical success factors for school leaders as created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). The researcher attempted to identify the extent to which these 13 standards have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The purpose of the study was to identify the extent to which the 13 critical success factors of school leaders have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose was to identify significant opportunities for addressing the critical success factors in preservice courses and preservice field experience development programs. This chapter describes how the research was conducted; the participants; the instrumentation that was used; how the data were collected, recorded, and analyzed; logistical issues; and how trustworthiness of the data was assured.

Research Design

The focus of my inquiry was to examine the perceptions of principals concerning the extent to which the 13 critical success factors of school leaders have been addressed in their preservice formal and informal development training experiences. The study was conducted with 20 principals across three regions in Tennessee: East, Middle, and West. The principals were from various levels including elementary, middle, and high schools; each participant had fewer than two years of experience in the principalship. The participants were interviewed and asked open-ended questions.

Because this study was an attempt to identify the participants' perceptions of their own training and qualifications, I determined that a qualitative (postpositivist) approach would be most appropriate. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) defined postpositivist research:

Postpositivist research is grounded in the assumption that features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and that these interpretations tend to be transitory and situational. Postpositivist researchers develop knowledge by collecting primarily verbal data through the intensive study of cases and then subjecting these data to analytic induction. (p. 28)

Bogan and Biklen (1998) added:

The history of qualitative research in education in the United States is rich and complex. It is rooted in early sociology and anthropology in the United States, but it also has ties to English and French intellectual traditions. The discipline of sociology of education was predominantly quantitative prior to the work of Waller. In *Social of Teaching* (1932), Waller relied on interviews, life histories, participant observation, case records, diaries, letters, and other personal documents to describe the social world of teachers and their students. (p. 7)

According to Creswell (2003):

Qualitative research takes place in the natural setting. The qualitative researcher often goes to the site (home, office) of the participant to conduct the research. This enables the researcher to develop a level of detail about the individual or place and to be highly involved in actual experiences of the participants. (p. 181)

The researcher makes an interpretation of the data gathered through the interview process. This also means that the researcher filters the data through a personal lens.

The purpose of qualitative research is to seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Open-ended questions were asked through interviews because they allowed for maximum use of ideas, thoughts, and memories in the participants' own words rather than words of the researcher (Reinharz, 1992).

Participants

The participants were principals from across the state of Tennessee with fewer than two years of experience in the principalship at elementary, middle, and high schools. Contact lists from the principal's academy were used to find current and past beginning principals as prospective participants. I contacted each participant by phone to set up an agreeable time and location for our interview. I traveled across the state of Tennessee to conduct personal interviews with beginning principals during the spring of 2004.

Successive Phases of the Inquiry

The first phase of my research was to receive authorization from the East Tennessee State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). Next, I developed a pilot interview guide and tested the instrument with two individuals who were currently serving as principals with more than two years' experience in their positions. The pilot interviews were not included in the study's results. From results of the pilot interviews, there were no revisions made to the question set. I determined that the set of questions was administered in a fair amount of time and it allowed interviewees the opportunity to supply substantial information (see Appendix B). I then contacted principals within the state of Tennessee who were willing to participate with the research. During this initial contact, I explained the project; after receiving verbal permission, I obtained formal permission from the principals who participated in the interviews (see Appendix C). After the permission letter was returned by each participant, I mailed him or her a demographic survey (see Appendix D) to establish background information. At this time, I began setting up times and locations to begin the interview process with the 20 perspective participants.

Instrumentation

The qualitative approach to this study allowed me to describe in depth the perceptions and thoughts expressed by principals. The primary data source was from interviews using open-ended questions that encouraged a natural response from the participant (see Appendix B). The questions were developed to open up a dialog that led to a discussion of the 13 critical success factors of the SREB. The questions, at times, expanded based on the individuals' responses and as dialog developed between the interviewer and the interviewee. It was imperative to create an atmosphere of trust by sharing information in a natural and nonthreatening setting. The data collection was through the open-ended questions recorded in the participants' own words using audiotapes and transcriptions. The interviewees were allowed to present their own unique

realities in the context they pursued for each question. The text of the interviews and questions served as the primary source for interpreting and analyzing data.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a key informant interview format (Gall et al., 1996). Principals were considered key informants within this study because of their special knowledge about the phenomenon and the extent that they were willing to express that knowledge. For this study, I purposefully selected principals with two or fewer years of experience in the principalship. According to Creswell (2003), purposefully selected individuals will help the researcher understand the problem and the research questions. Expanding the interviews across the state garnered insight from principals who had graduated from a variety of universities or college programs throughout the state. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions in which participants were initially asked the same set of questions (Gall et al.).

Patton (1990) added that a general interview guide will allow for a common set of topics from which data will be collected to determine exact wording or sequencing of interview questions. Interviews were conducted in person. Each participant was allowed to review the major points of the interview. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described member checking as critical to establishing credibility. Cassette tapes were used to record interviews and a professional transcriptionist transcribed the interviews. Tapes were transcribed verbatim to preserve impressions and to collect thick, rich description. The qualitative method of gathering data gave me the opportunity to look at the similarities and differences among the principals.

Data Analysis Procedures

According to Bogan and Biklen (1998):

Data analysis is the process of systemically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes, and other material that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involves working with data, organizing themes, breaking them into manageable

units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, and discovering what is important and what is to be learned. (p. 157)

Data were analyzed by a procedure known as inductive analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Inductive analysis works well when the purpose of the study is exploratory and descriptive (Huberman & Miles, 1994). All interviews were recorded on audiotape and transcribed. Using the transcriptions, I began the subprocess of unitization (Lincoln & Guba). According to Lincoln and Guba:

Units are single pieces of information that stand by themselves; that is, they are interpretable in the absence of any additional information. A unit may be a simple sentence or an extended paragraph, but, in either case, the test of its unitary character is that if any portion of the unit were to be removed, the remainder would be seriously compromised or rendered uninterpretable. (p. 203)

After the transcriptions were unitized, the process of categorization began (Patton, 1990).

Categorization is the process of sorting units into categories with similar characteristics. Data were gathered and coded into the Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theory-building (NUD.IST) software. The NUD.IST program was used to organize, analyze, and categorize data. Text files were coded into categories representing emergent themes.

Emerging themes were identified as the text files were coded. According to Bogan and Biklen (1998), using data allows you to come up with a focus or argument. The researchers recommended waiting to collect all data before deciding on one of three types of arguments: thesis, theme, or topic.

Ensuring the Trustworthiness of the Data

Trustworthiness of the data was established based on Guba's techniques to establish trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Creditability was established based on data being gathered from principals representing graduates from a variety of universities and colleges. Member checking was a component of each interview. Each individual interviewed was given the opportunity to review the interview for accuracy, correct interpretation, and the patterns identified. The data collected were triangulated based on interviews of principals from different

universities, different job assignments, and different job locations. Dependability and conformability was established through an audit of the data by an individual or individuals completely independent of the schools to assure accuracy and completeness (Lincoln & Guba).

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

I knew for this study to have the quality data needed for it to be a valuable tool to assist universities as they prepare for future principalship preparation programs, that I must obtain a sample of data from across the state of Tennessee. Going across the state and sitting down in the offices of principals whom I have never met was going to be a big task for a small town boy who had only once in his life been west of Nashville. With great anticipation, I left for my data-gathering mission on Easter afternoon in the spring of 2004. I was on spring break the week after Easter from my job as principal of Jefferson Elementary School, located 30 minutes down Highway 11E east of Knoxville. It seemed like a perfect time to start my interviews by driving six and one half hours from my home in East Tennessee to the part of my precious state that borders the mighty Mississippi River. Using the list of beginning principals who had attended the state's academy and with the assistance of a wonderful lady who worked in the central office of Shelby County Schools, I was able to establish a list of 20 principals across the state to visit. Each visit was in the school in which the participant served as principal. Not only was I able to visit with 20 unique individuals, but also I was able to visit 20 unique school buildings. Looking at the demographics of the participants, it is evident that the data in this study were information gathered from participants with a wide range of educational backgrounds. As my trip across the state unfolded, I quickly discovered that my adventure was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life and it gives me great pleasure and honor to present the data that were gathered in such a personal way.

This study was conducted to examine preparation and training experiences of school principals prior to accepting their first principalship assignment. I focused on the 13 critical success factors for school leaders as created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB).

The purpose of the study was to identify the extent to which these 13 standards or critical success factors of school leaders have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose was to identify significant opportunities for addressing the critical success factors in preservice courses and preservice field experiences development programs.

The study was conducted with 20 principals from the three regions of the state of Tennessee: East, Middle, and West. The principals were from various levels including elementary, middle, and high schools. Each participating principal was interviewed at his or her school and asked open-ended questions based on an interview guide. An audiotape and notes were used to record each interview and a professional transcribed the interviews. No identifiable personal information was used that could link the interview to the interviewee. Because this study was an attempt to identify the participants' perceptions of their own training and qualifications, I determined that a qualitative (postpositivist) approach would be most appropriate (Gall et al., 1996).

A pilot interview was completed with two individuals who were currently serving as principals with more than two years' experience in their positions. From results of the pilot interviews, there were no revisions made to the question set. I determined that the set of questions was administered in a fair amount of time and allowed interviewees the opportunity to supply substantial information. The pilot interviews were not included in the study's results. Demographics of the principals were collected; the characteristics documented that the group of participants had a wide range of backgrounds and experiences.

Demographics

The participants included 9 males and 11 females. The years of birth varied from 1942 to 1969, which put the participants in an age range of approximately 35 to 62 years. Both the median and the mode for year of birth were 1960, approximately 44 years of age.

The number of years of teaching experience when totaled for participants was 256; this was a mean for the group of 12.8 years. The range of teaching experience was from 3 to 28 years. The mean for time spent teaching in elementary school was 8 years; middle school, 2.9 years; and high school, 1.7 years.

The 20 participants came from 14 different undergraduate institutions. Those included Carson Newman (TN), Union (KY), Westchester (PA), Murray State (KY), University of Memphis (TN), Arkansas State (AK), Delta State (MS), Middle Tennessee State (TN), Tennessee Tech (TN), Virginia Tech (VA), East Tennessee State (TN), University of Tennessee-Knoxville (TN), Kentucky Wesleyan (KY), and Samford (AL).

The 20 participants graduated from nine different administrative endorsement-training institutions. Those included Union (KY), University of Memphis (TN), Arkansas State (AK), Middle Tennessee State (TN), Travecca Nazarene (TN), Sam Houston (TX), University of Tennessee-Knoxville (TN), East Tennessee State University (TN), and Lincoln Memorial University (TN). The range of graduation dates from these institutions was from 1980 to 2000. There was a bimodal distribution with the two modes being 1996 and 2000. The median was 1996. The highest obtained degree distribution was five masters, four masters (+ 45), eight educational specialists, and three educational doctorates.

Interestingly, none of the participants, after graduating with an administrative endorsement, went directly into a principal's position. Each participant served time as an assistant principal before advancing to a principal's position. The mean for time as an assistant principal was 3.9 years. The range was from 1 year to 8 years.

Because of the need for anonymity along with retaining accuracy of information, each participant was identified by a letter of the alphabet. Mr. A represents the first person I interviewed and Mr. T's was the last interview. The interviews took place during the spring of 2004.

Background of Participants

Motives for Seeking the Principalship

To ease the participants into a comfortable, conversational interview session, I began by asking each to think back and tell me about the time when he or she first desired to become a school principal. The majority of respondents focused on their motives for initially seeking the principalship; various reasons were given for these decisions.

Mr. B was in an administrative position as a warden of a prison when he decided to enter the field of education as a classroom teacher. He stated that this decision was based on his need for a change. He taught for three years before becoming an assistant principal and, ultimately, a principal. Interestingly, after changing careers, his desire to be an administrator resurfaced. He admitted, "Well, I guess when I changed careers; I left an administrative job."

When asked why she decided to become a principal, Mrs. P, a long-time teacher with 26 years of experience in the classroom, also confessed the need to make a change. Mrs. P added, "I knew I was getting antsy, and it was time for a change."

Mr. E had taught for 11 years--10 years in middle school and 1 year in high school. He was experiencing "burnout" in the classroom to a point where he was ready to resign as a classroom teacher. He detailed his frustration:

And so, I went to resign in my principal's office in November and he refused to take my resignation. He said, "Hang in there" and that I was experiencing burnout. . . . I went to the [teachers'] lounge and actually saw a posting for a position at the alternative school where they were opening up an experimental night school. So, from that point on, I decided to apply for the position. I ended up getting a position of administration--not to teach, but to administrate.

Mr. E admitted that this initial venture gave him a "taste for administration." He continued:

. . . from that point on, I got the offer to open up a new school with a principal down in [city]. Then I kind of got comfortable and that's where the question comes into being: When did I first realize that I wanted to be a principal? Toward the end of that third year, I just felt so at ease with what I was doing; it was so second nature; discipline wasn't an issue. I had a rapport with the kids; nothing was a challenge per se. At that point, I knew our school was opening up and I thought, let me just go ahead and see if I can open up a

brand new school. It was right at the end of, again, that comfort zone of assistant principalship that I decided on the principalship.

Mr. N was a retired army officer and was involved for six years with the ROTC program at the college level before he became an elementary school teacher. He taught for four and a half years before he started to examine the leadership at the school. Mr. N shared, "I became a little frustrated with some things that were going on. There were a couple of times that I didn't feel like the teachers were being taken care of or that we were being led."

Mrs. M mentioned that her experience in a previous position helped her realize she could make a difference as a principal and create change. Mrs. M had a lengthy resume and had attended and received degrees from three different universities in three states. She acknowledged:

At the time, I was what is called an instructional specialist. I was located in an elementary school. . . . I realized my ideas that I thought principals should utilize, and that's when I decided that, yes, this is what I wanted to pursue.

Mr. R, who completed his administrative endorsement in 1999, taught for six years and then realized he wanted to "make a difference." Mr. R explained his desire for the principalship by stating, "I felt I could have a broader influence on a larger group of students."

Mrs. H, who was an elementary school teacher for 26 years, mentioned her previous work experience as a catalyst for her decision to become a principal. She stated:

When I taught in another state, I had the opportunity to work for the state department, to do summer workshops. I traveled throughout the state working at different places, but working with existing teachers who were going back for some extra hours. That was when I knew I really liked the supervisory position.

Mrs. G, a teacher for 14 years, said she credited family tradition as part of her decision to become a principal. She added:

There was never a time I didn't want to. Every adult in my family that I was exposed to at family reunions was involved in education in some way and most of them were administrators either at the school level or at the central office level.

Finally, a recommendation from a principal was mentioned by three interviewees as part of their decision-making process. Mrs. F, who taught for 28 years with 19 years in elementary

and 9 years in middle school before serving as an assistant principal, stated, “I was an assistant for five years and my principal thought that I was just ready to move on to the principalship.” Mrs. J, who taught seven years in a kindergarten- through grade-eight school, spoke of her experience as an assistant and thoughtfully acknowledged the principal with whom she had worked:

I was fortunate to start working with him and open this school. Just under that kind of leadership, I realized something I thought I would have a talent for, and I felt like I'd been trained very well for it because of being here with him.

Mr. K, who advanced to administration with only four years of teaching experience, admitted that he was aided in his desire to become a principal by a suggestion. He explained, “Probably the second year I was teaching, my principal came to me and said, 'Have you thought about being an administrator? If you've got any thoughts of it, we'll see if we can't make you one.’”

Influences

I asked the participants if anything or anyone in particular influenced their decision to seek the principalship as a career. The majority of interviewees mentioned the principal they had worked for as being the person who directly influenced their own decision to become a principal. Mrs. C, who taught 15 years in elementary school and served as an assistant principal for 6 years, answered, “[It was] two particular principals--one male and one female, which is interesting. They were very encouraging too. They were very much saying, 'This is something you need to look into.'” Mrs. H expressed her gratitude for the influence of administrators in her past by saying, “I've had some excellent principals along the way. I kind of won the jackpot there. I've had some good administrators and good in lots of different ways.” Mrs. M gave an interesting answer, “Truly, since my first year of teaching, every principal that I've worked under has said I should be a principal. Hearing that, redundantly, certainly influenced my decision.”

