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**A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INDIVIDUALS HOLDING
PRINCIPALSHIP ENDORSEMENT IN TENNESSEE
YET NOT WORKING AS SUCH IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING**

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership & Policy Analysis

East Tennessee State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

by

William R. Flanary

May 1998

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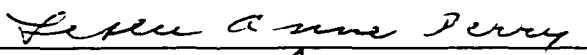
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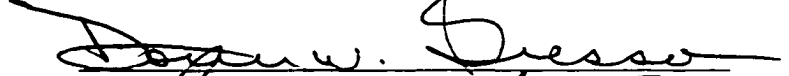
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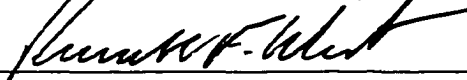
The committee read and examined his dissertation, supervised his defense of it in an oral examination, and decided to recommend that his study be submitted to the Graduate Council, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership.



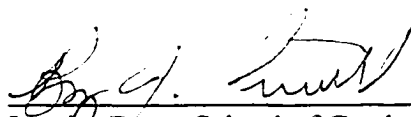
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Signed on behalf of
the Graduate Council



Interim Dean, School of Graduate Studies

ABSTRACT

A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF INDIVIDUALS HOLDING PRINCIPALSHIP ENDORSEMENT IN TENNESSEE, YET NOT WORKING AS SUCH IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL SETTING

by

William R. Flanary

The goal of this study was to develop insights into the experiences and opinions held common by individuals holding principalship endorsement in Tennessee, yet not working as a principal. The purpose of the study was to isolate phenomena common to these individuals at any point before, during, or after completing a program of principalship preparation, and further, to develop theory that would serve to describe these phenomena.

The qualitative research method was used. An interview guide was developed using a review of related literature, and further augmented by comments made during the interview process. Fourteen subjects were interviewed, representing all three grand divisions of the state. Transcripts of these interviews were produced and analyzed.

Conclusions of the study converged on three general areas. In the time frame preceding initial enrollment in a principal preparation program, subjects noted the importance of one or more individuals who enrolled along with them. Many subjects also reflected on formal or informal support groups that evolved during the time they were in graduate school. Other factors affecting the subject's decision to enroll in a program include financial considerations and the physical proximity of the program to their own locale. Subjects participating in this study professed little desire to become a school administrator at the time of enrollment and even less desire at the time of the study.

Theory developed about preparation programs themselves hold that students are largely self-selected, they are universally dissatisfied with the scope and quantity of practical experiences offered, and that they are more likely to remember and identify with individual instructors than with a program or graduate department in general. Curiously, the subjects in this study largely agreed on the need for long term, meaningful internship experiences during a principal preparation program, yet felt that if it had been a requirement in the program they completed, they could not have participated.

In developing theory to describe the experiences of individuals after completion of a principal preparation program, it was found that little effort was exerted toward obtaining a school principalship. Generally, the subjects in this study viewed promotion to a principalship in terms of promotion within the school at which they taught.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following study has been filed and approved by the Institutional Review Board of East Tennessee State University.

Title of Project A Qualitative Study of Inviduals Holding Principalship

Endorsement in Tennessee, yet not working as such in a Public School Setting

Principal Investigator William R. Flanary

Department Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

Date Submitted 11 April 1997

Institutional Review Board, Chair David N. Waller MD

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DEDICATION

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me Phillipians 4:13

To my wife, Lavon, who has been my greatest supporter, and to my daughter, Lauren, who has never known a time when her father was not working toward a degree, this work is dedicated.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I gratefully acknowledge the support and kindness of my professors and fellow students in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis, and specifically the following individuals;

Dr. Leslie Perry, from whom I learned it is the duty of educators to give something back to their profession,

Dr. Russ West, from whom I learned there are few limits to the person who sets clear goals and works diligently toward them,

Dr. Donn Gresso, from whom I learned the value and power of simply listening to another human being and respecting their right to an opinion different from my own,

and to Dr. Marie Hill, who taught me that there is nothing more important than the single student sitting before me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

According to the Tennessee State Department of Education (TSDE), 15,743 individuals held the appropriate credentials to serve as principal in the public schools of Tennessee in 1996. Records obtained from the same source reveal that there are fewer than 1,500 public schools in Tennessee. The annual principal turnover rate, according to a personal communication with Amy Gallagher, a staff administrator of the Tennessee State Board of Education, is consistently around 10% (Gallagher, 1996).

Concurrently, institutions of higher education in Tennessee continue to operate prolific principal preparation programs. Seven public universities and two private institutions train prospective school administrators, according to information received from the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996). Public universities alone have granted degrees in school administration and/or supervision to an average of 338 individuals per year since 1988 (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 1996). If the principal turnover rate in Tennessee is indeed 10%, new principals are being trained at roughly twice the demand. This number is in addition to the more than 14,000 individuals already licensed but not currently serving in a principalship (TSDE, 1996).

For a variety of reasons, a nationwide surplus of licensed candidates for principalships exists. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration

(NPBEA) contends that typical administrator preparation programs lack an effective recruiting strategy, and further, exhibit standards for admission that are less than rigorous (NPBEA, 1989). Don Goss, Assistant Director for Academics of the Tennessee High Education Commission, noted in a 1996 personal communication that a great many universities offer principal preparation programs, and that seeking training in that field may be a matter of settling on convenience of locale. Bliss (1988) noted that some teachers may simply want to expand their employment options, without ever actively seeking a principalship once they achieve certification. A more lengthy discussion of the supply of administrative candidates is found in the review of literature in the next chapter.

The literature is rich with dialogue in the area of principal preparation. Griffiths, Stout, and Forsyth (1988) hold that principal licensure should be tied to the doctorate of education degree. Sergiovanni (1991) opposes that view, stating that requiring the doctorate would only increase friction between principals and lesser-educated classroom teachers. Achilles (1988) suggests a specialized master's degree just for school administration, to be earned only after an individual receives an initial master's degree in some area of classroom instruction.

Hallinger and Murphy (1991), Churchill-Witters and Erlandson (1993), and Clark (1989) list perceived problems with current methods and programs of principal preparation. Common themes among these sources are admission standards, absence of adequate recruiting programs, and curricula that are often less than rigorous.

Efforts at the reform and reorganization of principal preparation programs are underway. Bridges (1992), Hill and Lynch (1994), Glatthorn (1994), Harris (1994), and Leithwood (1995) describe programs on local, state, and national levels that are moving toward more experiential coursework for prospective school principals. Hill (1995) and Worner (1997) describe efforts to make recruitment of high quality principalship candidates a reality.

Principal licensure has come under scrutiny in several states. Kowalski and Reitus (1993) pronounce the 1980s as a time of nationwide reform in principal licensure, with 28 states having revised their professional certification process and 16 others considering revisions by 1985. The Education Commission of the States (1990) described specific needs in a study of seven states. Kentucky (Prickett, 1990) and Virginia (Worner, 1997) have implemented plans that cause local school systems to work with area universities to target and train high quality principalship prospects. Tennessee has implemented an endorsement system that issues only a temporary license upon completion of a university degree program. Newly hired principals must then complete a three-year on-the-job professional development program prior to full licensure as a professional school administrator (TSBE, 1994).

The principal selection and hiring process is perhaps the only area that is not undergoing rapid change. Miklos (1988) found that few school systems had a written policy for principal selection. Wendel and Breed (1988) found that the process used by most school systems to select its principals had not changed remarkably in 30 years.

Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, and Mitman (1993) asserts that the role of the principal is still viewed by many as that of clerk and manager rather than educational leader. Baltzell and Dentler (1988) found that the process of hiring principals is controlled primarily by the superintendent.

The literature suggests that while there are a number of problems associated with the training and hiring of school principals in Tennessee and elsewhere, reform movements are not only underway, but are achieving results in many locales. It is noteworthy that while the number of schools tends to decrease with time, the number of candidates for principalships has tended to increase.

Statement of the Problem

Why do men and women pursue graduate coursework in principal preparation programs? What are the common experiences shared by these individuals during their time in principal preparation programs? Among those individuals who have sought a principalship unsuccessfully, what are the perceived reasons that they are not holding an administrative job in a school system? Further, how do the opinions of higher education faculty in principal preparation programs and directors/superintendents of local school systems parallel the opinions of classroom teachers on the preceding three questions?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was threefold. First, the study sought to determine why members of the study population enrolled in principal preparation programs leading to

administrative licensure. Secondly, this study sought to describe experiences of members of the study population during the principal preparation program. Further, this study sought to conceptualize and ultimately develop theory pertaining to reasons why members of the study population held administrative licensure yet did not work as school principals.