Family was also spoken of by many participants as an influence in swaying their decision to become principals. Mr. L and Mr. E spoke highly of their fathers' influence. Mr. L, who had nine years of teaching experience in middle and high school, stated, "My father--he was a principal. He had passed away at the time, but he's probably the biggest reason I did it." Mr. E added, "My father, who is an educator, is a physical ed teacher in the city system; he encouraged it." Mrs. I, a graduate of three different universities and teacher for four and a half years, mentioned her mother. She explained, "My mother was a teacher and later she became an administrator of a program. Basically, I guess I just bought into school. But, mainly, my mother was the influence." Mrs. G credited her immediate family when she stated, "Immediate family certainly had a strong influence on my decision. It was the family table discussion."

Peers were mentioned by two interviewees as having an influence on their decision to seek an administrative career. Mr. R, who began his career in the business world before teaching for six years in middle and high school, said, "When you work with peers, and they start trusting you because of perceived leadership ability--I had some people express that they thought I would be a good leader." Mr. N mentioned a mentor he worked with while doing graduate studies, stating, "She became kind of a mentor to me and kind of encouraged me." Mrs. P gave an immediate answer when asked what influenced her decision. She laughed when she said, "My husband was very fired up about it. He liked the idea of more money!"

Career Choice

I asked the participants if they had any regrets or if they were to start over, would they again choose the principalship as a career. Overwhelmingly, most participants agreed that if given the chance to start over, they would make the same decision. Several of the participants answered the question with a simple, but definite "yes" without elaborating or going into details. Mr. K represented several participants with his short answer, "Oh yeah. I enjoy it." Mr. N paused and reflected before answering, "Yeah, probably. . . probably. Of course the first year is

very tough and it doesn't matter how long you've been in the system; it's a different world."

Mrs. C echoed the other participants and added that she was curious about the outcome of this particular question, stating, "Yes. I would. I would love to hear how that all comes out."

Mr. E began his first year as a novice principal in a new school. While pausing to reflect on this choice, he admitted that it was a monumental undertaking. He explained that he would definitely choose the principalship again; however, if he could start over, he would begin differently. He explained:

Yeah, but probably under different circumstances. Possibly, with an existing school instead of opening up a new school. It was overwhelming to open up a new school as a new principal. I don't think it would have been as difficult for an existing principal who already had knowledge of how to develop culture, how to—I think it would have been easier for me to have adopted a stepchild than to have my own child, if that makes sense.

Mrs. I had a unique perspective in stating that the principalship was not a starting point or ending point in her life's work; she did not consider the principalship as being her final career. She divulged:

I really don't believe the principalship is a starting off--this being my 12th year of a 30-year career--I don't really believe it's an 18- or 19-year career. I'd like to make it *part* of my career, but I can't see it being an 18-year final career.

When asked if she would choose the principalship again, Mrs. F said, "My eyes would be a bit more open than what they were then." This was her way of explaining that she had no regrets in choosing to be a school principal; yet, she noted that she wished she had been more observant before entering administration. Mrs. H seemed to speak for the group by her humorous remark, "Oh yeah. It's like teaching; it's your calling. It's what you're supposed to do. Because if it wasn't, it would kill you." Another positive response came from Mr. A, a career educator with 17 years of teaching experience, when he stated, "No, I would not change anything. I would still want to be a principal."

Two participants had some reservations about their career choices. Mrs. D, who had taught for seven years and had five years experience as an assistant principal, stated:

I don't know. I really don't. I mean, there are some things that I just love about my job and there are some things that I hate. I hate doing this part of it. So, I'd have to think about it really.

A doubt was also expressed by Mrs. G:

This may not be a good time to ask that [question]. I do think I would; however, there was a time as I was getting my degree that I was kind of on the fence because of some of the negative slants that were taking place in the media then. But, I do think I would do it again.

How Would You Have Prepared Differently?

Participants were asked to share how they might have prepared differently for their first assignment. Some interesting viewpoints were given. Mr. R mentioned the importance of having had classroom experience before becoming a part of administration. He elaborated:

I would probably do it the same way. I think it's important for a principal to have classroom experience. Becoming a principal is much different from being in the classroom, but you still have to be grounded and know what your teachers are going through day in and day out. I don't think you can become a principal with no classroom experience.

Mrs. G readily admitted:

I don't know if there really is a way to prepare differently. I wish, as I was looking at your questions, I wished that my preparatory program maybe had had some different focuses. But, I don't know that there's anything personally that would have prepared me more effectively.

Mr. B said he thought there was no other way to prepare. He wistfully stated, "You [just] go through the licensure program." Mr. K talked about the courses he had taken, "I wish some of the courses had been different. There were some that were very good and there were several that I didn't think were beneficial at all."

Mr. N spoke of the need for more classroom teaching experience prior to becoming a principal. He confessed:

I would liked to have had a little more teaching experience, a little more classroom experience. But, I think that's the only thing--only having four and a half years classroom experience. I think you have some credibility things that you have to take care of early.

When asked how he would have prepared differently, Mr. R explained that education was his second career. He expressed regret that he did not get an earlier start so he could have experienced a longer phase as a teacher and assistant:

Sometimes I think I was on a fast track. Looking back, I wish I had looked into education as a career earlier in my life. I came from a business background and came to education as a second career. I think [I needed] a few more years in the classroom and a few more years as assistant principal.

Mrs. C had a different viewpoint. She explained:

I'll tell you what. I think for me, moving around as much as I did, being in so many schools, and working under so many different principals, I felt like by the time I got this job, I was really well prepared. But that was a different situation that I had because I'd been in so many different school systems.

Mrs. H spoke of time constraints and described some of the obstacles she faced in obtaining her last degree:

In the ideal world, I would have loved to have gone to school full time. But that was not possible, so I would have loved to have finished my doctorate sooner than I did. But I had to continue working and going to school part-time and full-time in the summer. That would be the only thing I would do differently.

Mrs. J smiled when she answered, "There's no preparing for this."

Preprincipalship Preparation

The focus of my interviews was to determine if principals were prepared for their first assignments. The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) identified what are considered 13 factors that are critical to the success of school leaders. I asked each participant if these critical success factors were addressed in his or her preservice program, the type of instruction that occurred in each, and how he or she considered it might have been addressed more effectively. During the interviews, participants also expressed their insights on challenges facing beginning school principals, strengths and limitations of university-based principal preparation programs, and how universities might prepare principals differently.

As documented earlier, Hale and Moorman (2003) reported:

Principals across the nation agree that administrator-training programs deserve an “F.” In a survey of educational leaders conducted by Public Agenda, 69% of the principals responding indicated that traditional leadership preparation programs were out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s schools. (p. 5)

My research with this study concentrated on the principals' perceptions of their own training before their first assignments. Did these participants feel that their university program deserved an “F”? In addition, I interviewed beginning principals to determine what they encountered during their first assignments and how and if their experiences related to what they were taught.

Challenges

During the interview process, it became evident that the participants faced challenges in their day-to-day activities as principals. There were many challenges mentioned and the responses varied among the interviewees; however, no single challenge stood out as the mode among the responses. Mr. A, who had taught in a small rural school before accepting an administrative position in a larger one, commented on the size of its population, stating, “The biggest challenge was coming up here from a small school of 300 to a large school of 840.”

Mr. B, principal of a large high school in the Memphis area, spoke of the need for personal preparation, a challenge that was exacerbated by one's peers having a high level of educational achievement. He explained:

The biggest challenge, I guess, in becoming a principal is preparing yourself. Over here there are a lot of doctoral people walking around and we have five or six doctorates just on the teaching staff. I think we’ve got three attorneys on campus teaching, so that a lot of people have gone into teaching as a second career. The biggest challenge, I guess, is doing the formal preparation to get yourself ready.

Mr. E, a middle school principal with high expectations, spoke of his experiences in opening a new school, stating, “It was overwhelming to open up a new school as a new principal.” He added, “The biggest challenge for me, two biggest challenges--number one dealing with marginal employees--and number two, time management and delegation duties.”

Mr. K, with only four years of teaching experience, spoke of the challenge of winning over the staff. He clarified, "I guess the biggest challenge you have is to win that core group over to your side and to get them to believe that your ideas are their ideas."

Mr. L, with prior experience as a high school coach, tackled the challenge of launching a new school as he began his first days as a principal and immediately faced a test of his skill to blend staff from two different schools and to create a single culture in the new school. He related his experience:

Here, it was blending the faculties. We were new and we opened and took the faculties from two different schools. Well we took the entire sixth, seventh, and eighth faculty from two different schools. So, trying to get our own school culture was a challenge.

Mr. N described an experience that was a personal challenge for him and one that he encountered on his first day as the school's new administrator. He related:

The biggest challenge I faced here was replacing a principal who had been on the job 13 years and who had been in this building 25 years. She was kind of a grandmother. A lot of things were not the way I wanted them. I felt like there was really no direction; we didn't have a place that we were going.

Mr. R was an assistant principal for only one year before he agreed to accept the principalship position to replace a popular and seasoned predecessor. He explained this daunting challenge, "Essentially, I only had about a year as an assistant principal. Mr. [predecessor] was a very good person to work with; his were really big shoes to step into. It's a whole lot different being a principal." Mrs. F, who had just moved to the community to start her new job, said her greatest challenge came from being unfamiliar with the school's culture. She added:

This was a brand new community to me; I knew no teachers in this building, I knew neither of my assistant principals. I walked in here and did not know one person. Even though it's the same Shelby County schools, every school you go into, the culture's different.

Mrs. C laughed when she recalled her efforts to win the respect of not only the school's staff but also trust from the community. She explained that her greatest challenge became:

Earning their trust and their respect. This had been a school where there had been only three principals since 1960 something. And not only was I new, but I was new to the state; really, I'd only been here a couple of years.

Mr. O said he regretted that he did not ask to be "involved in more administrative tasks" while he was a teacher and he spoke of the challenge of having to "learn new policies and procedures."

Mrs. M, who acquired her administrative training from Sam Houston University in Houston, Texas, admitted that the first challenge she encountered was the school's previous hierarchy. She explained how she handled this obstacle:

When I entered here as principal two years ago, the biggest challenge for this school was climate. That was really and truly a stacked climate. There were rulers here who had been rulers for a long time, very opinionated individuals. I don't mean that in a negative way. They're very knowledgeable of their field and therefore really thrust their thoughts forward and in an authoritative manner. I had to come in and first of all develop relationships and respect and stop all that, which I did very quickly. That's probably been the biggest adjustment I had.

Mrs. D faced initial difficulties because of "a lack of training in financial matters." She explained, "I think for me it was the financial side of it because as an assistant principal, you do all of it, you do the discipline, you do all the other stuff--but the financial?"

Mrs. H remarked that a particular challenge for her was, "Special ed issues--because that is a continuing, ongoing learning curve that changes every day." Mrs. I mentioned organization and said that keeping up with everything was a challenge for her. Mrs. J expressed that her greatest challenge was "altering my expectations for what I thought the job would be." She continued:

You have an idea that you're going to be planning long range for instructional programs and working with teachers. Actually, it's a lot different. It's a lot of dealing with issues, reacting, and not being proactive. You have to make time to do the planning part because your day is consumed with what's out there next, what's the next thing I need to do.

Finally, Mrs. P explained that a personal challenge for her was in "seeing the big picture." She added, "You have to see what happened in the past, what's going on today, and what's going on next month--keeping all that in little compartments, and all the letters and everything that goes with that."

Confidence

During the interviews, all participants spoke of an area in which they felt confident when they began their first assignments. The majority of the participants felt confident in their relationships with parents, staff, and students. Mr. A, with a small town background, said he felt especially comfortable working with parents:

I was told you would have a lot of dealings with parents and I felt confident in that aspect, dealing with parents. I feel confident today doing that. It doesn't bother me--irate parents having complaints over this or that--I'm comfortable doing that.

Mrs. F, born in 1946, was the oldest of the participants. She expressed her particular enjoyment of and confidence in working with people, "Well, I had prided myself on enjoying people. I like people; I think I have good people skills." Mrs. F also commented on her ability to work well with people, stating, "I had prior experience as a curriculum coordinator teacher. I think prior experience helps a lot."

Mrs. J stated that having good communication skills added to her confidence level. She expounded:

I'm comfortable talking with our most educated parents who value the program and appreciate what you're doing as well as the ones who question everything you do. I'm a good ear. I'm good at communicating with those folks, building consensus, and winning them over. I look at that as a challenge. It's exciting to have someone come in who's not supportive at all and they leave as your friend and understand what you're doing.

Mrs. P was promoted from assistant to the principalship from within her building. She explained the advantages of that type of promotion, "I was not worried about discipline or evaluations, those things. I wasn't worried about relationships with teachers; that had already been developed. That's because I was already here four years before."

Mr. E pondered the question about the area in which he was most confident and then talked about relationships with students:

Student relations--because of my experience as an assistant principal. It gave me the confidence that I needed to be able to go in and handle kids. Because that's all I was dealing with--discipline and some paperwork, evaluation of teachers, and that kind of stuff. But I rarely got a chance to seat in the big seat as assistant and really get a feel for how to deal with marginal employees or employees just not doing their jobs.

Several participants spoke of feeling confident about academics and curriculum. Mr. R stated, "I felt confident about curriculum decisions, and things we wanted to do as far as academics, placing them first." Mrs. C added, "I felt most confident about my knowledge of curriculum and my knowledge of people. I feel I have a real strong curriculum base." Confidence with curriculum was mentioned by Mrs. H, who stated her assurance was "particularly in the developmentally appropriate curriculum for a K-5 school."

Mrs. M acknowledged that her background as a "teacher of teachers" added to her confidence in instruction and curriculum. She explained:

In terms of being a school principal? My knowledge of instruction and curriculum. Again, I think that stems from having held intermediary positions; I've had to teach teachers. I also taught at [university] for a year and a half as an instructor in elementary and special ed. I really have a knowledge base that combines research and hands-on and I applied a lot of skill and ideas, so that's my confident area.

Confidence obtained from previous work experiences was a factor in building self-assurance for beginning administrators like Mr. B and Mr. L. Mr. B reflected on his previous experience as a prison warden:

Well, again, I had been an administrator for 13 years in one of the largest penal institutions. We had 3,500 inmates when I left, so I was overseeing a good portion of that work-release program. I felt I had the administrative background to do it.

Mr. L, who had coaching experience, stated, "I coached for a long time and my strength is probably getting people to work hard--motivation."

Lack of Confidence

Several areas were mentioned in which the participants stated they felt least confident when beginning their positions. Instruction and curriculum was spoken of often; almost everyone mentioned instruction and curriculum as being areas in which they either felt very confident or not confident at all. Mr. B remarked, "Well, I guess you have to learn the instructional strategies. You can change careers; there's an administrative part and there's an instructional part, so you need to learn the instructional strategies."

Mr. L addressed the complexity of entering administration at a grade level that was new to him. He explained his difficulty, "I've always been at the high school. My one year with middle school was my first year teaching. I've always been at the high school so I wasn't as familiar with the curriculum as I should be."

Finances and accounting procedures were a concern for a majority of principals. Mrs. H commented on her lack of confidence pertaining to financial matters:

I'll tell you the one thing that really baffled me when I started was the financial aspect of it. In a school, the financial secretary and the principal have access to the money and the records, so I had no training in that at all. Then all of a sudden--one day you're the assistant and you don't deal with finances and banking--the next day, you're a principal and you're signing checks.

Mrs. I spoke of her fear of managing large sums of money, stating, "I guess the thing that worried me--because it can put you in jail--was the money, managing the finances of it."

Mrs. M was not only responsible for the school's finances, she also had to work with the cafeteria's budget. She stated:

The cafeteria budget--when I walked in, that was in quite disarray and I had to learn how that worked. When something is in disarray, you have to figure out how it's *supposed* to look, and then, how can we get it to that point.

Other areas in which the participants mentioned feeling least confident included dealing with staff issues, special education, proving one's self, understanding the culture of the new school, new responsibilities, school maintenance, and school safety.

University Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

Three strengths of university training were mentioned by several participants: (a) teaching by using scenarios, (b) having experienced administrators teach, and (c) discussing current research and practices. Mr. E explained the process of teaching by using scenarios:

They did a lot of scenario-based teaching. Each class I had would come up with these scenarios. Like my budget class, they would say things like, "Okay, now you come into a school and this is the budget layout for that; yet, the PTA is on you for this and the parents for this, so where do you put your emphasis? Where do your dollars need to go?" And that would allow us to have dialogue and out of that, the professor, who had knowledge of what really needed to be the answer, would then kind of lead us. Some people were correct and some were not correct, but at least it helped us understand it.

Mr. K added to Mr. E's statement, "One big thing was they had a class that was situational.

Every day you worked on situations that had confronted principals previously. You were given information and you had to deal with that situation."

Mrs. J spoke about using experienced administrators to teach classes. She stated:

It was a great program. Certainly, I'd say the quality of instructors there was wonderful. I had a lot of former principals, former superintendents. I had a lot of good theory, but practicality as well. They were good at letting you know what to expect and how to make the transition. They brought in a lot of people to talk with us who were principals and on the job and not just a lot of theory. I felt they prepared you for the day-to-day of what was going on.

Mrs. J continued her acclaim, saying,

I felt school law was excellent. I had a wonderful school law teacher. I became very well versed in school law. In fact, I still have the book; I left there knowing a lot more than the basic things you learned in an undergraduate program, the things you need to watch for. And school finance--I had an excellent school finance teacher who helped me understand about building the budget and what's at your discretion.

Mr. R praised his experienced instructors, saying, "They had instructors that were based in reality. I had Dr. [name] and she was a principal at the time. They gave you real life situations."

Mr. L also said he liked having current principals as instructors because they, too, "were in the trenches." He explained some of the advantages:

I can remember a transportation facilities class, and the principal was having a problem with his own bus arrivals and departures. We worked on that problem. It was more practical than textbooks. In a lot of programs, they have people that haven't been in school for forever.

Mrs. G commented on exposure to current practices and mentioned the strength of having coverage of different viewpoints in the research. She added, "There was certainly a lot of time in the discussion related to that from a research standpoint."

Mrs. H spoke of the strong points of her university program and credited the instructors for developing her own eagerness and appreciation of research:

It made me have a real thirst for understanding and keeping up with research. I learned how to interpret research and the value of it and what a cool thing it is to look at asking these questions and finding answers that will help me in my everyday job. When you understand what you're reading, then it becomes relevant to what you do everyday.

Mrs. M gave her view on the university she attended in a positive way by stating it was the variety of classes and excellent instructors that contributed to a great program. She detailed:

I think the array of classes from finance, to special populations, to instructional leadership--you were well versed when you left there in a variety of areas that dealt with leadership and effective schools. I really feel like most of the professors had been superintendents at one point and had been through the rung as far as teacher, AP, principal, and on up. With that, they bring knowledge to the curriculum that's very relevant. I thought their program was very strong.

Mrs. F recognized from her university training that she was well informed on new research and ideas, adding, "I think I was very familiar with trends; I was very familiar with philosophy." Mrs. Q stated that knowledge of current research helped her in "dealing a lot with how to work with different personalities." Mr. N discussed his appreciation for the fact that his university took time to help with the state's school improvement planning. He elaborated, "I think the [university] program is cutting-edge. First, they were developing a program using the ISLLIC standards when nobody else was. I think they were ahead in that ball game." Mr. N went on to discuss being in a cohort, an advantage that he considered a major strength:

The other thing is, the program was a cohort. We were a group of 24 people that started together and we came from a wide variety of backgrounds. I believe 19 of us graduated together. The cohort was a strength.

Mr. N also spoke of practical experiences that he gained from one of his university's programs.

He detailed:

Another was the summer program when we actually did school improvement planning. They gave us a set of data and put us into teams and we developed and presented a school improvement plan. I think that gave us some practical experience.

Weaknesses

Two university training limitations became apparent during the interview process: (a) the lack of some type of internship or hands-on program and (b) not having experienced instructors. Mrs. G discussed the lack of hands-on experience in training programs and explained why she felt this was a weakness:

We all have full-time jobs; you had to be internally motivated in order to seek out those opportunities to try to apply what you were hearing in the classroom, or what you were discussing. It really wasn't built into the program. I think I know why they did that-- because they're trying to recruit current educators to get those higher degrees with their program. But, I certainly think it weakens the program when you don't have those field experiences, because you don't *know* until you *do*.

Mr. E said he thought his university, to better fit a teacher's schedule, should have built more internship hours into the program. He explained:

I think if they would have allowed us more release time to sit under administration, I think that would have helped a majority. It's hard when you're a teacher to have to be accountable in a classroom, but then they're asking you to get so many field experience hours. What happens is that people end up crunching in that time because they're trying to get their numbers. They're not necessarily feasting off the experience itself.

He spoke of additional problems in obtaining hands-on field experience:

And then principals are sometimes not as willing to let go of their duties and responsibilities for either the sake of law or for just for the sake of "That's my position, I'm going to let you *see* what I do but not necessarily *do* what I do."

Mrs. J also stated she considered the lack of field experiences as her university's main limitation; however, she said she understood why solving this problem might be easier said than done. She clarified:

Probably, this is difficult to do since most people are teaching, but I think some field experiences would be good. To actually just go shadow, spend a day with a principal, and just see what the day is really like. That's probably the biggest one [limitation].

Mrs. F extended the discussion about the need for more hands-on training and internship programs by talking about her own experiences:

I was very familiar with philosophy; but I was limited on real-life school. I knew, ideally, how the model school should be set up, but I don't think I was trained for the flexibility

that you have to use every day. There's no book on the shelf that I could go to and say, "This is how you deal with this."

Mrs. P brought up what she called a "limitation" in not having enough experienced instructors during parts of her university's program. She explained:

I had some teachers that were just asked to do it—it was a program where they came to [institution]. Some of those, to be honest, were not really good. Not exciting, just read this chapter and divide into groups. But then I had some that were very good. You role-played. You need that practical side of it; you need to know why, but you really need to know how.

Mr. K said he thought having instructors with experience in various capacities would have been beneficial. He stated:

They could use more [experienced instructors] as far as dealing with the various personalities within the school to teach you how to do things with labor groups, to teach you how to work with the people who are going to work for you.

Mrs. M added her opinion of the importance of having experienced instructors. She iterated:

Again, I would say getting people in the field to discuss the relevance of the issue and in a school setting. It's always going to be helpful. We all know that when you're at a university, some that's been there is not as current in their knowledge as someone who is currently a principal at the time. Things do change; principals in the field are implementing research currently, and their knowledge is valuable.

Even though the lack of hands-on programs and not having experienced instructors were mentioned more often, there was evidence of other limitations in the participants' university programs. The most negative comment came from Mr. A. He stated, with pessimism in his tone, "The courses I took to be a principal probably had nothing to do to prepare you for what you had to face." Mrs. C revealed her frustration with her program by saying, "Well, to be honest, I was very disappointed." She explained that part of her disappointment related to her university's poor scheduling procedures. She added:

I was very disappointed with my university experience because even though I'd had the same classes at other places, it was just something I got stuck into in a university and I had to take the class again. I'd walk in a class and the professor would go, "Oh my gosh, you've already had this class but you can't get out of it."

Mr. N was to the point and specific in his short answer stating what he thought were limitations in his university's preparation program, "school finance, facilities management, and personnel."

Mrs. Q said she noticed a lack of attention to teaching "the day-to-day issues such as maintenance."

When Mr. O was asked if his university program had any weaknesses, he spoke of the lack of exposure to issues that he would face as a school principal, such as special education. He did not give a solution to this weakness; instead, he admitted, "I think that's something you're not exposed to until you can actually get into it." Mr. L agreed with the majority of participants in saying, "There was not enough hands-on activities, internships, and that type of thing."

SREB's 13 Critical Success Factors

The purpose of the study was to identify the extent to which the 13 critical success factors of school leaders have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose was to identify significant opportunities for addressing the success factors in preservice courses and preservice field experiences development programs. I read the 13 critical success factors to each participant and allowed him or her the opportunity to share the extent to which each factor was addressed in his or her preservice program, the type of instruction that occurred in each, and how it might have been addressed more effectively.

Critical Success Factor #1

Creates a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum, and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.

From the interviews, it was evident that mission and vision were widely discussed in principal training forums. Although the approaches varied, several universities used the opportunity to work with a school improvement plan to address this success factor. Mr. N stated, "Well we did that--basically in developing a school improvement plan." Mrs. G elaborated:

We used a lot, several courses with my Ed.S. as well as my master's were based on school improvement and that process using SACS guidelines and a lot of round table

discussion in terms of reflecting on those documents, both from our school as well as from other schools.

Mr. K said that his university addressed this factor "basically by using books." Mr. E stated that his training centered on a "hands-on approach." He gave an example, "They gave us the scope of a community and told us, 'Now develop a mission for the school and a vision and where we can take it.'" However, he added a cautionary statement:

It was just fortunate that I was already an assistant principal as I was going through my administrative endorsement. I was already acting in the role of assistant principal, so, I had insight into a lot of the stuff that these other people that were in there, because they were teachers, didn't have a clue. They still had the teachers' view of administration.

Mrs. F recognized that her university's programs fulfilled critical success factor #1 in this manner, "We created a mission statement for an imaginary school. You could decide the demographics, the culture, everything."

Studying different theories was an effective tool according to Mrs. D, "We just looked at different types of theories and we just kind of determined our own kind of vision based on those." When questioned concerning mission and vision, Mrs. I stated:

Yes, it was covered. We had to write a vision and mission statement after we did all the leadership inventories. We had to write a vision and mission statement and support it with our evidence from our leadership inventories. We took six or seven of those.

Mr. R stated, "We did discuss that [mission and vision]. We discussed bringing the entire staff and faculty in as a cohesive unit. I think we even went through and developed our own model school."

One way to address this factor more effectively was shared by Mrs. M. She stated:

I would say the more people you can get in the field to speak and share . . . I would get principals in the field at a variety of levels, elementary and secondary, to talk about the reality of how did you create your vision and mission? Was it yours or did you go collaborative? Did you accept what was there? Those kinds of things. All those things were batted around, but when you talk to the people there, it helps you formulate your own ideas.

Mr. A also had an idea for teaching this success factor more effectively, suggesting, “They probably could have brought in administrators to tell you exactly how, or even to do more first-hand experiences in the schools.” Mr. R added:

As far as how? Maybe some schools that were successful--the type program I was in was fast track-- it was hard to get field experiences. Possibly getting some typical schools in to see how it worked--more practical experiences instead of theory.

Mrs. C shared how she was fortunate to have been part of a new school in North Carolina:

I had been in such great situations when I was in North Carolina. We opened a school and the principal had hired eight core-staff members the year before. We would work and we would do all the ordering, the hiring, the curriculum, and all that. I was a mentor teacher there, which was a totally different thing than being a mentor teacher here, and I was also working on teacher evaluations; so, I think I got most of that prior to coming here and in my coursework here where I finally got my degree.

Critical Success Factor #2

Sets high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.

Mr. B said that one way his training program addressed high expectations for all students was by discussions of learning theories, saying specifically, “I had some courses to help me with the multiple-intelligence theory.” Mr. R related to the same practice, saying, “We addressed that and tried to get to high-level thinking. It was a lot of theory and projects. The importance of it was talked about quite a bit.” Mr. E recalled discussing different learning theories, “I had some Cumberland courses to help me with the multiple-intelligence theory and the other guy who did the critical thinking--Blooms” Mrs. H remembered the study and classroom discussions pertaining to theories. She recalled:

A lot of it was developmentally appropriate because I’m an elementary person so I’m looking at the realm of ages in children from 5 to 12. What’s appropriate for a 5-year-old versus what’s appropriate for a 12-year-old and how you encompass all that in one building.

Mrs. I said her classroom discussion consisted of having current or previous principals as instructors to take advantage of their experience and knowledge. From her background and experience, Mrs. I spoke of a previous principal:

My first principal? I was fortunate. She's now assistant superintendent of instruction and she had very high expectations for all of us. I laughed about her a lot of the times, the things that she made us do that we would kind of squawk over; but now as a leader, I understand why she had those expectations for us. I think yes, that [high expectations] was emphasized throughout my field experience because I did part of it under her as well as at the university. They had high expectations for us; that was always emphasized.

According to Mrs. J, the standard of setting high expectations was addressed at her university in this manner, "Addressing all kinds of needs of different learners and making sure there were various methods used, leveling on occasions, as in middle school for math."

According to Mr. N, a thorough discussion of data analysis satisfied this factor. He elaborated by saying:

I think a lot of it went back to analysis of data. A lot of it was data driven and took place in group discussions or individual research. Being a cohort, we had a lot of group projects and group work.

Mrs. G spoke of having guest speakers in the classroom, adding, "Certainly, they shared how they went about trying to set those expectations." Mr. K. offered an idea to teach more effectively the concept of setting high expectations for all students:

With the *No Child Left Behind* are all the subgroups and various areas. That was not addressed and it should have been addressed. Or, it should be being addressed now. Dealing with the various subgroups, each one of the races, the differences between males and females, and addressing issues with attendance.

Mrs. D agreed that a discussion of the *No Child Left Behind* Act could lead to setting high expectations, adding, "That's all we hear at every meeting we go to." Mrs. C shared an effective solution:

Again, getting them [university students] out in the buildings. I've got a gal working with me now from [university] and, boy, she's like glued to me. She told me, "I have learned so much in these couple of months, so much more than I would have learned in the classroom."

Mrs. P, who had graduated with an administrative degree from ETSU in 1990, recalled discussing high expectations, but not for testing purposes:

I think high expectations were [discussed], but at the time I went through, the emphasis on testing was not there. The push wasn't as much as it is today on how to read test scores and all that. I know they're going to do that today, because as a principal you need that.

Mrs. M, who graduated from Sam Houston University in 1998, discussed a unique aspect of her training. Apparently, at least for her, it was possible to "absorb" concepts using an interesting and indirect approach:

Expectations were covered and embedded in many courses. It seems to be a component of effective schools that was constantly tossed about. They modeled that in having expectations for *us*. Most of us were in the field either as assistants or in a position that was an intermediary; some were actually principals under a waiver of sorts, so they really maintained high expectations for us. I think some of their teaching was centered on how they modeled that behavior to us.

Critical Success Factor #3

Recognizes and encourages implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.

Mrs. I shared information that was consistent with those who agreed that this factor was covered in their university training classes. Mrs. I stated:

That was addressed. We went through all the models. You know back then the different school models were really big. We did all those. I don't think that is as much within the county system, but just the idea itself of high expectations. Good instructional practice was emphasized.

Mr. K, who taught four years in elementary school before becoming an administrator, remarked:

I think the instructional part was hit on because they feel that's the part a principal does; they are an instructional leader. It was addressed through those various instructional courses. I don't know how they could have addressed it any better.

Mr. N agreed at first with Mr. K, saying, "Yeah, that was addressed. We had a course called *The Principals*hip, which was kind of a general introduction." He added, however, "We didn't spend a lot of time on it. So we could have probably looked at some more instructional strategies."

Mr. R related that his training for the administration position centered more on ensuring that the teachers under his leadership were properly trained. He explained:

Not a whole lot in that program, it was administration and supervision, so we were looking at things like providing programs for teachers to make sure they were following instructional practices and giving them the resources to make sure they did. As far as teaching practices, I don't remember us doing a whole lot of that.