Significance of the Study

Much research exists examining the principalship and the men and women who hold such positions. Little research exists examining the characteristics of the group of individuals who hold licensure as principals but do not work as such. The literature on the subject is largely anecdotal in nature. Empirical data are all but non-existent. Further, no single strand of theoretical or empirical literature encompasses the entirety of the three broad areas of investigation mentioned in the previous section.

This study added to the body of knowledge concerning individuals who hold licensure as school principals but who, for whatever reason, do not hold a principalship. Further, given the current atmosphere in Tennessee and elsewhere concerning the future of principal preparation programs, collected data from this study may be used in planning or evaluating higher education programs in principal preparation. Additionally, this study may have an impact on decisions made concerning the certification status of individuals holding administrative endorsements but not holding principalships.

Definitions of Terms

The term principal in this study referred to that individual serving as the chief building administrator at a given school. Principal licensure referred to any individual holding at least one valid Tennessee teaching certificate with one or more endorsements administrative endorsements, to include the following: 91, 92, 109, 110, 480, or 481. The term principal licensure was used interchangeable in this study with the terms administrative licensure or administrative endorsement. The phrase principal preparation program referred to any graduate level university program designed to prepare individuals for employment as a school principal. Completion of a principal preparation program did not automatically qualify an individual for principal licensure.

Organization of the Study

This study was organized and presented in six chapters. Chapter one contained the introduction, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, significance of the study, limitations and assumptions pertaining to the study, and definitions of specific terms in the study. In chapter two, a review of literature was presented as an information base for the importance of the study.

Chapter three described the research methodology and procedures used in the study. Chapter four contained a discussion of the subjects who were interviewed, an overview of the development of the interview guide, and a discussion of the development

of NUD-IST nodes used in data analysis. Chapter five contained an overview of comments made at each NUD-IST node. Chapter six was devoted to theories developed in light of those comments.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Chapter two is a review of literature, proceedings of meetings, and personal communications. It is organized looking first at the supply and demand for school administrators, and secondly, at the various training and licensure procedures used for principals. A discussion of principal preparation program reform is included in this section. Finally, chapter two explores the means by which school administrators are identified and hired. A summary is included at the end of the chapter.

Current and Projected Needs for Tennessee School Administration

Amidst the current clamor for school reform, parents, teachers, and legislators often ask, 'If you could do only one thing to improve schools today, what would it be?'. I would hire the best principal I could find and then give that person ample authority and heavy responsibility. A great school almost always boasts a crackerjack principal (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1987).

This quote comes from an introduction by Chester Finn to a report called "The Principal Selection Guide". He underscores the idea that the quality of a school's principal is a strong factor in gauging the quality of the entire school. Edmonds and Fredrickson (1978) studied differences between schools thought to be effective and those that were considered ineffective. He found that one of the essential characteristics of a

successful school was a principal who paid great attention to the quality of instruction. Murphy, Weil, Hallinger, and Mitman (1982) conducted a study of the School Effectiveness Program in Santa Clara, California and concluded that the principal's behaviors significantly impact student activity.

In 1984, Cuban examined research concerning student achievement in a local school system. He concluded that no school can be considered successful without a principal who exerts a "strong administrative presence, an active style, or some trait demonstrating leadership" (p. 129).

In any profession, a question occurs of whether or not the supply of trained, qualified new individuals will be sufficient to replace those in the same occupation who, for whatever reason, leave it. The profession of public school administration is no different. Although being a school principal has only since World War II established itself as a fully organized and distinct profession, it is a profession nonetheless (Sergiovanni, Burlingam, Coombs, & Thurston 1992).

The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) notes that it is imperative that recruitment efforts be launched to attract potential principals from among the best teachers, and that this goal can only be achieved through improved principal preparation programs (NAESP, 1990). However, a 1989 study conducted by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) found that the typical administrator preparation program does not have a recruitment strategy, and, in fact, these programs are "aggressively non-selective" (NPBEA, 1989, p. 10).

The Supply of Administrative Candidates

It may be readily stated that there will always be a demand for effective, qualified school principals, but what can be said concerning the supply? Regardless of the quality of prospective school principals, the sheer number of people pursuing and holding school administration licensure are quite large when compared to the number of available positions. However, the capability of some individuals holding administrative licensure to carry out the duties of a principalship may be questionable. Butterfield and Muse (1993) note that mediocre teachers may be accepted into principal preparation programs, and further, some states do not require any sort of practical experience for licensure.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education Administration (NCEE) asserts that the supply of public school administrators in the United States is at least two and one third times the number of available positions (Bliss, 1988). In a report released nationally in 1987, the University Council for Education Administration went so far as to recommend that at least 300 universities nationwide cease preparing education administrators (University Council for Education Administration Review, 1987).

It may be assumed that the number of administrative positions has remained generally constant, though there may be a tendency toward fewer, larger schools, and thereby, fewer school administrators. Evidence of this is found in a Tennessee State Board of Education study that lists the total number of school principals during the 1988-89 school year to be 1,561 (Poulton, 1990), while in the 1990-91 school year 1,493 principals and 749 assistant principals were serving the K-12 public schools in Tennessee

(Tennessee State Department of Education, Annual Statistical Report, 1991). Having demonstrated that the total number of school principals working in Tennessee is less than 1,500, it is noteworthy that 15,743 people are currently licensed to serve as a school principal in the state (Tennessee State Department of Education, 1996). Of these, some 9,556 are employed by local school systems in some capacity.

Examination of the Over-Supply of Potential School Administrators

The national and statewide abundance of principal candidates is certainly no secret. Why then do universities continue to offer school administrator training programs, and why do educators and others continue to enroll in them? To date, virtually no quantitative research has been done in this area, though speculation occurs both in and out of the literature. The National Commission on Excellence in Education Administration offered some ideas on the subject in a 1988 report. It begins by noting that administrative salaries are higher, and that teachers in most states are given pay increases for graduate hours earned in any discipline, regardless of their teaching assignment. Also, the report notes, the expense and effort necessitated by a graduate degree program in school administration is thought to be less than in other degree programs. Twombly (1989) notes that schools of education are money makers on most campuses, in the sense that they bring in more revenue than they generate in costs.

Don Goss, Assistant Director for Academics of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission, offered some musings on the subject in a February, 1996 personal communication. Goss noted that almost every state university in Tennessee offers a

graduate program in school administration. He contends the reason so many people are getting administrative endorsements, then, may well stem from the fact that the programs are conveniently located.

Employment as a school principal almost universally requires graduate level training and state certification beyond that held by individuals with a bachelor's degree and teaching license. Some educators, then, may simply want to expand their employment options without any intention of initially pursuing a principalship upon completion of a principal preparation program (Bliss, 1988). There is evidence, however, that pursuing administrative training and subsequent licensure without immediately pursuing a principalship may lower the likelihood of an individual's ever obtaining a principalship.

Butterfield and Muse (1993) note that, in Utah, the chances for an individual holding administrative licensure obtaining a principalship drops dramatically three years after obtaining this licensure and having never obtained an initial position as a principal. There are classroom educators, though, who pursue school administration as a career choice. Covell and Ortiz note,

...there are still those in the teaching profession who make attaining an administrative position the focus of their careers. People prepare themselves to become administrators by acquiring experience and undertaking formal study, and once they are appointed to an administrative position, pursue further administrative opportunities within that context (Covell & Ortiz, 1978).

Because State Board of Education policy awards pay to classroom teachers for any graduate hours earned in the area of school administration, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission is affected. In a case of simple supply and demand, Goss notes that since Tennessee teachers have demanded graduate coursework in school administration, Tennessee colleges and universities have supplied it. Therefore a self-sustaining cycle is perceived. Teachers demand the coursework, the schools provide it, other teachers enroll because it is convenient, and the cycle repeats, and sustains, itself.

The fact that most teachers cannot become school administrators is not lost on the THEC. A staff report in May of 1995 includes the following suggested resolution:

Be it resolved that the Tennessee Higher Education Commission recommends to the State Board of Education that it: (1) study the policies which permit additional pay to public school employees for graduate study, (2) consider altering those policies to reward that graduate study which bears directly on the employee's job assignment, and (3) consider salary guidelines that create salary equity between instructional and administrative personnel (Milsap, 1995).

Although it was not adopted, the THEC did consider the matter and vote to send their (then) executive director, Bryant Milsap, to discuss the matter with the (then) executive director of the State Board of Education, Dr. Brent Poulton.