Mrs. G observed, "It was addressed in both. More of a type of discussion of the research, again, as we were doing observations." Mrs. H talked about the university program that she graduated from in 1992, stating:

A lot of my classes were designed that we would take the current research--which in 1992 there was a lot of meta-analysis going on. We would look at that, interpret it in class, and write our reflections of it and compare how that related to what we were doing. We were taking something outside our building and putting it in our building to make it useful and make it right for the kids that we deal with.

Mrs. P remarked, "We did group work. We did research, but mostly it was group work."

The participants who did not consider that this factor was covered offered suggestions for improvement. Mrs. F stated:

I really think--and I know with the way our schedules work--this would probably be impossible, but I truly think that a leadership program should have an apprentice program where a teacher shadows another principal for a significant length of time.

Mrs. M added to Mrs. F's idea of an apprentice program, saying, "I would say possibly in terms of improving--that would be really putting us out in a place in the field where we are not day-to-day and to evaluate things in that manner."

Critical Success Factor #4

Creates a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.

Mrs. H spoke positively concerning this factor:

Yeah, because sociology was my area outside the college of education. The classes I took in the department of sociology were directly tied to home/school relations and family dynamics and things like that that are critical in an elementary setting.

Mrs. I seemed more equivocal as she stated:

I *think* it was covered in course work, but I don't know if the emphasis was what it should have been, even though we did case studies and problem solving and figured out what could have been done better. In some environments, I don't know if you could do enough of it. I think they just kind of whet your whistle on it and you use what you have from there.

Mr. K stated that this factor was covered by a discussion of hiring practices and choosing staff, "That was addressed as well, and it's talking about personalities. Particularly, that was addressed in some of the course where they talked about interviewing people to be hired." He made suggestions for improving the program, "It could have been improved by talking about-- not so much the optimum person to look for--but more like, these are the issues to be dealt with. They don't do that."

Mr. N remarked, "Well, again, it goes back to discussions of how to create a learning community, group work, and individual presentations." According to Mrs. C, this factor was addressed; however, she said she felt it could have been covered more effectively, explaining:

You know that was addressed, but it was always *only addressed*. Again, with textbooks, lectures by professors; I think if principals were brought in to say, "This is how our facility works. This is what happens." And then let students go out. I just think that is so important.

Mrs. D shared a different opinion, "I don't think they do a lot of that at the university. I mean, they would talk about climate but not specifically how you set that up. You have to come up with that yourself." She added a suggestion for improvement:

I think by spending more time talking about site-based management. I mean we don't have site-based here; but we have principals' advisory teams, which are kind of the same thing. They're not in charge of the school but they bring ideas to the table, and just talk about the climate.

Mr. E recalled:

We had a class called *Participatory Governance and Change*. Basically, we talked about creating a climate where students are able to learn and we also talked about how to get people to buy into your vision and how to set that climate up.

Mrs. G shared insight from two different universities' programs; one was private, the other, a public institution. When asked if this critical factor was addressed, she answered:

It was--primarily through courses. There were a lot of case studies and small group work that dealt with situational type things as well as in projects that we had to do. I'm kind of looking at this from two lenses. I'm looking at my masters, which was in leadership and policy studies through a public university and then my Ed.S. I'm on the road to my Ed.D with a private university. I think the private university has done a better job than the public university did.

All of the participants in the study agreed that they considered the factor of creating a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult was a very important standard to be addressed in principals' preparation programs.

Critical Success Factor #5

Uses data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.

With the accountability issues stemming from the *No Child Left Behind* Act and Tennessee's School Improvement Plan, this factor seemed to be well addressed within the classrooms of the participants. Mrs. G spoke of how this factor was thoroughly covered in her classes:

It was heavily addressed by a lot of question and answer type things through field experiences, the statistics courses--how to gather it correctly, if you're gathering anecdotal or if you're gathering it on your own, how to disaggregate what we're given by the bucket loads from the state department to make it meaningful for the school. I felt like that one was addressed very well.

Mr. N described his experiences:

We had courses in statistics that we took and tied that into school improvement planning. We were given a set of data, asked to do presentations on it, and asked to develop a school improvement plan and then do a presentation on it. That was very effective.

Mr. R said he thought that the factor of using data related to student achievement could have been taught more productively. He explained:

We did talk about using data. I wish it had been addressed more effectively. I feel that's one thing that is difficult, maybe it's a time factor, getting time to break that data down. That could have been addressed more effectively.

Mrs. C said she definitely thought the standard was covered sufficiently, stating, "Yeah we did talk data. We sure did. We talked a lot of data." She went on to explain how the data on scores and testing were used in her school:

We only get the value-added portion on the restricted website for our upper grades, but I even take kindergarten and first grade in there and show them, "This is what we're doing, this is what we're not hitting." So, we do focus on that a lot. But then we also focus on-- we have *Think Link Learning System*. It's wonderful, if you've not done it. It's where we test in August and then we test in December and then we test again right before T-Caps. We're utilizing that portion too. We say, "Okay, here's the T-CAP; here's the T-VAS. But, what's happening day to day here with this?" So we use that, but we also pull in the day to day."

Mrs. G agreed that this standard was well covered. She spoke of her training:

It consisted of a lot of question and answer type things through field experiences, the statistics courses--how to gather it correctly, if you're gathering anecdotal or if you're gathering it on your own . . . I felt like that one was addressed very well."

Mrs. J was very pleased with the methods used by her university. She enthusiastically shared:

Yes, that was well addressed. We had a computer class as well as finance that taught you how to use data and convert data. We had classes on *Terra Nova* testing and how to use that data to build your school improvement program. Everything's got to be data driven, it can't just be a feeling you have. You have to be able to back it up with the numbers. We did that all through school. It could not have been addressed more effectively.

Mrs. M seemed to realize the importance of hands-on experience when addressing this standard.

She explained:

This was done in research classes as well our other classes. We looked at school improvement plans. We looked at samples of state scores and looked at different types of practices going on in different districts within a state. I thought this was done well; however, for me a little abstract. Until you get to your school, you don't really know what you're dealing with. So, it was good to cover but until you get your job and you're in a setting, you don't really know where you're going to go with that. Does that make sense?

Mrs. M offered several suggestions as to how this standard could have been taught more effectively. She laughed as she made a disclaimer that her ideas might possibly apply only to her own style of learning. She suggested:

I guess I'm just a relevant person that wants someone who is in the field to talk to me. A person could have come in and shared data, shared classroom practices, shared student achievement, talked about their improvement plan, and that may have had more impact

on me. We should have done a cross section: a rural area, an urban area, a free and reduced high, a high economic, and see what the differences are there too.

A few participants said they would like to see the standard of using data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices to be addressed more effectively. Mrs. D voiced her frustration with portions of her training, specifically how to read test scores. She expounded:

They kept talking about having a data-driven school but they never showed you how to do it. When you get out, you're just expected to know how to read the test scores and make those decisions. I think they should spend more time teaching you what to look for in test scores. As you know, we get mounds of paperwork. But, which ones are important, which ones do you spend more time looking at? There needs to be more emphasis on that.

When asked if this critical factor was addressed in her training, Mrs. F gave a swift and short answer, "No." I then asked if she had recommendations to teach this critical factor better or more effectively. She did have suggestions; however, after dwelling a moment on her ideas, she seemed to hesitate as her voice drifted off in doubt. She proposed, "Well, I think just giving or being responsible for being in a school and seeing the data and having more hands-on with data-- and I don't know. . . with the confidentiality issues, I don't know if that would be. . ."

Mr. O explained that because he graduated in 1981, his university did not emphasize *Terra Nova* test score data. He continued, saying, "I'm sure they do it now in the class work, but that wasn't one of the courses offered, using data to improve instruction." When questioned, Mr. E remarked, "Coursework? No, definitely not. Field experiences? Definitely, yes. Because Shelby County makes full use—we are inundated with data." When asked if it could have been done more effectively, Mr. E exclaimed:

Oh definitely. Yes. We're in the age of accountability. If they don't learn to try to look at classroom practices and data and student achievement and how to measure it and evaluate it, then we're not preparing administrators for what they'll be having their hands on full time.

Mr. K added:

It wasn't addressed as much as it should have been. It could have been addressed by saying, "Here's school X and here's the data for all those subgroups. What do you feel

needs to be done, how would you go about doing it?" I don't think it was addressed as much as it should have been. It could have been more situational.

Mr. L, who was not a recent graduate, remarked, "[It] was not covered well. In all fairness, at that time, it's been several years, data was not that big. Now, it's everything; that's what we're told."

Mrs. P answered:

The only data that we discussed was when we did our research paper. In one class we had at State, they did talk about proven theories, but as far as flat-out numbers, the research class was the only one. Here again, the testing part was not . . . the emphasis wasn't there.

I then asked Mrs. P to explain, now that she was dealing with the "testing stuff," what she thought a college could do to help someone prepare. She replied:

In Tennessee they need to take the *Terra Nova* or Gateway test scores and show them what it looks like, not the test, but the results, and what it means. It's nothing but stats. To look at it the first time, you'll go crazy. A lot of my teachers can't read it because they don't do it enough.

Mrs. H conveyed that it was addressed; however, she added:

Not to the extent that it probably would be now because we did not have *No Child Left Behind* when I was working in my doctoral program. What I learned in interpreting test scores and Stanines and Standard scores and all that comes with it, I was easily able to take that knowledge and make it fit in my school building and my school's test scores. I had the knowledge; but, I don't think I used it for what I'm using it for right now. We kind of learned it in an abstract form because you didn't have to do that back then.

Mrs. I also addressed this factor and gave ideas to implement it more effectively. She added:

I think during the field experiences, they need to have that as an indicator that has to be met and I think they need to state specific things like working with test data, looking at test data, figuring out effective strategies they could work with. I think hands-on is the most important part, a book can't necessarily do that.

Mrs. H summed up this particular standard of the 13 critical factors with a warning. She cautioned, "I'm assuming that they're tying it very closely to *No Child Left Behind* because that's going to make or break all of us."

Critical Success Factor #6

Keeps everyone informed and focused on student achievement.

Again, the accountability issue with the federally mandated *No Child Left Behind* Act and Tennessee's School Improvement Plan influenced how this factor was addressed in university programs. Mrs. J stated that it was addressed adequately in her preparation classes. She added:

Yes, there was a class called school community relations. Of course, you do it within the school environment. That was something to build consensus with families and the community business people to see what their needs are and to see what you need in this community and address it at the school level.

Mr. N said he thought his university's training for keeping everyone informed and focused on students' achievement was effectively addressed. He explained what they did, saying, "Well, again, it goes back to discussions of how to create a learning community, group work, individual presentations, reading." Mr. R agreed, stating, "Today that goes to standard number two and number one, keeping that cooperative effort. So, yes, they did great." Mrs. D also agreed, and said, "Yes, I think that was addressed well at the university level." Mrs. D explained how this was accomplished, "It was kind of going back to coming up with a mission statement and your beliefs, and making sure all stakeholders are included in that." Mrs. G spoke of the effectiveness of her training classes, elaborating:

That kind of went hand-in-hand with a lot of the discussions in the number five question (data). Again, there were quite a few speakers that came in regarding some programs that were available to help support in terms of professional development and those type things to keep that focus.

Mrs. H stated that she thought this factor was covered satisfactorily and explained her special circumstance:

Because I'm C & I and my secondary area was administration, I was able to put those two things together. So, let's say I know what is developmentally appropriate and I know what is good for kids, but then from a leadership position, how do you do that? I had the two parts together--what you should be doing and what you should be doing to implement it.

Mrs. I stated that it was addressed in her preparation classes; however, she added a caveat:

I guess it was more so in my field experience. We did have a course where we talked about the different schools, initiatives like Little Red School House. I think I got the most through the field experience.

Mrs. I added a recommendation for future course work, “The data and student achievement needs to be emphasized more. The focus has changed since I went to school 10 years ago.” Mrs. J not only gave a positive answer to this question, she also went on to describe constructive outcomes to her current position as an administrator:

Yes, there was a class called school community relations. Of course, you do it within the school environment but that was something to build consensus with families and the community business people to see what their needs are and to see what you need in this community and address it at the school level. We were told to have partnerships with businesses, which we do here. We've got reading buddies and people who've adopted us. They come in and tutor children from local businesses. That was well addressed.

Mrs. M reflected on her university training that took place in Texas:

Yes, that was covered. Texas is a high test-driven state as are many states. But I would say Texas has certainly led the forefront on that issue thanks to Ross Perot back in the early 80's. Anyway, as a result of that and the reality of that, there in Texas it certainly was in their curriculum to make sure that student achievement was the focal point for what we were doing. What I did like was at the university level, they don't have to overkill that so much. They could bring in the other parts of a student—the whole person--the whole child. I don't think that could be done any better. I think there's so much natural information on this out there that they wouldn't need anything else added.

Several participants addressed the need to be able to communicate data concerning students' achievement better. Mrs. F remarked, “I think we need more instruction on data analysis, more in-depth instruction, and not just assuming when you get to your school, you're going to understand this, that, and the other.” Mr. E answered "not very much" I when asked if this factor was covered in his training classes; yet, he said he "could not come up with a plan to improve the effectiveness." Mr. K said this standard could be met, "probably through different information, how to deal and how to convey your expectations; but, I do not think that was addressed at all.” Mr. L acknowledged:

That [standard] was pretty well covered. It was covered better in my doctoral program. We had a communications class that did it better. It had a lot of role-playing, a lot of hands-on stuff, and a lot of planning and research.

When I asked if this could have been addressed more effectively, Mr. L replied, “Yes, and by doing more hands-on. This is not an academic profession. It's a hands-on, do it type thing.” Mr. O stated, “No, I don't remember that” and offered his opinion for improvement, recommending, “Exposure again, particularly now. That's a big part because the federal and local government and your local districts are emphasizing that in student achievement. I think that's something they need to be exposed to.” Mrs. C exclaimed, “Yeah, we do that. Is it addressed? No, I don't think it's addressed enough.” She then suggested, “Gosh, I am so big on first hand experience. If you could shadow principals when they're addressing some of those things, I just think that would be so valuable.”

Critical Success Factor #7

Makes parents partners in students’ education and creates a structure for parent and educator collaboration.

Mr. A reflected, “Well the courses we took, they would tell you it was a great idea to have parents involved. I agree with that to some extent and to some extent I don't.” Mr. A wanted more specifics, “They probably could have told us the best ways to use parents in this or that area instead of just having parents everywhere--specific areas to use them.” Mr. E enjoyed his experience with this factor, “Yeah, that was in coursework as well. That was a class we had called School Community and something. But yeah it was addressed in both that and field experience.” When asked if it could be addressed more effectively, he answered, “No, they did a good job with that. That was actually one of my favorite classes.” Mrs. H praised her curriculum and instruction training, saying:

I think that was very well addressed in my particular program because of the sociology component and also in my C&I work, a lot of it was early childhood classes, and those two areas are probably the strongest in parent involvement in education.

Mrs. I spoke of this factor, “Yes that was emphasized and that was through my community involvement. There's a school and community class. I think that was covered pretty well.”

Mr. K said that he thought this factor was taught effectively in his university's classes. He added, "It was addressed quite a bit as far as involving the community in the school. That was addressed in many different ways and I think it was effectively addressed." Mr. N shared how his cohort group interacted. He explained:

We had a class that kind of permeated this whole thing in which we traveled to other schools. We visited one school a week for every week of the spring semester. So, we visited about 14 schools all over the East Tennessee area. We met with principals and principals basically told us what they did, what was working, what wasn't working, how they integrated parents, and how they dealt with curriculum and instruction.

Mrs. P followed with a comment about working in groups, "That was in a class. I'm sure it was group work. We had different groups and you had a problem to solve. They handled it well. "

Mrs. C recalled:

That was really addressed a lot. Very much so. We did do a lot of studies, we read a lot of articles. And, at that point, they did bring a lot of principals in to talk about that. I was very impressed with that.

Mrs. D talked about field experiences, commenting, "Yeah, they spent a long time on getting parents on your side. That was mostly field experiences." Mrs. J offered an interesting perspective concerning parental involvement:

You want your parents to be involved, but you're the educator and there's a line there. You want them to be informed and involved and you want their input but there's a challenge there for it to go over the line and they lead your program. I can't think of a particular class that really addressed that. That's difficult in my employment.

Mrs. J continued the discussion on parents and how to make them partners in their children's education. Regarding how this concept could be taught more effectively, she said:

I think it could be with regards to how to manage that, how to welcome parents in and use them and what they have to offer most effectively, and not to create conflict. Like I said, there's a line you can't cross and who's running things in the school.

Mrs. J continued to speak from her own experiences and added some suggestions:

We haven't had that problem here but I've talked to a lot who have,-who've had to disband PTO's because they went and spent \$20,000 of the money they raised on instructional materials without talking to anybody. We haven't had that, and you don't expect to have that, but it could be addressed more. Probably a college program could

talk about how to best garner the support of parents and what to do when you have that support.

Mrs. Q expressed that this factor was taught during her training; however, she admitted that classroom instruction on this topic is difficult, “That's hard because it's a hands-on thing; you really need to do it. It was touched on, not very much.” Mr. O added that parental involvement was addressed in his educational courses in a unique manner:

We had a practicum we went through. One thing I had to do was increase parental involvement. We had a little booklet we developed while I was at Jefferson County High School. Actually, we developed a little comic book to give parents telling them about what guidance offered and this, that, and the other.

Mr. R considered that improvement was needed with this factor; however, he admitted:

. . . at the middle school level, that's difficult, trying to get parents involved and keeping them involved. So, at middle and secondary level, it would be nice if that were addressed better. That's one thing I think we struggle with here, trying to get parents involved--community too, but parents, more.

Mrs. F suggested:

I think there needs to be more attention given to how important the parent is as a team member in a school. Rather than just mentioning it—but, I don't know if case studies would be a good way to do it.

Mrs. G recalled that her training with this critical factor was limited:

It was limited. There's quite a bit of verbal with it but actual learning experiences were pretty limited. Again, that's one of those things where it's difficult because school communities are so diverse. For me, anyway, as I was in the training program, I never would have thought that I would be in the middle school setting that I'm in. The ideas I had or that maybe blossomed a bit through having to get a project together or having to put something together were fine. There was nothing wrong with them; but, in terms of actually assisting me in this setting, the applications were fairly limited.

I asked Mrs. G for suggestions that could enhance teaching of this factor. She admitted that she "had no idea" how to do it more effectively and then explained:

I don't know how you would do it--there's not a cookie cutter program that's going to work that I've found anyway. Granted, I've not been doing this very long, so maybe there is one out there and I just haven't stepped on it. But I don't have an idea for how to do it more effectively. The importance on it was stressed, but the actual how to get from valuing it to making it a reality is something I'm having to evolve into.

Mr. L was critical of his university's training on this factor and even more derogatory of his own efforts to implement it. He confessed, "No it wasn't covered well." When asked for suggestions on teaching this concept, Mr. L admitted, "I have no idea because I'm not doing it well here."

Mrs. M summed up her thoughts on this factor by stating, "It was dealt with in scenarios, special populations. When you're talking Title I, we talked about the requirements of certain programs for parental involvement or input."

Critical Success Factor #8

Understands the change process and has the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.

According to the participants, this factor was addressed extensively. Mrs. C seemed to speak for all the participants when she exclaimed, "Oh, we did the change process out the wazoo. My gosh, absolutely!" She added that this was accomplished, "mostly by text and then books that were written." As an afterthought, she said, "I thought it was very informative. I really enjoyed that part."

Mr. A explained how this critical success factor was taught in his university's program, saying, "It was mainly lectures, if you had a system that the school uses that was not working, you would try to implement change." Mr. E gave high marks to his university for its efforts in both classroom and field experience in addressing the change-process factor. He disclosed:

Yeah, definitely both. Both college work and field experience. Going back, again, to that scenario-based type teaching, giving us different things—this could happen, or if this happened, what would you do? And how would you change this situation?

When asked if this standard was covered in his university's training program, Mr. L commented:

That one was probably covered very well. We did a lot of the historical aspects of education. What has changed over the years and up to that point. We did papers and that sort of thing--a lot of discussion about that.

Mr. O said he learned to successfully implement this factor by developing an action plan, "We had some type of projects that we had to work on as a cooperative team where we had a problem

and we had to look at our resources and develop an action plan.” Mr. R expressed that his university did well addressing this factor by focusing on theory:

They did a good job talking about change process. A lot of times with education courses, much of it is theory. And theory is based on change. They did a good job addressing keeping current with different changes and incorporating them in your school. It's difficult at times to get teachers to realize that. They become ingrained in what they're doing and don't like to change a whole lot.

Mrs. D reported that her university did a good job with teaching the change process. She recalled, “We talked a lot about change and how to get people to buy into change--a lot of cooperative groups and field experiences.” Mrs. F said that her university used materials written by Covey to aid in instruction of the change process and that she currently uses the same ideas.

She explained:

[It was] Covey again. That was a good place to start. Since I've been in the principal's seat, I have used that with the different situations--the win-win, the win-lose. I've used that to talk to my assistants about, you know, "We've created a win-lose situation; we're winning but you're losing, so. . .”

Mrs. G discussed the change process and the difficulty of teaching the required skills to a diverse group of people. She expounded:

The first part of that was addressed very effectively--understanding the change process and the stages that people typically go through in reacting to change--both positive and negative. The leadership skills to manage effectively did not get as much time--how I handle the change process for the needs of my faculty may be completely different from how my father, who was a school principal for 33 years, handled it--because of the difference in our personalities as well as the community that we're doing it in.

She continued her discourse by focusing on the need for on-the-job experience:

There were discussions of the different leadership styles and the different things you need to address during the change process; but again, it's one of those things that until you do it, you may not have the skills you need. Some of it is learning, "Well, I'm not going to do that again. I'm not sure what I'll do the next time, but I'm not going to do this." It's another one of those where they gave us the information but it's a matter of finding how your personal skills are going to work with that information.

Mrs. H expressed satisfaction with her training and she mentioned the difficulty of teaching how to implement the change process. She explained:

We did talk about change because we talked about different leadership models and how you recognize them. We talked about how to implement them and the good, bad, and ugly of each one of them; but, I'm not sure that I really knew from my classes--I think that's an instinctual thing--I'm not sure my classes made me prepared to do that and make my school and my leadership style go together. I think that was kind of an instinct thing. You knew what you had to do and it just kicked in how you do it.

She stopped and reminded me that she was not a recent graduate and then continued:

The changes that I learned in my program were a different set of things from what we face now. The topics that were current at the time, we knew how to do that. I can only assume that they're addressing current topics still.

Mrs. I explained that her university offered a separate course on teaching how to manage the change process:

Yes, that was emphasized. There was a whole course on that. I had a teacher who researched with a guy in Albuquerque, New Mexico, who did a resiliency book. She worked closely with him in his research on that, so we had a lot of coverage.

According to Mrs. M, not only was the change process addressed in her classes, she was completely satisfied with the manner in which it was taught. She stated, "This was addressed in both instructional leadership classes. That was another focal point--culture and change. I think it was adequately addressed, I don't know how I would change it." I asked her to share details from her experience in the classes. She elaborated:

We looked at scenarios. I remember we watched videos that kind of characterized and followed principals. We had a great book about a female principal and it just charted her process through the first year of being a principal and dealing with change and trying to attempt to find the culture to create the right change. I thought we did some valuable things in that.

Mrs. J spoke of the change process and related her first-hand experiences in using what she learned in the classroom:

That was well addressed with regard to not resting on your past achievements, looking at your data every year and seeing what the differences are. We have team leaders for every grade level so it's a smaller core of teachers with experience that you can meet and talk with and get input before you make decisions as to where you're headed and where your weaknesses are in what you are addressing. That was done well.

Unlike most participants, Mr. K was not satisfied with the training he received regarding the change process. He stated:

I don't think that was addressed much. That information I actually got was when I became an assistant principal through the Tassel Program. They could have offered us more literature or more information as to how change takes place, how to have change effectively take place in the school.

Critical Success Factor #9

Uses and organizes time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.

According to the interviewees, this is a factor that was not addressed very well; yet, none had suggestions for improvement. Mrs. G spoke on this issue:

I don't think it was addressed very well. Certainly, there were plenty of articles and journals and those types of things talking about the demands and the need to multitask. But in terms of time management classes or what you delegate, what you don't, that wasn't an issue. With the demands of the training programs, I don't know that they could really add it logically.

Mrs. J recalled her earlier classroom discussions on time organization. She stated some of the things she learned about not wasting time:

It was having to do with making sure that everything that comes into your building is attached to your goals and mission for your school. You don't have a yo-yo assembly if it doesn't have something that you're trying to do. Just not to waste time on things.

Mr. A also discussed this topic, relating his personal field-experience training:

You probably learn a lot more out of the field experience there. You went to the school and you saw this area was doing this particular thing and they had a time limit. Then they would move around to different areas. That's a hard part at that school and today--time limits.

Mr. E readily agreed with the importance of applying this factor; however, he considered time organization as one of his weak points. He admitted:

That's my weakness. So, I would say it was taught somewhat in the coursework but not enough. It really needs to be enhanced and enriched because I think that's at the core of the principalship, his or her time management skills.

Mr. L offered one suggestion as to how instruction on time organization could be enhanced. He suggested: “. . . going back to portfolios, I think they would have helped on that in planning your day . . . planning . . . except, my plans never last past 9:00 a.m. probably.” Mr. O was satisfied

with the hands-on training he received, stating, "We had a class where we had to develop a schedule. Yes, I think it's a big part of it. They need to let you get experience in it instead of just talking about it." Mrs. C seemed somewhat disappointed with the training she received for the time management factor, saying, "I don't think we talked about that at all. I just don't. I don't think anything could prepare you for your time constraints here. Do you? And you could stay 24 hours a day." She related what she thought would be an effective way to address this factor for future administrators. She stated:

I think some shadowing, and at crucial times like summer when the principals are preparing for the coming year. If you could release those students who are at the university also during those first couple of weeks of school to see: "Wow, schedules, and I've got these kids coming in that I didn't know I had, I have three classes that I didn't know I had, whoops, now I've got to get rid of three teachers. . . ." I don't think there's any way you can do that without shadowing.

Mrs. F referred to Covey's principles, "I'd say yes it was addressed, and I refer to Covey again. I don't think there's any way for higher-level institutions to tell us how to manage time. I think that's something you just have to learn." Mrs. H commented on time management and could not decide whether she gained expertise by her university preparation or if she honed her skills with on-the-job training. She explained:

Whether it's based on something I learned in my program, in my studies, or whether it's something I've learned by trial and error, I don't know. That's a fine line between those two. I'm never satisfied with my time management. Never. One day I want to go home feeling satisfied that I got something done today; but, as you can see, that won't be happening today. I don't know if that is something that was tied to the program or if that's something I've learned along the way. I don't remember anything specifically about time management in my program, but I do okay--probably better than some.

When asked if she remembered learning activities to increase her time management skills, Mrs. H answered, "I really don't. No." I asked if she had suggestions for improving instruction in this area and she gave an informative answer:

That should be like a whole semester, but then what would the answer be? If you were going to teach that class on time management, what would you say? There does need to be some direct instruction on prioritizing your needs for the day; but still, when you sit down and do that, the priority list is still going to be sitting there at the end of the day and you probably haven't touched the first thing on it. I don't know, maybe it could be from

the approach of thinking on your feet. Maybe that needs to be the focus of it, almost like a role play thing--here's your dilemma, what do you do first, what do you do second? Now, I think [university] has a class like that, and I think [name] teaches it. It's in the Ed.S program. I did not have anything that would be like, "Here's your dilemma of the day." Of course, some dilemmas you can't really predict, can you? Some dilemmas you look at the office staff and think, "Can you believe that?"

Mr. K's answer to the question of whether his university program addressed the factor of time management seemed to focus on the lack of training toward school improvement plans. He commented, "I think time--as far as using your time and managing your time as an administrator was addressed, but toward school improvement? I don't think so. I don't know how they would have gone about that." Mrs. P did not recall having any classroom time or discussion devoted to this factor, saying, "I don't remember any time that was addressed." When asked if she thought this factor could be taught in a class, Mrs. P responded, "Class? No. It may be within a class as far as role playing or practical ways where you have people trying to act out what happens. I think you learn more by doing." I asked Mrs. P if she ever sat down and said, "Let's play with a school day and try to change time." She responded:

No, sorry, not that much. We did play with the school day, but it was more in your perfect school, what would you want? Well, there isn't a perfect school. But, not taking a schedule like you would have at a middle school—we've got five different schedules running here. That's telling.

Mr. R remembered the absence of training on time management at his university. He confessed:

I don't remember time management being touched on at all. I have a problem with that. Maybe partly it's my philosophy here, but that door is hardly ever closed--whether it's a student, a parent, or a teacher. Sometimes I catch myself going, "Oh gosh, they just show up and want to talk to you." But, that's the way I want it to be.

At the same time, Mr. R stated that he considered it vital for universities to address the factor of time management, saying, "Yeah, I think it needs to be but I don't know how they could do it.

That's what I struggle with year after year." Mrs. I remembered that the subject was addressed by using school improvement plans. She explained her experience:

I was involved in school improvement then and we did that. I remember some concentration in one course where we had to work with a school improvement plan, write up a plan, and work closely on a committee. We did that. I think school improvement

evolves every year. I don't know what kind of course could keep us abreast. You have to do your own research and keep up with that.

According to Mrs. I, this factor was covered adequately with no improvement needed by her university. She stated, "No, I don't think it can be improved. It has changed so much from like, Southern Association, I don't see how any course could keep you abreast." Mrs. M was also satisfied with her university's training on time management. She said:

This was discussed and targeted. Examples were given in terms of how to use time, how to budget, how to delegate, how to subdivide out committees and groups and make sure you're tracking with benchmarks. That was covered. I felt like I could move into this. I've done this last year and this year as far as our school improvement--we'll have our visit in the fall and things have gone very well. So, I feel like I was prepared for that.

Critical Success Factor #10

Understands how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality, sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.

Mr. B recalled that this factor was addressed in his training experiences. He stated:

I can remember us being privy to Hersey & Blanchard's model, and that was helpful because that came up in every class. They kept going back to that and harboring on the fact that adults learn in different ways or are moved and motivated in different ways.

Mr. E also recalled that this factor was addressed in his university's programs, but he divulged that he was "now getting that somewhat in experiences." When asked if it could be addressed more effectively, Mr. E shared, "Probably so. Yeah, I mean that's at the core of what I said at the beginning. That's the people skills."

Mr. L did not remember this being addressed during his masters program. He stated, "Probably not in my masters. In my undergrad, we probably did better with that. And once again, it was with courses directed at that topic--like brain-based learning. I went to a workshop on that." Mr. L's suggestion was, "Restructure the program; it wasn't emphasized at all." Mrs. C also expressed dissatisfaction with her training on this topic:

I don't think we did enough of that at all. When I got into this school two years ago, they had no professional development and that's the first thing I ran into. Now, the county

does it, but it depends, really, on the principals in the school how much--and you know how some schools are, getting hit hard all the time and others like this one has never . . .

She went on to explain how she solved this problem at her school:

They had the accelerated reading program but they had never been trained. They had this program. The first thing we did was we brought people in. They said, "Wow, this is great." We even have a teacher book club now, once a month. They meet outside of school and it's just wonderful.

Mrs. F gave a well thought out answer as to whether this factor was taught at her university:

No sir. I think that there needs to be a class on professional staff development, professional development, and adult learners. I think we assume that we teach teachers like we teach children and that's not the case at all.