Tennessee Turnover and Training Rates of School Administrators

In Tennessee, the average number of new principals hired annually from 1987 to 1989 was 136 (Poulton, 1990). A January, 1996 conversation with Karen Weeks, a staff member of the Tennessee State Board of Education, confirmed that the new hire rate had stayed roughly the same. She stated that the pattern of school principal turnover might be comfortably projected in the 7 to 10% range for the foreseeable future. With this in mind, the next logical step is to determine the rate at which potential school administrators are being trained.

During the 1994-95 academic year, private institutions of higher learning in Tennessee produced 36 graduate degree recipients with majors in school administration (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 1995). According to Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) staff members, this number is representative of the last four years. Of these, 32 received master's degrees and four received specialist's degrees. All 36 were subsequently endorsed by the TSDE to serve as school principals in Tennessee (THEC, 1995).

The public institutions of higher learning in Tennessee were more prolific, producing an average of 339 individuals each year from 1988 to 1995 who earned a graduate degree in school administration (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 1996). These degrees were either masters, specialist, or doctorates, and, while there is no way to tell how many of them applied for and received administrative credentials from

the SDE to serve as school principals, it may be safely assumed that virtually all of them qualified.

These data show that the various administrative training programs in Tennessee are producing some 350 to 400 potential school principals per year for half that number of openings. This annual addition is coupled with over 15,000 individuals already licensed by the TSDE as school principals.

Degree Programs in Tennessee

As in virtually every other state, persons who wish to become licensed to serve as a public school principal in Tennessee must submit to some type of training beyond a bachelor's degree. At this writing, seven public universities, one private university, and one private college in Tennessee offer graduate coursework in school administration, each leading to various graduate degrees. Table One lists the public universities, the degree programs they offer, the mean number of graduates, and the mean number of majors from the years 1988 to 1995. The source of the data was the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (1996).

TABLE 1

TENNESSEE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OFFERING GRADUATE COURSE WORK
IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION. THE DEGREES OFFERED, MEAN NUMBER OF
GRADUATES AND MAJORS

Institution	Degree	Yearly Average number of...	
		graduates	majors
Austin Peay State University	MAED	22	28
East Tennessee State University	MED	36	49
	EdS	5	4
	EdD	14	78
Middle Tennessee State University	MED	55	106
	EdS	23	41
Tennessee State University	MAED, MED	48	57
	EdD	12	59
Tennessee Tech University	MA	48	84
	EdS	28	49
University of Memphis	MS	5	58
	EdD	4	35
Univ. Tennessee, Chattanooga	MED	15	27
University of Tennessee, Knoxville	MS	11	19
	EdS	4	5
	EDD	8	54

Note. The mean number of graduates and majors is calculated from 1988 to 1995.

The two private institutions that offer graduate coursework in school administration are Trevecca Nazarene College and Vanderbilt University. Trevecca awarded 31 master's degrees in K-12 administration during the 1994-95 school year. Vanderbilt University operates masters, specialist, and doctoral programs, but does not publish its numbers of graduates or majors to the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (Tennessee Higher Education Commission, 1995).

The Endorsement and Graduate Degree Process

It is instructive to review concepts and data concerning the scope of graduate programs in school administration and their relationship to the process of licensing and/or endorsement as a school principal. Griffiths, et al. (1988) hold the opinion that the master's degree in education administration should be dropped, and that the degree leading to licensure in school administration should be the doctorate. The National Policy Board for Educational Administration recommends that the doctorate in educational administration be a prerequisite to national certification and state licensure for school or school system administrators (NPBEA, 1989). A move in that direction would almost certainly lower the number of potential principalship candidates.

Other, opposing schools of thought exist on this subject. Sergiovanni (1991) notes that if teachers finish their training at the master's level, and school administrators go on to reach the doctoral level, a "hidden hierarchy" (p. 524.) will exist causing friction between teachers and principals. Better, he says, to have school administrators who are closer to being teachers than managers. Achilles (1988) suggests a specialized master's

degree in school administration that could be pursued only after an educator attains an initial graduate degree in another area. Achilles also advocates different types of graduate programs for different types of school administration.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education Administration noted their position to state policy makers in a report entitled “Leaders for America’s Schools”:

Although the schooling of future generations is, in the lofty rhetoric of public discourse, touted as the nation’s most critical responsibility, it is difficult to think of another profession in which screening is so poorly executed (Griffiths, 1988).

Hallinger and Murphy (1991) found principal preparation programs to generally have four common characteristics:

1. Prospective principals are self selected.
2. Few leader recruitment programs are associated with principal preparation programs.
3. Selection processes are something less than systematic.
4. Program admission standards are notoriously lax. Almost everyone who wants to prepare for the principalship is able to do so.

A compounding problem is the assertion that university training had been easy, boring, and only intermittently useful to principals (Churchill-Witters & Erlandson, 1993). Clark (1989) offered three generalities concerning school administrator preparation programs:

1. Literally hundreds of institutions are preparing administrators and the quality of these institutions varies markedly.
2. Few students pursue professional studies on a full-time basis, with the resulting loss of a true residency program.
3. Many institutions have low admissions standards and weak instructional programs, a condition that does not exist in prestigious professions.

If, then, principal candidates are indeed self-selected and the program is somewhat less than rigorous, the casual observer may surmise that many of those enrolling in principal preparation programs are looking for the least difficult means of increasing their salaries by earning graduate hours, and may have no intention of ever working as a school principal. This is problematic in light of Thomson (1993), who points out that professional school administration rests on two legs - the quality of standards required for licensure and the relevancy of content and skills taught in preparation programs. Achilles (1988) suggests that higher education may be the venue for reform and improvement in principal preparation, saying:

Higher education is in a position to lead the change in principal preparation.

The university has a special domain of competence - the domain of intellect. The university should engage in research, theory development, intellectual development, and intellectual development and delivery of training ... they should align the content and processes of administrator preparation program with what administrators "do", and with what theory says they "should do" (p. 50).

Principal Preparation Program Reform

Mojkowski (1991), in a national report on the restructuring of schools, concludes in part “Leadership matters. As schools restructure to share decision making authority and responsibility, new forms of leadership will be essential. Administrators will need to prove that leadership in partnership with teachers (p. 59)”. In the same study, the following principles were set forth as being necessary as part of the design requirement for any new program of preparing school leaders:

1. Programs must be based upon the state of the art in adult staff development programs.
2. The syllabus must present a coherent developmental program tailored to the functions and competencies called for in leading restructuring schools.
3. The setting must provide real and important occasions for the exercise and development of competence in restructuring.
4. Processes which themselves embody the principles of restructuring must be employed. (Mojkowski, 1991)

Efforts toward reform of principal preparation programs are underway. At Stanford University, a system called Problem-Based Learning has evolved (Bridges, 1992). Lecture and discussion class format has given over to scenario based instruction in which students deal with realistic situations rather than absorb theory only. According to the proponents of this system, three major goals are addressed. First, the development of administrative skills is stressed. Secondly, students must develop problem solving

skills. Lastly, students should acquire a knowledge base that underlies the administrative process (Bridges, 1992).

Hill (1995) outlined the benefits of a cohort approach to the principal preparation program at East Tennessee State University. Despite the increased workload on departmental faculty in implementing the concept, the “cohort model adds richness to graduate experience and has extensive ripple effects” (pg. 189.). There was also evidence that principals trained in this way used the approach in subsequent administrative positions they held.

North Carolina completely overhauled its system of principal preparation over a two-year period in 1993 and 1994. The 12 existing part time master’s degree programs in school administration were scheduled to be phased out and replaced by seven full time programs. Institutions desiring to offer a degree program in school administration were invited to develop proposals for such programs and submit them to the University of North Carolina’s Board of Governors. Two significant requirements were listed. The program must be full time over a two year period, and the program must involve at least one year of full time internship (Glatthorn, 1994). Louisiana has adopted an internship program for newly appointed principals that involves sixty hours of structured training sessions over a two year period (Harris, 1994).

The Danforth Foundation program for the Preparation of School Principals, begun in 1987, has been part of an effort to more fully develop potential school leaders (Leithwood, 1995). Gresso (1989) described the nationwide program as having an

emphasis on experiential learning coupled with classroom learning. Decisions concerning the actual Danforth program curriculum are made jointly, says Gresso, by a program committee comprised of school district and university representatives.

Leithwood (1995) conducted a summative study of Danforth program completers. It was found that the experiences most valued by the completers were the opportunity to work in a cohort type environment with other prospective school leaders, and the internship experiences offered through the program. It was also determined that the professional colleagues working with Danforth completers found that they were generally demonstrating effective leadership ability.

Bjork and Ginsberg (1995) have shown that true restructuring of preparation programs is more likely in emerging educational administration departments. In August of 1992, the University of Arkansas opened its Leadership Academy for Arkansas educators. It is based on a "whole village" (p. 524.) approach, so named due to the practice of building a coalition among universities, professional associations, corporations, educational cooperatives, and the Arkansas Department of Education for the purpose of training school leaders (Harris, 1993). Memphis State University initiated a completely new program of principal preparation based strictly on new mandates set by the Tennessee State Legislature. Because no program was in existence prior to that time, it was impossible to adapt existing coursework and curricula to the new mandates. Rather, a "seamless, state of the art" (p. 3.) program was built from scratch (Valesky, Markus, & Nelson, 1993).

Klauke (1988) describes an Oregon program called Selecting and Training Administrative Recruits (STAR). The program involves instructional units, taught by experienced school administrators, followed by week-long practicums custom designed by each program participant. Interested candidates then complete internships and workshops in educational leadership. Anderson (1989) notes that performance simulations, case studies, and games offer promise as teaching strategies. Anderson also recommends various field-based programs, along with various school district sponsored programs. This has been put into practice at Butler University in Ohio, where the Experiential Program for Preparing School Principals attempts to solidify theory and practice. Field based internships that assimilate administrative course content with the actual activities associated with school leadership become central components of the program structure (Smith, 1990). Lynn (1994) contends that graduates of innovative programs are in high demand and can impact the schools in which they work.

Shibles (1988) notes that the lack of sound student recruitment practices may be the most serious problem facing principal preparation programs across the country. He encourages development of active cooperation between universities and the public school systems to identify potential school leaders.

Means by which prospective principals are recruited into preparation programs are under revision. Hill and Lynch (1994) describe a cooperative program between the University of Central Florida and Orange County Public Schools. Potential recruits are identified through principal nomination, an application, and interviews, rather than

traditional means of self-selection, Graduate Records Examination scores, and grade point averages. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) recommends that multiple procedures and sources of information about potential candidates be utilized in the process of selection, rather than allowing any one information source to dominate the selection decision (Wendel & Breed, 1988).

Virginia Polytechnic University and State University has addressed the problem of self-selection of principalship candidates. Wayne Worner, then professor in the principal preparation program there, explained in a January 1997 personal interview that students enrolling in the Virginia Tech program must be nominated by their peers and endorsed by their local superintendent prior to admission. The program certifies only 25 new principals every two years, a reduction from the more than 100 per year certified prior to initiation of the new admission standards.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration has issued recommendations concerning the actual faculty of principal preparation programs. They recommend that quality be ensured by:

1. Strengthening faculty recruitment, selection, and staff development programs,
2. Maintaining a critical mass of at least five full-time faculty members,
3. Provide the bulk of teaching, advising, and mentoring through full-time faculty who have demonstrated success in teaching, clinical activities, and knowledge production in the field, and
4. Ensuring a student-faculty ratio comparable to other graduate professional

degree programs on campus (NPBEA, 1989).

Principal Licensure Procedure

Nationally, the last decade has witnessed much discussion and movement toward reform in principal certification procedures of many states. In a study conducted in seven states, three issues emerged as particularly critical and significant:

1. Statewide policy has the greatest impact on school leadership when it specifically addresses principal licensure standards and procedures.
2. There is a need to define roles and responsibilities clearly for the school principal.
3. Recent efforts at educational reform have yet to provide new concepts of the school principalship (Education Commission of the States, 1990).

In what is hailed as the first program of its kind in the nation, Kentucky has implemented an overhaul of its system of identifying and licensing principals. Prospective principals must complete a post-master's degree program, pass a written test, and then complete an internship (Prickett, 1990).

Tennessee has restructured the means by which individuals may obtain licensure as school administrators. In its Policy for the Principal in Tennessee's Schools, the Tennessee State Board of Education (TSBE) states plainly the policies previous to November, 1991 were inadequate for preparing principals. At that time, the TSBE adopted new licensure standards to be implemented in phases. By fall of 1994, all the phases had been completed and the new standards were in effect (TSBE, 1994).

The new policy for principal licensure is a detailed document that can be summarized in three key components. First, individuals who desire licensure can no longer “accumulate coursework - often poorly sequenced - at one or more institutions and apply directly to the state for endorsements (p. I.)”. Applicants must now submit to a graduate program of study administered by an approved institution of higher learning, and ultimately obtain the endorsement of the institution for licensure. Secondly, a written test must be passed. According to Amy Gallagher, Director of Teacher Licensing for the TSDE, no statistical records are kept on individuals taking this test. Prospective administrators seeking licensure may take the test as many times as they like, until a score satisfactory to them is attained. They may then voluntarily have their score sent to the TSDE for inclusion in their documentation for subsequent principal licensure.

Having received endorsement from a university and passed the written test, the candidate may receive licensure as a beginning administrator. Then, and only then, can he or she be employed as a principal. Next ensues the third component, that being a period of customized professional development. This development phase is constructed by the beginning principal, the superintendent of schools, the institution where the principal pursued coursework, and a mentor principal (TSBE 1994).

Upon satisfactory completion of the professional development phase, the superintendent and the institution jointly recommend licensure as a Professional Administrator. This recommendation is made to and granted by the TSDE (TSBE, 1994).

It should be noted that all persons holding an endorsement in administration or supervision, supervision of instruction, or as a principal issued under existing or previous licensure standards as of August 31, 1994 will be issued a Professional Administrators license automatically (TSBE, 1994).

On a national scope, the 1980s saw certification of teachers and school administrators become a popular target for state-level reformers. By 1985, 28 states had revised portions of their professional certification procedures, with 16 others considering reforms (Kowalski & Reitcus, 1993). Much discussion occurred about alternative certification for school administrators, which was and is generally unpopular among educators. Those who seek non-traditional paths to entering the practice of school administration usually cite one or more of the following reasons:

1. There is a perceived or real shortage in the number of licensed professionals in a given state, and the problem can be solved most easily by allowing access to individuals who have not pursued traditional preparation,
2. school administration training programs largely stress managerial tasks that many not trained in education have mastered,
3. school administration training programs simply are not necessary (Kowalski & Reitcus, 1993).

Lovette (1996) contends that a major problem with principal preparation programs is that students are required to amass a wealth of knowledge about theoretical models and other material that is neither useful or functional. He asserts that a practical leadership

model is adaptable at once to both education and the business world. In that same vein, Finn (1988) contends that any search for principalship candidates ought not be limited to graduates of administrator preparation programs but be extended to other fields. He continues that troubling evidence suggests too many principals in schools today are inadequately prepared for the job.

Available literature seems to point to a national state of transition in principal licensure. However, the procedures used in identifying and hiring principals seem to be somewhat static. A discussion of this is found in the next section.

Hiring Practices and Procedures

Yet another component of becoming a school principal is the application and hiring process. A study conducted in Maine found that superintendents are not as equitable as they could be when hiring principals and in fact show an apparent disregard for the level of education or knowledge of candidates (Godin & Mithoefer, 1988). Cunanan (1994) showed that in education women are outnumbered by men four to one at the administrative level. Banks (1995) contends that there is no justification for the small numbers of women and minority educational leaders. A study conducted in New York State suggests that the small number of women hired as secondary school principals may be due to an insufficient number applying for the position and to continued sex discrimination (Bonuso & Shakeshaft, 1982).

Many school systems, including the majority of those in Tennessee (Neymann, 1986), still use the traditional four-step path to the position of principal described by Wendel and Breed (1988):

1. Prospective principals self-select from the teacher ranks.
2. They complete a graduate program in education administration.
3. They meet state certification requirements.
4. They maneuver through a district selection process that was often loosely organized, intuitive, and based more on perceptions of administrator image rather than administrator skills.

Baltzell and Dentler (1983) conducted a nationwide study of factors and procedures used to choose local school leaders. They found that the nation's principals are selected in a process "ridden with chance" (p. 2). Vacancy announcements were rarely publicized widely, and the person selected for the job was typically someone, a teacher or a coach, who "stays late to help" (p. 2). Compounding the problem is Scheetz's assertion that minority administrators were almost impossible to find and hire (1995).

Baltzell and Dentler (1983) found that the process of hiring principals was controlled by the superintendent. Upon being interviewed, these school officials implied that educational leadership formed the basis for selection, but these same individuals could not satisfactorily explain what this meant. Baltzell and Dentler further discovered that even the principals themselves did not know exactly why they were hired into their

positions. Castetter (1992) found that the method a superintendent used to staff administrative positions depends on the administrative organization. If the system is small, this responsibility is generally administered by the chief executive personally. If the system is large, the responsibility will likely be delegated.