When asked if his university addressed this factor, Mr. L commented:

They did, but probably not as effectively as other things. I can't recall a particular class but we knew we had to have a certain amount of professional development and that we should do it in the core area. But, we didn't discuss in graduate program as much what type of learner you were. We did that more in undergraduate.

When asked if her university covered this topic, Mrs. P admitted, "I don't remember; it's been a while." Nevertheless, she gave suggestions for improvement in teaching this factor, saying:

I think they need to talk more about the importance of professional development because teachers need continuing education, and a three-hour college course is not the answer. It's what they're doing everyday in a classroom that needs to be addressed.

When asked about professional development, Mr. R said, "I think we briefly touched on that." He considered this factor as a challenge for principals, explaining, "That's one area that could be addressed better. I think that's a challenge for a principal to find meaningful professional development for teachers." Mrs. G said she was satisfied with her university's training programs in this content area; however, she gave ideas for improvement, saying, "To do it more effectively, they could bring in some people whose roles with those perspective systems deal with supporting administrators as they're looking for programs." She began to relate her experiences as a novice principal:

I was struggling with what we were going to do that first inservice week, as we had gone through our set process and was looking at our action plans. Where do we really need to grow? We have to reinvent the wheel in some ways, whereas there are several people at central office who are very knowledgeable.

She shared what she had learned through experience:

Now I know. I pick up the phone and I can say, "We really have a need for this. Do you know anybody?" That's networking. You tend to get tunnel vision when you're on your own little island of the campus because there's not a lot of time for networking out there, but you need to do that to be successful.

She concluded with another idea for how universities could enhance the area of professional development:

If they were to bring some, people in, maybe from outside the school system--community resources. We have a wealth of information but it wasn't really highlighted through any of my programs. That community mapping that they talk about--even just a skeletal type of outline or map would have been helpful in terms of "Here's someone you can start with."

Mrs. H addressed the area of professional development by stating:

I do feel like I had a strong component in professional development because a lot of my classes and experiences since then have been me as an instructional leader--teaching teachers. Whether it be a new math program or a new computer attendance program, whatever; because of my knowledge base, I felt very comfortable being the teacher of teachers. That's part of being the leader in the school.

Mrs. M added her opinion on professional development as it pertained to her training experience:

While this is important, I don't think this was stressed as much as it should have been. It was talked about, staff development, professional development, but not in the manner that even as a principal I would like for my teachers to be involved with.

She added this recommendation:

I think more time needs to be spent possibly creating some evaluative tools for us to use to look at professional development, even those that we attend. We didn't talk a lot about that. That would be an area where they need to improve.

Critical Success Factor #11

Acquires and uses resources wisely to support high levels of student and staff performance.

Mr. T addressed the topic of acquiring resources by stating:

The business world goes out and wines and dines clients to get support or to create a deal; in the education business, if we went out for a luncheon trying to gain resources, the public would see that as a negative. They would perceive us as not doing our jobs; we should be in the school working. I think we need to look at all possible resources.

Mr. E said, "Yeah, we were very resource oriented in the coursework. Yes, I would say yes. And even in accounting, they would furnish us with literature all the time." Mr. L said he would have liked to have learned more about acquiring grants during his training. He admitted:

I don't know that anybody's ever covered that with me. I'd like to have a class in grant writing. We're pretty well funded in Rutherford County, and we have . . . a lot of times we don't put the emphasis on it that we could and I think we miss a lot of stuff. We say, "Well, we got it, why worry?"

When asked if his university prepared him for acquiring and using resources wisely, Mr. O stated, "Yes, we had some exposure to that. They talked about some agencies that were out there and what resources they could give us. It was just through classroom discussions." Mr. O gave a suggestion to make training in this topic more effective, saying, "They could let you, instead of just telling you about it, they could let you do some calling, some hands-on activities."

Mrs. C also said she saw room for improvement and made several suggestions:

I think if you brought principals in and they shared some things that they had done--If not a shadowing situation, have principals come in. I think the best information I've gotten as far as student learning has been from other principals. Actually, that's how I got hooked onto *Think Link*, by talking to a principal. They had been a Title school, and all Title schools had gotten to pilot it that year, so those are the things that I think we really need to use as resources. Again, we need to look at the population we're serving.

Mrs. F agreed with Mr. L in saying that universities should teach prospective principals more about how to write grant proposals, explaining:

I know that through Shelby County we get a lot of information about grants and such where we could purchase materials to address those higher levels. But as far as being hands-on, we didn't get that and I think they should just make it available for perspective principals.

Mrs. H recalled the training she received at her university about acquiring and using resources wisely. She explained how she currently uses the knowledge she gained:

We really need it because we're in a partially rural, but very low income area. We do get some Title I money here, but I learned a long time ago how to rob Peter to pay Paul and figure out what you need and how to pay for it--because we spent a lot of time on prioritizing the school's needs. From that, you know what you need to spend your money on. Now on that, I did have some role-playing experiences. We would have case studies, where you had to look at them and then figure out what do you do next.

Mrs. J expressed confidence in dealing with technology resources and credited her university's training programs for her self-assurance in that area:

Yes, that was addressed, since this is a 21st Century School, particularly in regards to using software and using your STS in the school to train teachers on things that they can implement in classrooms and teach them to use all their resources. Frequently you see people who have all these things and they're not used. They use their computers for AR and do not use all the software. I think they were good at letting you know that you need to implement everything at your disposal.

Mrs. M said, "I don't believe this was addressed" and then gave a suggestion, "I guess if they tied it in with professional development and then designed a course that deals with student and staff performance, that might be the avenue to address it." Mrs. I recalled that the critical success factor of acquiring and using resources wisely was addressed in her university's training program. She detailed, "We had different case studies and we had to determine which types of resources, human and material resources, would be needed to implement programs. Just basic case studies."

Community mapping helped Mrs. G in acquiring and using resources wisely. She explained, "To me that went back to the way I processed it in terms of resources that are available outside of the school, and that kind of fell back to that community mapping." She admitted that she would have liked "a little bit more exposure to the things that are out there so you aren't floundering; that would have been a big help."

The university spent little time on teaching how to acquire and use resources, according to Mrs. D, who stated:

I don't think they spent a lot of time on resources, you know, what would be the best to use them. That's something you had to learn once you got out in the field by talking to other principals and finding out what works from them. I think it would have been nice if they had said, "If you're having difficulty in this area, these are some resources you could use." I don't think they did that very well.

Critical Success Factor #12

Obtains support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.

This was a critical factor that did not get many positive responses as to its being effectively addressed in principals' preparation programs. Mr. R shared, "I don't remember it being addressed much." Mr. K added, "I don't think that was addressed either. I think it's so broad, the various school systems do things so differently, it'd be difficult for them to hit the information for each person who would be taking the course."

A discussion of school improvement planning covered this factor according to Mr. N, who stated, "Yes. It goes back to the school improvement process and how to do it, and how to involve people." Mrs. G said she would have liked to have seen more experts come into the classroom to discuss this factor. She added:

I floundered on that one because I don't remember it being part of my courses or field experiences, but just through working my way up in administration. You learn very quickly to rely on your central office and community. I don't know that it was in my formal curriculum, but it was certainly in my informal in order to survive the program. If they had had more central office people, or Junior Achievement, or Youth Villages or some of those members of the community to come in, that might have helped. I really don't remember that component from either program.

When asked if this success factor was covered by her university, Mrs. M said:

This was addressed mildly I suppose. We really talked about dividing out roles and who is in central office and what their roles would be in a generic sense--and the importance of community and parents. But, there wasn't any "how to" in that--how you obtain that support.

Mrs. M also agreed with Mrs. G that having experts come into the classroom for discussions would have been beneficial. She explained:

It really would have been nice to have some central office people come in and talk about ways that they work with schools or support schools and/or improvement plans for schools within their systems. I would have liked to have heard that because when I identified my own school system at that time I would not have known how they would have answered that or who was actually supporting our school and our improvement plan. I think it could be addressed more effectively in that manner.

Mrs. M made another suggestion to improve the effectiveness of teaching this success factor:

Certainly one idea could be to create a class that really deals with school improvement in and of itself. Several of these questions tie into that. That may be a way to address the issue of school improvement and community support more effectively.

Mrs. Q stated this critical success factor was not addressed in any of her preparatory classes, “No, we had principals who came in and talked to us but they didn't discuss that, and they could have. That would have been an easy topic.” Mr. E also said that the topic of obtaining support from the central office, community, and parent leaders for school improvement was not addressed in his coursework. He gave further details and added his opinion on why this was not addressed in his situation:

Coursework? No, not as much as it could have been. It was sporadic. They very rarely talked about central office. I don't know if that's because the university was dealing with teachers, or students who were from Tipton County, or from Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee in both Memphis City and Shelby County Schools. Our central office boards tend to be different. That may be the reason.

Mr. L recalled that the topic was covered in his principalship-training classes. He stated, “We did discuss that quite a bit. It was mostly discussions in classes. Could they have improved that? I don't know that they could have. They did a pretty good job with that.”

Mrs. C commented that she was confident in this critical area; however, “I don't think it was addressed at the university; I think our *county* has done a great job of addressing it.” When asked if it could be addressed more effectively, Mrs. C. exclaimed, “Absolutely. Now, at one class, they did bring some people from a different county's schools, and everybody got to talk for about an hour. But, I don't think that was enough time.”

Whereas Mrs. F did not express a positive comment about her university's training program for this critical factor, she did elaborate encouragingly on her unique position, “It was not addressed in field experience, but Shelby County has a wonderful central office that truly gave me all the information I needed about parent leaders for school improvement.” She continued with suggestions for teaching this factor more effectively:

I think so much emphasis is placed on school improvement that it needs to be part of a course of study. When I was an assistant, I did parts of it, but I was never responsible for pulling the whole document together. I think for a new principal coming in, that would be so valuable.

Mrs. H said that in her preparatory classes, obtaining support for school improvement was addressed in courses other than leadership training. She explained:

That was probably addressed more in the sociology component that I had or some of the curriculum classes or some of the developmental classes along the way. As far as my leadership classes, those didn't have a parent component to them. They had the central office component because you learn through your classes the avenues you have to take to get different things done. I think I got both of those areas, but in two different ways.

When asked how this factor could be addressed more effectively, Mrs. H responded:

I don't know. Of course with every system and every makeup, the way they've got the leadership groups set up, it's a different path to get to where you want to be. That changes from year to year, too. That's something you definitely learn the hard way. If you go the wrong way, you definitely won't do it again.

Mrs. J was very enthusiastic when relating details about her university's training methods for this critical success factor. She gave details as to how her classroom experience continues to help her as a principal:

In school-community relations in particular, all of my professors brought in guest speakers. We had state senators, councilmen, and the mayor. All kinds of folks who came in and let us know that whatever they could do to help the schools, to call on them and let them know what kinds of things they needed to do. I learned a lot about who you could call on at that time. I've done it since then; I've called people and said, "You came in and addressed my class. Now I want you to do that; I'm actually here." And, they have.

Critical Success Factor #13

Continuously learns and seeks out colleagues who are abreast of new research and proven practices.

As to whether they were staying in touch with colleagues, there seemed to be an admitted advantage to those who went through their programs in a cohort group compared to those who did it individually. Mr. L spoke of his cohort:

One thing at [university], you were in a cohort, so you went through with the same group. I still keep in touch with probably 10 out of the 30 that I went through with, and we learn from each other. I think that goes back to the system more than your college. I don't know how the college would prep you for that. Too many principals are afraid to ask questions.

Mrs. D offered an idea as to how universities could make this factor even more effective:

I think it would be nice if they would share the different organizations that are available to new principals--what the mission of those organizations are. I found out about the National Association for Elementary Principals after I got out. No one ever talked about, "This is something that would be good for you to become involved in." It was from other principals that I learned about different organizations.

Mr. E had an entirely positive experience pertaining to this factor. He said he was required by his professors to keep abreast of new research and to review current articles and that they personally encouraged students to join professional organizations. He detailed:

A lot of my classes at the university level required that we go to the library and review articles and look up various periodicals. Half my professors from time to time would get on us and say, "Have you gotten your membership yet with the National Association of Elementary and Middle School Principals; there's an open membership that you can have that's not as much as the regular cost." And with that, comes these magazines that are filled with a wealth of knowledge. They really encouraged that.

Mrs. O seemed frustrated by too much focus on research and too little use of hands-on practice.

She offered suggestions to universities for use in future education classes:

They would talk about research and what the data said, but in the last 30 years, the latest literature says that 90% of the educational research has been done. They would talk about it, but they need to give you more exposure to how you can actually use it. I think they should have a mentorship program. There needs to be an extended period of time where you're working with administrators in the field getting field experiences. They need to let you get some hands-on experience like they do for student teachers.

Mrs. C offered several suggestions for ways to seek out colleagues after graduation to keep abreast of proven practices. She related:

What I would love to see happen is, once everyone leaves that university, that they have a sort of consortium so they can follow through every three months or every six months to say, "Hey, how's it going for you? What's going on over here?" We do that in Shelby County. Wouldn't it be great if the colleges did that?

When asked what changes she would like to see made in preservice preparation programs, Mrs.

C stated, "I really think shadowing, and pulling together, and having that support there. Not just

with those people who graduated, but also those professors who are in that particular study area. It would help them too.”

After saying that she had received no formal training for this critical success factor, Mrs. F spoke about the benefits of networking with former colleagues:

I did maintain a network of principals that I went through my leadership studies with and we talked when we were in class and we talk now. I think it was more of a casual networking of professionals rather than a formal study. I think chemistry has a lot to do with that; there are people that you trust and you feel like you can talk to.

When asked if her university effectively covered the factor of seeking out colleagues to keep abreast of current practices, Mrs. P responded that her university focused more on the present than the future. She explained, "Most of it was 'This is what we're going to do right now.' It wasn't for the future."

According to Mrs. H, her university program prepared her with the desire to seek out current research and to find proven practices on her own. She enthusiastically gave details of her newly discovered zeal for conducting research:

I think my program kind of whetted my appetite for research, because, as we talked about earlier, I finally understood the different research tests, the different statistical tests, and what they mean, and how you use them and how to interpret them. That kind of opened the door to me. I don't know if they wanted to accomplish that, but it certainly did. It was a case-study kind of thing. In my research classes and my statistics classes, we would look at different questions, like what's your research question and we would be given a research question and we would have to design the path you would have to take. Then we would take someone who had already done that research and then look at that research with the same question and compare what they did with what we did and things we could have done differently to make it a more efficient study. At the time, the access to information was limited. This was before Internet; but, I don't think that's an issue for students anymore because the access is so easy now. At the time, if I wanted to get something from the library or someone's research, I pretty much had to go down there and pick it up, find it on a shelf, and make a copy. That's not the case anymore. It's so much easier.

Mrs. J spoke of her university training regarding research:

We were often cautioned about going a different way without a research base. You should be able to show success with a program before you just try to do something brand new. You need to have a research background. We were encouraged to use professional journals and to continue to do that. I think you leave that when you get out of school and

you think you don't need to do that anymore. In fact, we were given a lot of choices to go ahead and start taking subscriptions to some of these journals and were told which ones would do this, which ones were for that, which ones for curriculum materials, which ones for leadership ideas. That's when I first started subscribing to a lot of things that I've read through the years.

When asked what changes she would like to see made in preservice development programs now that she had been through the university, Mrs. J answered with a suggestion that was made by several of the participants:

I think some field experiences would be good. To actually just go shadow and spend a day with a principal just to see what the day is really like. That's probably the biggest one. You do that with student teaching. You spend all that time and it's the same. Even though you do your student teaching, it's not preparing for the actual classroom. A lot of people in the classroom had not been an assistant yet either. I think it would be beneficial to actually be on the other side and actually be in the office and see what goes on in a day. I'm not certain how that would work. I have a brand new assistant half of the time. She's just out of the classroom and she's just still amazed by my day, by the 500 people who come through the door.