Criteria for Principal Selection

Miklos (1988) discussed the procedures used in local school systems for selecting principals. He found that some systems were aware of recommended procedures and followed them. However, other systems he described as having no regular procedure, saying "One of the major discrepancies between ideal and actual practice is the lack of written policy or explicitly stated practice" (p. 54.). Wendel and Breed (1988) found that what was considered the body of knowledge on effective principal selection was being virtually disregarded, with the process being used was the same as 30 years ago.

Anderson (1988) also found fault with the process. He concluded that patronage, favoritism, familiarity, and good impressions frequently carried more weight than merit in the selection process. Socolow (1978) found that school administrators come from traditional pools of candidates, even when changing conditions support broader recruitment strategies. Castetter (1992) stated that "the selection process is subject to extensive internal and external influences that frequently neutralize organizational efforts to employ personnel on the basis of merit (p. 150)".

Why is this? If the research is clearly in evidence and readily available, why does the patronage system hold sway time and again over a more objective means of selecting

school administrators? Ralston (1995), in a study of superintendent's hiring practices of school principals in Tennessee, found that most superintendents see principals as "clerical managers rather than as leaders of an innovative educational community" (p. 69).

Further, only 50% of the superintendents in his study even had a written list of qualifications for a candidate for the principalship. In a historical analysis of the principalship, Beck and Murphy (1993) assert that the job of principal has evolved to meet the clerical needs of schools, and nearly all the pressures that have come to bear over the past 150 years have reinforced the administrative nature of the position.

Apparently, these attitudes are well entrenched. Consider the following quote, and note the date of publication: "It is primarily the function of the superintendent to think and to plan and to lead; it is primarily that function of the principal to execute plans and to follow and to support (Cubberly, 1923)".

Contemporary literature suggests that an evolution in the relationship between principals and superintendents could ensue. Clark (1995) contends that superintendents should teach principals how to conduct environmental scans, dream creatively, build schoolwide objectives and strategies, and assess indicators. Jones (1995) writes that superintendents should seek administrative candidates who "sparkle with goodness and high intelligence (abstract. P.ii)", who have credentials detailing internships and assessment center evaluations, and who are dedicated to helping teachers create a strong learning environment (1995).

As to the question of why superintendents are seemingly reluctant to incorporate current research into the selection processes, West and Rhoton (1994) offer an explanation. Their statewide study of Tennessee school administrators found that research reports are difficult to understand, too technical, and often impractical. School principals expressed a desire for research data and summaries that were published in simple terms. West and Rhoton (1994) did find that administrators with doctoral level training were more likely to use published research than those administrators who had earned only a master's degree.

Summary

This review of related literature reveals some troubling facts about the supply of prospective principals, the way they are prepared, and the means by which they are selected for positions in schools. The available pool of licensed prospective principals is large, perhaps overly so. The casual observer might assert that this is not possible; however, logic dictates that if thousands of Tennessee teachers are pursuing coursework in school administration, they are not pursuing coursework in other academic fields. Stated another way, scores of educators are studying administration, while English, the sciences, history, and the like go wanting. Are the school children of Tennessee being well served by having roughly one third of the teaching corps trained in administration rather than in their teaching area?

A concern exists on the part of higher education about the large number of programs in Tennessee offering training in school administration. It can be demonstrated

that a single graduate program in Tennessee can supply a sufficient number of trained school principals to meet the needs presented by normal turnover and attrition in public school systems. The literature also shows a general feeling of misgiving about the quality of principal preparation programs in general. While there is no empirical evidence that this pertains to programs in Tennessee as well, anecdotes offered by the staff of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission in personal communication would seem to support the allegation that many are, in fact, less than effective.

The question remains, why do Tennessee educators pursue training and licensure in school administration, full in the knowledge that they may never obtain a principalship?

A number of opinions were heard by means of personal interviews. Some educators indicate that many persons simply want additional graduate hours to increase their salaries. The convenience of these programs around the state entices teachers to pursue graduate work that does not require long drives to distant institutions is another opinion. Certainly, many teachers actually want to be school principals, given the right set of conditions and circumstances. Given the large number of potential school administrators in this state, it may be postulated that many are actively seeking an administrative position but cannot find one. Little research has been done in this area, clearly warranting this study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

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

Research Design

Primarily, this study sought to seek reasons why individuals holding principal licensure were not employed as principals. Research hypotheses were formed from a review of related literature and from interviews conducted with officials of the Tennessee State Department of Education (TSDE), the Tennessee Board of Regents, and the Tennessee Education Association. The large number of hypotheses formed yielded a survey instrument of unwieldy size and questionable validity. Therefore, the quantitative research method was abandoned in favor of a qualitative research procedure that involved in-depth interviews with a small number of individuals. No hypotheses were formed as part of the final study; rather, comments made by subjects during interviews were used to form theory.

Analysis of data was performed using the Nonnumerical Unstructured Data – Indexing, Searching, and Theorizing (NUD-IST) software program.

Context for the Study

Individuals selected to participate in this study held administrative licensure during February, 1996, and were currently employed by a Tennessee public school system. A list of potential subjects was obtained from the Tennessee State Department of Education. This list identified a total of 9,558 individuals. To strengthen and lend credence to any theory developed, additional individuals were identified and interviewed. Among this group were a school system director, a member of a graduate school faculty involved in principal preparation, a member of the Tennessee Board of Regents staff, two administrators of the Tennessee State Department of Education, and a member of the legal staff with the Tennessee Education Association. Although the additional individuals mentioned were interviewed, only the interviews with the school director and higher education faculty member were transcribed. The other interviews were used as part of the literature review.

Individuals who held administrative licensure but who were not employed by a public school system were excluded from the study. This group totaled an additional 6,185 people, meaning that the total number of people licensed as school administrators in Tennessee was 15,743. The TSDE has no mechanism for purging names from its list of licensure holders; therefore, any list of endorsed individuals not currently employed by a school system would include a great many people who were retired, deceased, or had moved away. Further, the licensure list also contained names of individuals who were currently working as school principals. As the study concerned itself only with

individuals who were not school principals, the TSDE Directory of Public Schools (1993-94) was used to segregate principals from non-principals among those on the list.

Subject Selection

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) note that the open nature of qualitative study precludes the ability to know either all of the meaningful selection criteria or the number of interview sessions necessary to gather adequate data. The selection strategy evolves as the researcher collects data. Glesne and Peshkin further note that thinking in terms of important stratification criteria offers a good initial approach to the problem.

The review of literature pointed out that school system superintendents, and more recently, directors of schools, exerted the greatest influence over the selection of school principals. The process of sample selection began by selecting at random a director/superintendent of a school system, a classroom teacher meeting the criteria for inclusion as a subject in this study, and a member of a graduate school faculty involved in the preparation of school principals. The graduate school faculty member had formerly served as a school superintendent. This pilot study technique, suggested in 1992 by Glesne and Peshkin, served to revise the study technique for the remaining interviewees.

An additional number of individuals within the population were selected and interviewed until clearly emerging themes surfaced. These individuals were selected by means of a stratified purposeful sampling, as described by Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996). This technique involved identifying variations within the population and intentionally including members of these groups in the study. The review of literature in this case

suggested that gender may have an impact on employment as a principal. Therefore, individuals of both sexes were sought for inclusion in the study.

A strategy was adopted to determine when a sufficient number of interviews had taken place. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four criteria for determining when it is appropriate for data collection, and, therefore, subject interviews, to end.

1. Exhaustion of sources - it has become clear that little more can be gained from further discussion and interview.

2. Saturation of categories - eventually, the categories used to code data appear to be definitely established.

3. Emergence of regularities - there are sufficient consistencies of occurrence of phenomena that the researcher can develop a sense of what construct occurs regularly or only occasionally.

4. Overextension - the researcher finds that new information is far removed from the central core of viable categories that have emerged

Interview Strategy Development

Glesne and Peshkin (1992) write “in the interpretive tradition, the interview can be the sole basis of a study...the opportunity to learn what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry” (pp. 64-65). Kahn and Cannell (1957) describe interviewing as a “conversation with a purpose” (p. 149). Marshall and Rossman (1984) note that

qualitative researchers should explore a few general topics for gaining perspective, but should otherwise respect how the interviewees “frame and structure” (p. 82) their responses.

In forming the initial questions, the purpose of the study section was brought to bear. It was felt that three distinct time frames existed in the experience of group members. First, there was that period of time in which the individual made a decision to pursue training toward principal licensure. Then ensued the period of time during which the individual received training, and ultimately an endorsement allowing them to become a principal. Lastly, the time frame from the point they received endorsement until the present is considered.