Mr. K was introduced to literature at the university; he spoke of his method of developing relationships with colleagues and maintaining interest in current research, saying, "There were several things as far as leading you toward developing professional development for yourself, various literature, groups, peer groups, and things along that line."

Mr. R stated that proficiency in keeping abreast of current research was addressed at his university's preservice program:

Being a university-based program, they were very strong on research base and theory; so, they did address that. We did a tremendous number of articles on current practices. They wanted to make sure those articles were current within the past three to five years. They addressed it as effectively as they could. There again, as far as practical experience, having experienced administrators in the community to ask is important.

He then thoughtfully shared a practice that he said he would like to see implemented, "Sometimes I wish we had a program set where the elementary principals meet once a month for lunch to discuss . . . 'How's things going?' Just to get away from school for lunch together."

Mr. R said he would like to see changes centering on "practical things" rather than abstract, consisting of a "little less theory and more reality." He recommended several ways this could be implemented:

You don't really have practicum programs for principals. I don't know how you could do it because everyone is working. But that would be a way to do it. Or, have some actual principals in the field come in and talk about their experiences and how they've handled certain things. For example, if you're doing a unit of study on bringing your faculty together, it would be nice to have someone who did a good job on that come in and talk about it. Practical things instead of just saying well you should do it and you could do it, and do it in these ways. Bring somebody in who says, "This is what I did." Much of what you see with a principal is people skills, whether it's with staff, faculty, parents, or even students.

The Future of Preservice Principalship Development Programs

Participants were asked to share how they viewed the future of preservice principalship development programs. The need for an internship program was mentioned by Mr. A and several other interviewees. Mr. A added, "I don't know if it could happen, but I think they should have a little internship time before actually taking the job." Mrs. C spoke of shadowing and practical on-the-job issues, explaining, "I really think shadowing, pulling together, and having that support there. Not just for those people who graduated but also those professors who are in that particular student area. That would help them too." Mr. R added to Mrs. C's comments with a suggestion "to have some actual principals in the field come in and talk about their experiences." Mr. L also supported the internship program by wanting "more hands-on, more internships, more of actually doing the job." Mrs. J suggested allowing university students to shadow a principal as he or she goes about the day. She added:

Probably, this is difficult to do since most people are teaching, but I think some field experiences would be good. To actually just go shadow, and spend a day with a principal and just see what the day is really like. That's probably the biggest one.

According to Mrs. P, she also would like to see some type of practical, hands-on experience added to preservice principalship development programs. She explained:

I think you need flat out practical work. You need to be in that office. I know that's not practical because people have to work. You can't take a year off--you wouldn't be paid. But, you do not know what's going on until you are in that office every day.

Mrs. D wanted universities to add more real-world type activities. She gave examples:

I think, again, more of the scenarios, more of the real world type activities as opposed to, "This is the *theory* of leadership." The people that I'm mentoring, that's what they're telling me. What we do, we meet biweekly, every other Tuesday, and they say that's more helpful to them than spending the day in class listening to theory X and theory Y.

Mr. O also considered mentorship as a needed addition to principalship development programs. He explained:

I think you should have a mentorship; there needs to be an extended period of time where you're working with administrators in the field getting field experience. They need to let you get some hands-on experience as they do for student teachers.

More courses in people skills and time management are needed, according to Mr. E. He elaborated:

I've always said that if I ever got a chance to go back to speak to another college course or professor, that I would make sure I would say this on behalf of the many administrators that are about to come into this position: We need more courses in people skills--especially in dealing with difficult employees and you need more coursework that deals with time management. Those are two critical areas to the success of an administrator.

Mr. K stated that more emphasis was needed on finances at the school level and explained, "I think they probably need to address how to work with funds at the school level and how to order things that you can do to cause the school to improve." Mrs. H added:

For me, personally, I would like to have had more experience in managing the school's money. But then, how do you do that? Because you can only have a limited number of people who know about the money and generally, that's only the principal and the financial secretary.

Mr. N addressed a need for emphasis on instruction, saying, "Well, I think I would like to see more emphasis on instructional techniques, instructional methodology, so that you can be a stronger instructional leader." Mrs. F added to this point, "I would love for more emphasis to be placed on instructional issues such as higher-level thinking and leadership skills that come in

dealing with all segments of the school population.” Mrs. M had a desire to experiment with issues in which she lacked familiarity. She exclaimed:

Let me dabble in the things that I don't have experience in, such as budgetary items or scheduling issues for special areas and such--those things. While it's touched on and you know it's there and it exists, you don't really have an opportunity to have your hands on it.

Mrs. M then shared an interesting idea for a project that could garner hands-on experience:

While I wouldn't necessarily want someone to be bogged down in having to do more, I think it would have helped me to sit by the principal or assistant principal and just kind of take notes on what they were doing, how they created a schedule, and then submit that as a project of sorts.

Mrs. I mentioned her advantage in getting to go into a school setting early in her program. She recommended that all universities adopt this practice:

When I was going through the program, they had gone to the extent of putting you out in the field sooner because they were saying, like with teacher preparation programs, that people weren't getting into the situations until the end. So, I think an emphasis on getting people out in the schools and the actual field experiences prior to their internship is needed.

Mrs. Q mentioned a part of preparation training where she said she felt a weakness. She said schools should focus more on the practical issues of maintaining a building. She explained, “I know it's different in every system, but just the practical knowledge in taking care of a building, and grounds, facilities, that part. I did not feel prepared at all for that part.”

Mr. B was very deliberate, stating:

Well, here's what I would say on a couple of issues. All of these items were—now I have to go back 15 years—and that's another thing you have to tell them in your study. You can tell them you talked to a high school principal from one of the largest high schools in the state of Tennessee with a doctorate who teaches in a graduate school and there *are* several issues. One that you nailed down already is the fact that just because you're a principal doesn't mean that you finished your licensure program last year or even your doctorate last year. I finished mine in '95. Because in this system, if you're a vice-principal in a high school, you're pretty far up there, so you are going to stay there until a high school you want opens, so you got the politics, the competitiveness of it. All of these items are addressed in teacher preparation. I don't remember formally sitting down and somebody telling me about these 13 standards, but again, I can't tell you what I had to eat last Thursday. In our university program, we address all of these issues even so far as putting as objectives on our syllabus the ISLLC standards, because right now Union is getting 100% success rate on our students going and taking the ISLLC. Now this is what

licenses the people in the state of Tennessee. I'm not sure what this does, and beyond maybe going on over at—is it East Tennessee State University? So, at East Tennessee State University, I believe that's a board of regents' school, same thing as University of Memphis. Now, it may be that Memphis is in line with this, but it's kind of like with our biology, Gateway, algebra I, and English 10. We have to teach the objectives if we want those kids to pass the test. At Union University we're teaching these ISLLC standards because we want that person to go out and pass the beginning licensure practice exam so they can feel like—hey we charge them a lot of money—they pay \$18,000 to get an Ed.S, and we want to make sure they can pass the test. So, we drill these standards.

The Role of Distance Education

I asked the participants how helpful they thought distance education courses might be in a principal's preservice program. The use of distance education for principalship development programs was a favorable idea among the participants; however, only a few participants considered it should be used for completing the total program.

Mrs. P gave a unique negative response pertaining to distance education. She said she saw the "need for dirty hands." She laughed as she answered, "No, I think you have to be right there to get your hands dirty, to be right there with it." Mr. A spoke of a limited use of distance education, saying, "I would say a course or two, but for the majority, no."

Mr. R stated that having relationships with a group was a valuable tool for learning:

From everything we've said, if I said yes, I think I would be contradicting myself. I think it would be difficult, but that's my philosophy, being in education. It's difficult to have a disjointed person. It's best to have someone you can bounce ideas off of and build a relationship with. I think it would be difficult. I stayed with the same group. I went through the 18-month program but it was actually just 12 months with the same people. I saw one of my old group members the other day. . .

Mrs. D also commented on the need for human interaction:

I think as long as they're--I don't think you can learn all of it on computers but I do think that it's possible as long as you have some human interaction in there as well. To be honest, some of the classes I went to? They read to you out of the book. I could have read it myself, and I did.

Mrs. H recalled learning from the ones who sat beside her in her training program:

I'm kind of old fashioned with that. I know that distance learning is the way it is going to go. And it probably should. That makes it easily accessible; more people have the

opportunity. But I just know in my heart that a whole lot of my knowledge and a whole lot of what I know came from the people that I sat beside in those classes. People will say you can get the same thing with distance learning because you can correspond and you can talk back and forth, but to me it's just not the same as sitting in a class with somebody and they will say, "You will not believe my week this week." And then start talking. From that, you figure out how to solve these things. Chances are before it's all said and done, the same type thing is going to come back to you sometime. Yes, and no; distance learning is probably the way it is going to be, but only if it's tempered with some kind of direct contact.

Personal contact and ongoing relationships are important components of learning according to

Mr. L, who explained:

Other than maybe some of the core classes, I'm not sure. That's because you don't get to network, and you don't get the professional contacts. With my Ed.S and my doctorate, the best thing about any of it is the contacts I made. Without being around them, I think I would have suffered some.

Mrs. J recalled the value of personal contact with teachers and colleagues from her university experience:

There probably is a future, but I don't think that's a good development. This is such a people job that you need to be working with people and learning how to communicate in those roles. It's certainly not a job that you can sit behind a computer and do. Or, behind a shut door. There's probably some areas you could use it but I'd hate to see it go that way. I'd rather see it be classes because those are very memorable. I don't know what you really retain from sitting in front of a computer screen. I had some teachers that I'll never forget and some classmates that I'm working with now, colleagues.

Mrs. M discussed how distance learning could do away with important relationships:

I think it will be possible, although, I'm not certain that it's a good idea. Part of education is the actual interaction with people discussing research and ideas and being able to listen to how someone articulates their point to receive that. I think doing a class online, we had to present billboards in a particular class, and that was fine. That was good to push us to do something that was a little bit different. I certainly would not have walked away from a class that would have required me to do that consistently and not ever see me. You don't develop relationships. It's moving away from what we say is right for learning, community building, creating relationships, and then kids are going to succeed. So, it's really the opposite of that. I don't think it's a good idea.

Mrs. G seemed to be concerned with accountability issues that could result from distance education degrees being obtained online. She explained:

I would be very leery of it; I'm interviewing and seeing that more and more. People are going toward online degrees. It kind of concerns me because I don't think you have that

supervision and feedback that's necessary for this type of career. You've got to have the dialogue and someone monitoring the gate or we'll wind up with people who *think* they have the skills. Someone will hire them and it's just going to be one more example of how public education isn't accountable. I think it's a limited role at best.

According to Mrs. S, having an instructor in front of a student may become a thing of the past:

I can see the use of distance education for principalship training. I think the days of having to be on campus with a professor in front of you are fading. But I don't think you can totally rely on distance education to complete the program. There is so much to gain from personal contact with a group. I think cohort groups are the way to go with the training. So much can be learned together when you're with a group.

Distance learning could be a way to save funds according to Mrs. C, who stated:

I think that's probably the way it may have to go for some things. I feel if you did distance education, you might bring in some components that you couldn't bring in with the funds you may have in your particular university. I don't think that should be the entire program. But I do think it could be an added plus.

Mrs. I talked about the value of getting information that one might not normally be able to obtain:

The main role that I see--I like the schools here in town--they're okay. But I've had interest in going to other schools that are not local, ones that would be hard for me to travel to--like weekday programs that start at three or four in the afternoon and I'm hours away. I could see where that could help someone who is looking for philosophies from other states or communities to have exposure to and participate in programs not necessarily within the area. Maybe for some of the universities that have budget cuts, I can see where you can have exposure to different kinds of coursework that you could not normally get at the university. It would also put you in touch with resources and people as well as other contacts that you would not normally get in your own area.

Mrs. S shared the concept of using computers to replace field experiences:

This might be a valuable means of providing direction, examples, and hands-on experience in the day-to-day operation of the school. Because of our schedules, there was no apprenticeship program that provided experience on instructional issues. Time was spent after school with principals but this did not accomplish much. It was fragmented. If we had the distance education, then you could sit down and really get that field experience without having the principal leave his office or without me having to travel all the way across town. Most of the principals in West Tennessee are educated at the University of Memphis. You go to school; you come home. It's not an away from home kind of experience at all. I felt there were many things I could have learned where distance learning could have helped me.

Mr. O commented on using distance learning, "I think you could have self-paced programs, access to sites that would help beginning principals, classes on how to use the internet to hook up with others, and question and answer periods." Distance learning should be an option for educated people, according to Mr. K, who stated, "I think once you're at that level you can learn things online. Basically, you're an educated person. Educated people should be able to discern information from written work--especially people with some experience in that position." Mr. B used several examples to express positive remarks for distance learning:

Yeah, yeah. We do that here. Right now, we have distance learning here at the school and we send out five classes a day to other high schools. We've connected with the space station in Moscow, Russia, and talked to cosmonauts. A couple of years ago, we put two different protein crystallization experiments on the Space Shuttle. So, when we were doing that, we were connecting to scientists all over the world, bringing in that learning. It's expensive when I go outside my little loop of these high schools because it's like making long distance calls and you're charged quite a bit for it. But everyday we're on a flat rate. For instance, we teach Latin here and we send it to Millington. We teach German and send it to Millington. Sociology we teach here and send it over to Houston High School. I've got an AP Macro economics going to Cordova High School twice a day. We do a thing here, a medieval type curriculum with our senior English and Collierville High wanted that, so we send a regular 12th grade English class over to Collierville High. So, distance learning, certainly, I see it being used. Before I left the prison system as an employee, we had gone to distance learning in the fact that we didn't have to send an inmate down to the courthouse. The penal farm is probably 10 miles from the jail downtown, so if there was an inmate out at the penal farm and they were fixing to charge them again with another charge, they could go before the camera and be on the monitor in the judge's chambers. You would not have to take the inmate downtown and could save security, time, money, resources, personnel, vehicles, and everything else. So, we use it with teacher training and it should be used with administrator training. I know the University of Memphis has some distance learning classes and Union has talked about that as well. You could have one of your professors at East Tennessee do a statewide session and everybody could plug into it. Locally, we've done training amongst the high schools. We do distance learning everyday so there's no reason it can't go to administration.

Mr. E was upbeat concerning distance learning:

I think that if we utilize the distance-learning program, that would expose students to the different pedagogy or different ideologies of thoughts on education throughout the country. You could actually use a scenario-based situation where you got people that you are linked with here, and here, and you are studying the same scenario and getting feedback. Not just from the Memphis area--maybe the people in New York have a different approach as to how to solve a scenario like that. I think that would open up

more of a school of thought. I think that is what Memphis suffers from--we're so used to doing it this way; then, when somebody comes in from outside and says do it differently, we say, "Oh, what are you doing?" Some areas, I think, embrace change more readily.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE PRACTICE, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Through a review of relevant literature and after interviewing 20 beginning principals across the state of Tennessee from the East, Middle, and West regions, certain conclusions and recommendations have been drawn as to the needs and concerns in preparing principals for their first assignments. These components could result in added awareness from university administrators into the insights of beginning principals and might assist universities in redesigning curriculum for principals' programs to better meet the needs of current and future students.

Conclusions From the Study

From the review of literature, it was discovered that the reformation of preparation programs for principals is not a new process. There have been several reform movements over the past 20 years. Hale and Moorman (2003) wrote:

Nearly 20 years of efforts to reform administrator preparation programs have produced little progress. The reforms prompted by such well-known national initiatives as the U.S. Department of Education's Administration Development (LEAD) Program (1987-1993) and the Danforth Foundation's Principals Preparation Program achieved rather limited success. (p. 5)

From these reform efforts, standards have been set. This researcher looked at the standards created by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to determine the extent to which the Board's 13 critical success factors have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. The SREB, the nation's first interstate compact for education, was created in 1948 by southern governors. SREB helps

educational and governmental leaders work cooperatively to advance education and, in doing so, to improve the region's social and economic life (SREB, 2002).