Questions for the first time frame, that time prior to embarking upon a training program, were suggested by the review of literature. First, it was necessary to simply ask why they had decided to pursue licensure. Then, it was deemed necessary to broach the subject of self-selection of principalship candidacy versus recruitment of candidates by the university or school district.

The literature suggests an ongoing reform movement in principal preparation is underway. It was thought necessary, therefore, to inquire about the perceived effectiveness of the preparation program the interviewee had completed.

The literature is somewhat silent on experiences shared by individuals during the period of time after that individual completes a training program. Initial questions about this period were general in nature. A list of questions asked of the first three interviewees

is included as Appendix A. Appendix B includes additional questions suggested by initial reactions to the first three interviews. In addition, each interviewee was asked to complete a short questionnaire at the conclusion of his/her interview. A facsimile of this questionnaire is included as Appendix C.

Assimilation and evaluation of data collected from the initial three interviews served to refine the questions used in subsequent interviews. Bogdan and Bilken (1992) likened qualitative data collection to a “funnel” (p. 154), meaning that data should be collected widely, pursuing different subjects and issues, in order to develop a research focus. Having done this, based on what is feasible to do and of interest to the researcher, the scope of data collecting may be narrowed.

Lancy (1993) urges that the process of developing theory begin early on so that disconfirming evidence may be sought. He called this “grounded theory” (p. 243) and suggested that it be the focus of data collection during the remainder of the study.

Data Gathering

When interviews were conducted on school premises, permission for doing so was secured from the superintendent/director of the school system in which the subjects were employed. A letter was used as a means of introduction and to secure permission. A facsimile of this letter is included as Appendix D.

Each person interviewed was asked to sign a consent form. This consent form explained that any comments made could be used verbatim in the study, the names of individuals interviewed would not be divulged, and that any person involved in the study

could choose to withdraw from participation by contacting the researcher. A facsimile of this form is included as Appendix E.

Data Analysis

Interviews were tape recorded and transcribed into the Microsoft Word word processing software program. After being saved in the ASCII format, each interview was transferred into the NUD-IST qualitative data analysis software program. An index system was created within the parameters of the NUD-IST system. Words and phrases used by the interviewees were targeted, indexed, and brought together for analysis.

CHAPTER 4
DESCRIPTION OF THE SUBJECTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE INTERVIEW
GUIDE AND NON NUMERICAL UNSTRUCTURED DATA INDEXING
SEARCHING AND THEORY BUILDING (NUD-IST) NODES

Introduction

This chapter details the data gathering aspects of the study. It is arranged in five sections, including an introduction, a brief discussion of the subjects interviewed, the broad categories of subjects broached within each interview, the development of the interview guide, and the development of NUD-IST nodes during analysis of the raw data.

Discussion of the Subjects

The first subject interviewed was a 53 year old director of a public school system. A male, he had worked in three schools prior to moving into a superintendency/directorship. He had held administrative endorsement some 13 years at the time of the interview. His experience was varied, including a time in private industry, military service, stints as a teacher of science and woodworking, two years as maintenance supervisor of a public school system, time as an assistant principal and principal in a large, comprehensive high school, and as a director of schools. His school administration coursework was taken entirely at East Tennessee State University. This subject was one of two individuals not specifically meeting the criteria as a member of the survey group, but included for purposes of lending support and

verification to data gleaned from others interviews.

The second subject was a 57 year old female with 25 years experience as a classroom educator. Her teaching experience included time in a middle school, and, most recently, as a high school business teacher. She had held administrative endorsement for 12 years in Tennessee. This subject had applied for a position as an assistant principal in a high school, but had not obtained the job. This was her only attempt at obtaining an administrative position during her career, and she stated that she had, at that time, no intention of pursuing another administrative position. This subject had received her administrative coursework at East Tennessee State University.

The third subject was an instructor in the College of Education at East Tennessee State University. He had been in education for more than 30 years, and had taught in numerous public schools. This subject was 59 years of age at the time of the interview. Like the school system director, this subject's inclusion was for purposes of verification of data gleaned from other interviews. He did not hold administrative endorsement in Tennessee.

The fourth subject interviewed was a male vocational teacher currently employed by one of the largest school systems in the state. He had taught in two different high schools within the same system and had held administrative endorsement 13 years. He had never applied for nor sought an administrative position. He had received all of his administrative coursework at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

Subject five was a male with 16 years of experience in Tennessee public schools. At the time of the interview, the subject was serving as a classroom science teacher in the

morning and assistant principal in the afternoon at a middle Tennessee high school of some 900 students. He had held administrative endorsement for 10 years and had interviewed for only one administrative position, the one he currently held. The subject was 42 years of age and had received all of his administrative coursework at Tennessee State University.

Subject six was a female elementary guidance counselor, working exclusively with sixth, seventh, and eighth graders. At the time of the interview, she held three degrees, including the doctorate of education. She had worked in three separate schools, and had held administrative endorsement in Tennessee more than 16 years. She had never applied for an administrative position, nor was she seeking a position at the time of the interview. She was 48 years of age. Her administrative training had come primarily from the University of Alabama, with some coursework at Tennessee Technological University.

The subject of the seventh interview was a 45 year old female with 20 years experience. She was teaching eighth grade English at the time of the interview. This subject had held administrative endorsement for five years but had never applied for a principalship. She stated that she had no plans to apply for any administrative position. This subject had taught in three different schools. Her administrative coursework had come entirely from Tennessee Technological University.

The eighth subject was a middle school librarian with 25 years experience. A female, she had held administrative endorsement for 15 years. She had never applied for an administrative position, had never desired one, and had no plans to pursue such a

position in the future. She was 48 years old at the time of the interview and had received her administrative coursework at Tennessee Technological University.

Subject nine was a female with 15 years teaching experience. She had taught in three separate schools and was currently assigned to teaching seventh grade science. She had held administrative endorsement for four years. She had never worked as an administrator, never applied for an administrative position, and had no plans to do so. She was 38 years of age and had received her administrative coursework at Tennessee Technological University.

The tenth subject had taught in two separate schools, and had 20 years total teaching experience. This individual had worked in private industry for a number of years prior to entering the teaching profession. He had held administrative endorsement for six years at the time of the interview. At the time of the interview, the subject was assigned to science and vocational teaching duties. He had applied for one administrative job, not received the job, and subsequently left the school system. He was not actively seeking an administrative position at the time of the interview but would not rule out doing so in the future. He was 46 years old and received his administrative coursework at Memphis State University.

The eleventh subject was a male with 31 years experience as a high school science teacher. He had held administrative endorsement in excess of 16 years and had had numerous opportunities to move into administration, but had considered making application for only one position. He did not get that job, nor had he ever held any administrative position whatsoever. He was not seeking a principalship at the time of the

interview and had no plans to do so in the future. He was 50 years old. His administrative coursework had come from Tennessee Technological University.

The twelfth subject was a 70 year old female. She could not remember how many years total she had worked in education, had worked professionally in five schools, and substitute taught in several more. This subject had worked in a university psychology department as a graduate student. She had held administrative endorsement for more than 16 years in several states. At the time of the interview, she was a full-time graduate student at East Tennessee State University. Her administrative coursework had come from Appalachian State University, with some coursework from the University of Wyoming. She had never worked as a public school administrator, but expressed a desire to do so in the future.

Subject thirteen had taught in several public schools for 25 years. She had never worked as an administrator, nor had she ever applied for a job as such. At the time of the interview, she was assigned to remedial mathematics classes on the secondary level. Other work experiences included military service in the United States Navy. She was 55 years old and was certified to teach music in addition to mathematics and administration. Her administrative coursework was received at East Tennessee State University.

Subject fourteen had taught on the middle and high school levels in two public school systems. Part of a university cohort program, she had received administrative certification in 1993. This subject had applied for a number of administrative positions with no success. She was 39 at the time of the interview and had received her administrative coursework at East Tennessee State University.

Origin of the Interview Guide

Each subject was interviewed privately, with the sessions recorded on audiotape. For purposes of continuity and to facilitate the smooth flow of each interview session, an interview guide was used. This guide consisted of a series of questions that developed and evolved as the number of interviews increased. The subjects had some prior knowledge of the reason they were being interviewed, but no specific knowledge of the questions they would be asked. Follow-up discussions were held with subject one and two for the purpose of discussing theory in development.

It was decided to divide the areas of investigation into three broad areas, showing the following:

1. The reasons subjects decided to pursue administrative coursework and endorsement, along with their rationale for selecting the graduate program they attended.
2. The experiences subjects had during their time in graduate school earning a degree and/or administrative endorsement. This section of the interview also dwelled on their retrospective of the worth and validity of the training they received.
3. The subject's experiences after receiving their administrative endorsement, including questions about barriers individuals may face when seeking the principalship.