The purpose of the study was to identify the extent to which the 13 critical success factors have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose was to identify significant opportunities for addressing the critical success factors in preservice courses and preservice field experiences development programs.

Research Question #1

What are the greatest challenges facing beginning school principals?

Beginning principals face many challenges as they embark on their first assignments. From the results of this study, five specific areas emerged that presented challenges for beginning principals. The following conclusions pertain to those issues that participants in the study suggested should be addressed to a greater extent in a university's preparation programs:

1. **Financial responsibility:** It was discovered in many cases that individual school's budgets and handling of these budgets are a well-kept secret. School budgets, in most cases, are not made public to the staff or faculty. Several participants admitted that as an assistant principal, they had no knowledge of the school's budget. The budget was the responsibility of the bookkeeper and the principal.
2. **Special Education:** The rights and responsibilities associated with special education are overwhelming. It is understood that these rights and responsibilities are there for a good reason, to assure the proper education and rights of a very worthy group of students. It is a challenge for those principals who do not have a special education background to understand the total process of special education.
3. **Culture:** In most cases, a beginning principal is coming into a new community and a new environment. There is a learning process that every principal has to go through with his

or her new appointment. Even if they are promoted from within their community or within their own building, principals must be able to see the new “big picture.”

Sometimes, one can be a member of a culture and not have an understanding of all avenues of that culture until he or she is responsible for its members.

4. Organization of time: "Where did the time go? Look at all the things I didn't get accomplished today!" That is a question and statement that many principals ask themselves every day. Even though principals maintain a very active day, several participants addressed the fact that they did not accomplish much during the day. Few principals recalled any type of instruction addressing time management. Scheduling is a skill that all administrators must master to have a successful day or school year.
5. New responsibility: A new principal faces new responsibilities; these new responsibilities can be overwhelming. A simple walk down the hall can result in numerous requests for the principal's attention. A new principal must be able to wear many hats and be able to make many decisions.

Research Question #2

In what areas do beginning school principals feel the most and least confident?

There were two areas in which most principals felt very confident when beginning their new assignments. One in particular, relating to people, seemed to be an area in which all beginning principals were confident. Relating to people is a needed skill in order to be a successful principal as principals are constantly in contact with people. Another area in which many principals were confident was in dealing with instruction and academics. However, it was also evident that instruction and academics was an area of least confidence by other principals.

Research Question #3

What do principals identify as the greatest strengths and limitations of university-based principal preparation programs?

In this study, the participants were asked to identify strengths and weaknesses of their universities' programs. According to the participants, four factors appear to make a strong university program:

1. Use of scenarios: Universities need to try to make their training as realistic as possible. For several universities, that training included using real-life scenarios.
2. Cohorts: There was evidence that a cohort group lead to a more satisfying experience with principalship training programs.
3. Experienced staff: It is important that universities hire instructors who have experience in the areas they are teaching.
4. Current research: Universities should stay current with their instruction by keeping current research part of their curriculum.

Two university training limitations became evident during the interview process: (a) lack of some type of internship or hands-on programs and (b) not having experienced instructors.

Research Question #4

To what extent are the 13 critical success factors of school leaders being addressed in university-based principal-preparation programs (coursework and field experiences); what types of learning experiences occur, and how might they be addressed more effectively?

It is concluded from this study that the SREB's 13 critical success factors are being addressed in most university programs. There were indications they were not addressed as being standards set by the SREB. Mr. B added an interesting point of view. Not only was he a beginning principal but also he currently teaches in the doctorate program at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee. Mr. B discussed his unfamiliarity with the SREB's critical success factors;

yet, he was familiar with ISLLC standards. He stated, “I’m not familiar [with SREB] and I teach in the graduate school--what we do is the ISLLC.” Mr. B noted that the 13 critical success factors were being addressed but they were not affiliated with SREB. He remarked:

In our Union University program, we address all of these issues [13 critical factors] even so far as putting them as objectives on our syllabus [but as] the ISLLC standards, because right now Union is getting 100% success rate on our students who are people in the state of Tennessee.

The evidence strongly indicated by using the above strengths: scenarios, cohort groups, experienced staff, and current research, that universities could support the effective teaching of the 13 critical success factors. In addition, there was evidence that the *No Child Left Behind Act* and Tennessee’s School Improvement Planning also lean toward effectively addressing the 13 critical success factors.

Research Question #5

What role might distance learning play in helping preservice school leaders acquire the 13 critical success factors?

The use of distance education for principalship development programs was a favorable idea among the participants. However, only a few participants considered it should be used for completing the total program. The consensus strongly indicated the need for human interaction. The importance of relationships and personal contact with a group lead by an instructor was repeated through the interviews.

It was documented that Hale and Moorman (2003) reported, according to a survey of educational leaders conducted by Public Agenda, that 69% of principals who responded had given their university an "F" for the training they had received. This study's findings contradicted Hale and Moorman. Principals did give recommendations for improving their principals' preparation programs; however, none rated their preparation as failing.

Recommendations to Improve Practice

It is concluded from this study that the 13 critical success factors are being addressed in most university programs. I would recommend that universities look for different ways to allow their students to get more hands-on experiences. Some type of internship, mentorship, or principal shadowing should be established. There is a need for a program that would enable students to be able to experience the principalship up close and in person. It is evident that it would be difficult, because of job and time restraints, to have a full-time program such as student teaching. Mrs. C shared her experience regarding mentorship:

I've got a gal working with me now from Union University and, boy, she's like glued to me. She said, "I have learned so much in these couple of months, so much more than I would have learned in the classroom." So, I think--there's a lot of good things, don't think I'm downing the colleges because there's a lot of bookwork that needs to be done. Plus, you have people coming in who have only been teaching two or three years and they need a lot of that bookwork. But maybe more seasoned teachers don't need it. Again, make that connection with real-life schools.

One possible solution could be to have a program that allows graduates who have been appointed assistant principals or principals to do a roundtable discussion with current students. In addition, I would recommend that universities take a close look at the following aspects from the 13 critical success factors and the principal's responsibility for each topic. Even though it was apparent that each of these was addressed at the university program, it was also evident from the results of this study that they could be addressed more effectively. Listed below are the factors and samples of how participants recommended that each could be addressed more effectively. These recommendations follow the general theme of some type of internship, mentorship, or principal shadowing.

1. Time management: Mrs. C recommended shadowing, explaining, "I think--some shadowing at critical times. I think critical times like summer when the principals are preparing for the coming year."
2. Current instructional practices: Mrs. J recommended:

I would say in terms of improving--that would be really putting us out in a place in the field where we are not day-to-day and to evaluate things in that manner. It's one thing to evaluate things within your own school, you can go to the teachers you know are effective, you can sit down and you can evaluate. We know how to work things to get the job done, but maybe it's a good idea to raise the bar, force you to step out of your comfort zone, assign you to a place you haven't been before to evaluate things, and then come back and give feedback.

3. Parental involvement: Mrs. J recommended more discussion in the classroom, "Probably a college program could talk about how to best garner the support of parents and what to do when you have that support."
4. Understanding data: Mr. R suggested, "I wish it had been addressed more effectively. I feel that's one thing that is difficult; maybe it's a time factor, getting time to break that data down."
5. Understanding all resources available to schools: Mrs. G suggested community mapping: In terms of resources that are available outside the school, that kind of fell back to community mapping. We need a little bit more exposure to the things that are out there so we aren't floundering. That would be a big help.
6. Understanding how central office is organized: Mrs. M recommended, "It really would have been nice to have some central office people come in and talk about ways that they work with schools or support schools and/or improvement plans for schools within their systems."
7. Professional development: Mrs. M suggested teaching how to evaluate professional development, "I think more time needs to be spent on that, possible creating some evaluative tools for us to use to look at professional development."

Furthermore, from the results of this study, it was evident that a principal's influence has an enormous impact on whether a teacher decides to attend a principals' training university. I would recommend that principals should take an active role with the application process or have the opportunity to nominate teachers for principals' training programs. In addition, principals could aid in the training of future principals by involving assistant principals more with decision-

making and budget issues. All the beginning principals who participated in this study had served as assistant principals before being appointed to the principalship.

Recommendations for Further Research

After completing this study, I would recommend for further research the following topics:

1. Assess the training that state and local education departments provide principals once they are appointed to their first assignment.
2. Determine the nature and degree to which the SREB standards compare with other standards.
3. Conduct a study of recent graduates who are now assistant principals; I feel they could share more information concerning their university programs. As noted in the demographics, all beginning principals in this study served as assistant principals before entering the principalship.
4. Conduct a study of principals who have graduated in the past five years. Even though I concentrated on beginning principals with fewer than two years of experience in the principalship, several participants were not recent graduates of an administrative preparation university.

Mr. B agreed with this recommendation for further research, stating:

You can tell them you talked to a high school principal from one of the largest high schools in the state of Tennessee with a doctorate who teaches in a graduate school and there *are* several issues. One that you nailed down already is the fact that just because you're a beginning principal doesn't mean that you finished your licensure program last year.

He added that he graduated from his administrative training university in 1995.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Form

Page 1 of 3

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

East Tennessee State University
Veterans Affairs Medical Center

INFORMED CONSENT

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Robert C. Vick

TITLE OF PROJECT: Use of the SREB Leadership Development Framework in Pre-service Principal Preparation Programs: A Qualitative Investigation

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

PURPOSE: The purpose of the study is to identify the extent to which the 13 Critical Success Factors of School Leaders have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose will be to identify significant opportunities for addressing the CSFs in pre-service courses and pre-service field experiences development programs.

DURATION: The participant will be asked to share their information in one face-to-face interview lasting approximately 60 minutes. Should the participant wish to continue the interview it will be accommodated at their request at a mutually convenient time. Any additional information that is needed for clarification and accuracy will be taken over the telephone and will last no more than 30 minutes.

PROCEDURES: The procedures used will consist of face-to-face interviews. Information gained will then be analyzed using the NUD*IST computer program. This program will allow comparison of information so that conclusions can be drawn concerning pre-service principal training.

POSSIBLE RISKS/DISCOMFORTS: There will be no significant risk to individuals participating in this study. The participant may decline to answer any question at any time for any reason. They may also terminate the interview at any point in the process if they choose and may withdraw from further participation in the study of their own choice.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS and/or COMPENSATION: There are no direct benefits or compensation to any individual participating in this study. Some satisfaction may be

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Robert C. Vick

TITLE OF PROJECT: Use of the SREB Leadership Development Framework in Pre-service Principal Preparation Programs: A Qualitative Investigation

taken from the interview knowing they are allowed to express their opinion concerning pre-service principal training.

CONTACT FOR QUESTIONS: If you have questions or research-related medical problems at any time, you may call Robert C. Vick at 865-xxx-xxxx or 865-xxx-xxxx or Dr. Russell West at 423-xxx-xxxx. You may call the Chairman of the Institutional Review Board for any questions you may have about your rights as a research participant.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Each participant's right to privacy will be maintained. The results of the study may be published and/or presented at meeting without naming you as a participant. The research information will only be available for inspection by personnel for the East Tennessee State University Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis in collaboration with the researcher, East Tennessee State University Campus Institutional Review Board. Records will be stored for 10 years following the study in safe deposit box #625 at US Bank in White Pine, Tennessee. All information about the participant will be treated confidentially and will not be revealed, except as noted above, unless required by law.

COMPENSATION FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT: East Tennessee State University (ETSU) will pay the cost of emergency first aid for any injury that 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-xxx-xxxx.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION: The purpose, risks, and benefits of the projects 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 read to me, and fully understand the consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A signed copy has been give to me. My study record will be maintained in strictest confidence according to current legal requirements and will not be revealed unless required by law or as noted above.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Robert C. Vick

TITLE OF PROJECT: Use of the SREB Leadership Development Framework in Pre-service
Principal Preparation Programs: A Qualitative Investigation

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

DATE

APPENDIX B

School Principals' Interview Guide

A. Introductory Questions

1. Can you think back and tell me of the time when you first decided that you wanted to be a school principal?
2. Did anything or anyone in particular directly influence your decision?
3. If you were to begin again, would you choose the principalship as your career?
4. How might you have prepared differently?
5. What represented the biggest challenge or challenges you faced when you became a school principal?
6. What things were you most confident about as you began your career as a school principal? Why did you feel confident?
7. In what areas did you have the least amount of confidence? Why did you feel this lack of confidence?
8. What do you see as the greatest strengths of your university-based principal preparation program? What are the greatest limitations?

B. 13 Critical Success Factors

As you know, the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) has identified what are considered to be 13 factors that are critical to the success of school leaders. I am going to ask you about each of these critical success factors and I would like to tell me about the extent to which each was addressed in your preservice program, the type of instruction that occurred in each, and how you think it might be addressed more effectively:

1. Creates a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
2. Sets high expectations for all students to learn higher-level content.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
3. Recognizes and encourages implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
4. Creates a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?

- b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 5. Uses data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 6. Keeps everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 7. Makes parents partners in students' education and create a structure for parent and educator collaboration.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 8. Understands the change process and has the leadership and facilitation skills to manage it effectively.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 9. Understands how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality, sustained professional development that leads to increased student achievement.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 10. Uses and organizes time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 11. Acquires and uses resources wisely to support high levels of student and staff performance.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 12. Obtains support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for the school improvement agenda.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?
- 13. Continuously learns and seeks out colleagues who are abreast of new research and proven practices.
 - a. Was it addressed in courses or field experiences?
 - b. What type of learning experiences were involved?
 - c. How could it have been addressed more effectively?

C. The future of preservice principalship development programs

1. What changes would you like to see made in preservice preparation?
2. What role, if any, do you see for distance education for preservice principalship development programs?

APPENDIX C

Letter to Principals

Dear Beginning Principal,

I am a doctoral student in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University. I am writing my dissertation on preservice principal preparation programs. The purpose of this study is to identify the extent to which the 13 critical success factors of school leaders, developed by the Southern Regional Education Board, have been addressed in formal and informal development training experiences of school principals in Tennessee. A secondary purpose will be to identify significant opportunities for addressing the CSFs in preservice courses and preservice field experiences development programs.

I am writing to see if you would be willing to participate in my study. If you agree to participate in the study, I will email you to arrange a time for the interview. If possible, I will travel to meet you at your school.

I am sending an invitation to principals who have completed or are currently enrolled in the Beginning Principal's Academy or principals recently appointed to their first position. I will interview as many as possible who respond. I need participants from East, Middle, and West Tennessee.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Vick
Principal, Jefferson Elementary School
321 W. Broadway Blvd.
Jefferson City, Tennessee 37760
865-xxx-xxxx

APPENDIX D
Demographic Survey

Male or Female _____

Year of birth _____

Number of years of teaching experience _____

Elementary _____

Middle _____

Secondary _____

Number of years of administration experience _____

Years as assistant principal _____

Years as principal _____

Undergraduate institution _____

Institution you received your administrative endorsement training _____

Year _____

Highest degree earned _____

Year _____

Institution _____

VITA

ROBERT C. VICK

Personal Data: Date of Birth: January 20, 1960
 Place of Birth: White Pine, Tennessee

Education: University of Tennessee, Knoxville
 Bachelor Science Degree
 Mathematics Education
 1986

 Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate
 Masters of Education
 Administration and Supervision
 1996

 Lincoln Memorial University, Harrogate
 Educational Specialist
 Administration and Supervision
 1997

 East Tennessee State University, Johnson City
 Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, Ed.D.
 2004

Professional
Experience: Teacher, Morristown West High School;
 1986 - 1996

 Assistant Principal, Jefferson Elementary School;
 1996 - 2000

 Principal, Dandridge Elementary School;
 2000 - 2002

 Principal, Jefferson Elementary School;
 2002 - Present