In short, the three broad areas included the time prior to the subject's entering a

principal preparation program, the time during the program, and the time after program completion. This strategy was thought logical in that, simply by being a member of the focus group, all subjects would have in common these three periods of time to discuss during an interview. Shown below are the six initial questions used as an interview guide.

1. What reasons would you give for initially deciding to pursue administrative endorsement?
2. Why did you pick the school you went to for training needed to get your license?
3. Please describe your experiences during the time you were in the principal preparation program.
4. Do you feel that completing coursework toward your administrative endorsement helped you in ways not associated with being a school principal?
5. Since receiving your endorsement, what have you done, if anything, about becoming a principal?
6. What barriers do people face when attempting to obtain employment as a principal?

Development of the Interview Guide

Three subjects were interviewed using the initial six questions. For purposes of obtaining the broadest possible scope of comments, the subjects were specifically selected. A school director, a professor of higher education, and a classroom teacher

holding administrative endorsement were interviewed. Data gleaned from conversations held with these individuals were also used in the theory development phase of the study. Based on their comments, question one was expanded to include the questions shown below.

- 1a. Do you feel like you knew what you were getting into?
- 1b. Why did you choose administration/supervision over something in your teaching field?
- 1c. If you knew then what you know now, would you have pursued administrative endorsement?
- 1d. At the time you began graduate classes toward administrative endorsement, how serious would you say you were about becoming a principal?
- 1e. How big an impact was increased pay for hours earned on your decision to pursue administrative licensure?

Question two was expanded to include the questions shown below:

- 2a. Could you imagine a scenario that would have enticed you to go to another school?
- 2b. Was the cost of getting your endorsement ever a factor in your decision making process?
- 2c. If there had been an extensive, long-term internship involved in the program, would your decision to enroll have been effected?

Question three was expanded to include the questions shown below:

- 3a. What positive experiences stand out?

- 3b. What negative experiences stand out?
- 3c. In what ways could the school improve on that it did to prepare you for the principalship?
- 3d. Were you in a planned program, a cohort group, a series of random classes...describe the program.
- 3e. Do you feel you were given sufficient opportunities for practical experiences?

Question four was expanded to include the questions shown below:

- 4a. Could your time have been better spent pursuing a degree or coursework in some other area?
- 4b. Which would have been more beneficial to a school; teachers obtaining administrative coursework or coursework in their teaching area?
- 4c. There is a shift toward 'teacher as leader' curricula in various graduate schools. What is your opinion of this trend?

Question five was expanded to include the questions shown below:

- 5a. What sort of things might an individual do to make him/herself a stronger candidate for a principalship?
- 5b. What does it take to become a principal in this (your) school system?
- 5c. The pool of licensed principalship candidates in Tennessee is quite large. How does someone go about making themselves stand out in the crowd?

Question six was expanded to include those questions shown below:

- 6a. Do race or gender come into play?
- 6b. Is age a barrier?

6c. What makes a good principal?

Development of the NUD-IST Nodes

The Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorizing (NUD-IST) software package is basically a database program that allows the user to select passages of qualitative data and ‘tag’ them for purposes of comparison to other passages of data. Primarily a system of indexing, this allows researchers to categorize data, compare it in different ways, and identify common threads of thought running through interviews.

Much like a plant sprouts limbs at areas known as ‘nodes’, NUD-IST allows the user to investigate interviews by building a system of ‘nodes’. A node is nothing more than an idea or topic of discussion that came up during an interview. Each time a particular topic arose, that passage in the interview was tagged with a number corresponding to a particular node. If a new concept presented itself, a new node number was created so that the concept could be indexed.

Four nodes were created for indexing the 14 interviews conducted in this study. As the taped discussions were transcribed and indexed, additional sub-nodes were created until the final ‘tree’ was created, consisting of 46 nodes. A complete listing of nodes used in this study is in Appendix F. In the broadest sense, the nodes reflected the questions asked in the interview guide. This was not a rule, only a guideline, as the following discussion will illustrate.

Development of Node 1 and Descendants

Node 1 indexed the concepts gleaned from discussion of experiences the subjects had prior to enrolling in their respective principal preparation programs. It was broken down into nine sub-nodes, with one sub-node having an additional sub-node. Subjects were asked to generally reflect on the reasons why they had decided to pursue administrative licensure. Responses varied, but several subjects reflected on how serious they were, or thought they were, about becoming principals at the outset of their graduate programs in school administration. The question was asked, 'how serious were you about becoming a principal?', and, in later interviews, subjects were even asked to rate their level of desire on a scale of one to ten. Node 1-1 was created to index concepts and quotes from this line of discussion.

The creation of Node 1-2 stemmed from the review of literature and comments made by the initial three subjects interviews. Questions supporting this node were directed at the impact increased pay had the subject's decision to pursue graduate school classes and advanced degrees. Comments varied on this subject, but one common thread involved the Tennessee Career Ladder system. Interestingly, nowhere else did the subject of supplemental pay from any source arise. In light of this, no additional nodes were created concerning salary increases in order to keep all comments together.

Node 1-3 was created after several interviews were finished and transcribed. Practically all of the subjects spoke of one or more individuals who had played a large part in their decision to embark upon a program of principal preparation and/or remain in one. Nowhere in the literature does this phenomena appear, and it only comes up in

conversation with the subjects when the transcripts are observed closely. During interviews, this subject was broached firstly with the question, 'Do you feel like you knew what you were getting into...?', and then, 'Did you begin your coursework with someone you knew, or by yourself?'. Depending on their responses, subsequent, probing questions were asked in order to further define their thoughts on the subject.

Node 1-4 was created to index responses to the rather direct question, 'Why did you choose administration over something in your teaching field?'. The question itself originated during the three primary interviews, where subjects had spoken at some length about the rationale underlying teachers' decisions involving what sort of graduate coursework they may choose to pursue. Several additional nodes were developed as a result of comments made at this point.

Node 1-5 was created as a result of comments made when subjects were asked why they had chosen administration over degrees or coursework in their teaching field. The initial three subjects had stated that increased job options might be a factor. Subsequent interviews supported that theory. No direct questions were asked concerning job options; this node simply collected and indexed comments that were made along those lines as they were stated. However, the question was asked, 'If the same university offered the same degree for coursework in your teaching field, would you have pursued that instead?'. A number of comments made relative to that question related to their desire for increased job options and were indexed at this node.

A related topic necessitated the creation of Node 1-6. Several subjects spoke of the advanced degree earned as a wholly different factor from the administrative

endorsement they had added as a result of their graduate studies. Conversations during several interviews led to asking subjects directly, 'Were you more interested in the degree or the endorsement?'. A daughter node was created at this juncture. Node 1-6-1 indexed responses to the question, 'Is supervision/administration an easier route to a degree than coursework in some other fields?'. This node could have easily been attached to other nodes, and in fact, several comments made at this point are cross indexed to other nodes.

In latter interviews, subjects were asked if they thought they were leaders on their faculty. They were also asked if they thought they would make good principals. Both of these subjects were discussed during the segments of the interviews dealing with why they had chosen to go into administration for their graduate coursework. Node 1-7 was created to index any responses that supported the idea that these individuals desired to develop their own leadership skills and potential.

In interview six, the subject stated bluntly that she pursued administrative endorsements in order to increase her status among her peers. This had not appeared in the literature or in earlier interviews but was discussed by this subject in such a way as to warrant additional investigation. Subsequent subjects were asked about the topic of status and its relevance to the decisions they had made. These comments were collected and indexed at Node 1-8.

Development of Node 2 and Descendants

Node 2 and its daughter nodes were created to index all topics of conversation related to the subjects' experiences during the time they were in graduate school

completing the coursework necessary for administrative endorsement. Without question, different graduate programs in school administration have different advantages and disadvantages. The literature, as well as comments made in early interviews, suggested the creation of Node 2-1 for indexing comments made about the subject's choice of schools. The question was asked, 'Why did you choose the school you did for the training you received?'. This opened a number of topics of discussion, but the central issue of why they chose one school over another is indexed at Node 2-1. A question was included in the interview guide that asked subjects to specifically comment about the cost of going to graduate school. Comments made at this query were numerous, necessitating the creation of Node 2-1-1 to index them.

Early interviews and concerns arising from the review of literature brought out the topic of administrative internships in the interview guide and subsequently in the interviews. Node 2-1-2 was created to index all comments made when the subjects were asked if their decision to enroll in a program was influenced by whatever internship requirement may have been in place at the school in which they enrolled. Subjects were also asked if they believed a long-term internship was a practical requirement in a given principal preparation program. Comments made at that point were found to be germane to node 2-1-2 and to several other nodes, as well.

Comments made at Node 2-1 suggested the creation of an additional node. Several subjects spoke of the location of the school, or of the penchant of that school to provide off-campus instruction. Node 2-1-3 indexes concerns and ideas subjects expressed about convenience and the physical location of where the coursework was

offered.

A series of questions was asked probing the subjects' thoughts on the overall nature of the program they had completed while earning graduate degrees and/or administrative endorsements. They were asked to comment on the positive aspects of the program, any negative aspects they could identify, in what ways could it have been improved, did it reflect real world situations, and other areas. Two nodes were created to index their comments. Node 2-1-4 indexed comments about the total program offered by a given institution, while Node 2-1-5 indexed specific comments about the quality of instruction.

The concept of experience versus training came up repeatedly in the literature and in the initial interviews. Node 2-2 was created to index comments made about opportunities they were offered for practical experience in school administration during their graduate program. Subsequently, Nodes 2-2-1 and 2-2-2 were created to index comments about experiences the subjects had gathered on their own and as part of their program of instruction, respectively.

The advent of cohort programs in school administration is found throughout the literature. Institutions throughout Tennessee are using the cohort system in different ways, and the interview guide included questions designed to delve into this. Subjects were asked to describe the program as to whether they were in a cohort, a planned sequence of classes, or just random classes. Their comments are indexed at Node 2-3.

As the interviews transitioned from questions dealing with the program they completed to their experiences since the program, the subjects were asked to generally

comment on how they would improve, given the chance, the program they had undertaken. Their comments on this, as well as comments made on principal preparation programs in general, are indexed at Node 2-4.

A subsequent concept, suggested by curricular modifications made at East Tennessee State University, was included in the interview guide. Subjects were asked to consider the shift toward teacher as leader programs in graduate schools of education. These programs, they were told, were designed to increase the ability of classroom teachers to serve as faculty leaders, while not necessarily preparing them for school administration. Their comments were indexed at Node 2-5.

As a final question before moving into their post-program experiences, the subjects were simply asked if they felt their time could have been better spent pursuing coursework in some other areas. Most of the comments fit into other nodes, but some of them were indexed at Node 2-6.

Development of Node 3 and Descendants

Node 3 and its daughter nodes indexed comments made about the experiences and activities of the subjects since completion of their principal preparation and graduate degree programs. There is ample literature on the subject of getting a job as a school administrator. The question was put to them, 'What does it take to get a principalship in your school system?'. Comments are indexed at Node 3-1. A daughter node was created at Node 3-1 to index comments specifically related to 'politics' and the role it played in the process of finding a job as a school administrator. Created due to

comments made by the first three subjects and in the literature, it was designated Node 3-1-1.

Subject three, a professor of higher education, noted the unwillingness to relocate as a barrier to securing an administrative position. By no means exclusive to education, this phenomena is seen in many fields of professional endeavor. Questions were included in the interview guide that led the subjects to discuss the possibility of relocating and of their school system's penchant for looking within or without for new school administrators. Comments on this subject were indexed at Node 3-1-2 (relocation), and at Node 3-1-3.

Node 3-1-4 brought together comments made when subjects were asked what steps they had taken toward getting an administrative endorsement. This node was heavily indexed, and the comments were quite varied, though no daughter nodes were created here. Obviously, the two subjects who had already worked as school administrators were not asked this question, though comments they made germane to the subject were considered when developing theory within this subject.

Node 3-2 opened the subject of professional growth experiences the subjects may have had since completing their principal preparation programs. It proved difficult to create daughter nodes at this juncture, due primarily to the widely varied experiences of the subjects. Node 3-2-1 was created to index comments made when questioned about practical experiences in school administration. Because the subjects were not school administrators, this question brought few notable comments. Node 3-2-2 was created to index comments made concerning professional development activities that the subjects

may have participated in outside of their school setting.

Questions were asked that were designed to initiate conversation about the barriers people face when attempting to secure employment as a school administrator. Comments made as to the simple availability of jobs were indexed at node 3-3. Several daughter nodes were created. The literature speaks of race as a factor, prompting both the inclusion of that topic in the interview and of the creation of node 3-3-1 to index comments made on the subject. Similarly, node 3-3-2 was created to collect and index comments made on the impact of gender in the process of obtaining an administrative position. A comment made by a female subject during one the early interviews prompted the inclusion of age as a topic of conversation during the interviews. Comments about age as a barrier were indexed at node 3-3-3. The concept of “politics” is difficult to define and may well mean different things to different people. Comments made concerning this subject and its effect on the hiring process were indexed at node 3-3-4. The likelihood of a school system looking within or without for new principals seemed to be a logical extension of the subject of politics. Comments made about this subject were indexed at node 3-3-5.

Questions were asked that probed the relationship of an administratively endorsed teacher and the specific school that he or she worked in. Subjects were asked if a school benefited more from an individual with administrative training or graduate training in their teaching area. Node 3-4 was created to collect and index comments made in this area. Several subjects were further asked if teachers should have ‘some’ administrative training. Comments made were indexed at node 3-4-1.

Subjects were asked to reflect generally on their experiences in the principal preparation program they completed. The question was posed, 'was the program beneficial to you in ways not associated with the classroom?'. Comments made to this query were collected at node 3-5.

Throughout the interviews, a number of the subjects offered personal views about school administration that were of interest but not specifically related to topics indexed in nodes 1 through 3. Still, they added insight into why given subjects responded in certain ways to certain queries. Node 4 collected comments subjects made when asked to discuss the overall qualities of a good principal. Several interviews actually included the directive to pick a single word that best described the most important quality of a school principal, which some were unable to do. Node 4-1 indexed comments made when the subjects were asked if they thought they would make a good principal. Node 4-2 indexed comments made by subjects who were asked who provided the leadership in their schools.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter five is a discussion of the comments made during the 14 interviews conducted during the course of this study. It is presented in three sections, beginning with an introduction, a discussion section, and a section devoted to illustrating theory.

Discussion of the Interviews

Topics Pertinent to the Time Prior to Enrollment in a Graduate Program

This study sought, among other things, to determine why it was that people pursued administrative endorsements and, in conjunction, graduate study in school administration. The school superintendent (subject one) expressed flatly that ‘they didn’t know what they were getting into’ – be that as it may, it did seem that the simple desire to be a school administrator did not stand out as a primary reason. The desire to increase their job options seemed to be a greater factor. This is admittedly a fine distinction, yet some direct quotes bear this out. Subject seven stated that it was ‘just common sense to get into some other area’. Subject ten said that ‘after twenty years, I might need a change’, while subject nine ‘felt like it would be an advantage in case I wanted to be an administrator someday’. Subject twelve mused that ‘I just like administrative things’.

Clearly, these are not the comments of people who are driven to become school administrators. Several of the teachers were asked to reflect on just how serious they were about becoming school administrators at the outset of their principal preparation programs. Some were even asked to use a scale of one to ten, with ten being the most serious. A small minority expressed great desire; subject six said 'very serious, but I was much younger then', with subject eleven stating 'quite serious at the time, but later selected other options'. Comments such as these were quite the exception rather than the rule. Subject seven said 'scale of one to ten....probably a five....not a distinct possibility'. Subject two said it was 'just time to get a master's....', while subject ten said he pursued the administrative route to a graduate degree 'just in case I wanted to get out of the classroom'. Subject ten also stated that after completing his training 'the job was much tougher than I had realized'. There seemed to be an evolution of thought among all the subjects from the time they began the endorsement process through the time of the interview. It was as if the process of gaining the endorsement, the scope and sequence of the graduate coursework, and perhaps even the greater maturity brought on by the passage of time had cooled their desire to serve as school administrators. The feeling was inescapable that their desire had once been greater than at the point when the interviews took place. Still, none of the teachers interviewed expressed a resignation to finish their careers in education as classroom teachers. Said subject ten, 'I did go to school three nights a week, and I did it for about a year and a half, and that was tough on you, but I think it was worthwhile....I still may use it'.

The review of literature strongly supported the notion that many individuals pursued graduate coursework in school administration because they could increase their salaries by doing so. The subjects were asked bluntly, 'Why did you pursue administrative endorsement?'. Interestingly, none of them cited increased pay as their first reason. Some mentioned money as they continued their discussion, but several had to be asked if money had anything to do with it before commenting on the subject. It is possible that the subjects simply did not want to mention money, because several had strong comments on the subject. Subject nine said 'it was the main reason.', while subject seven said 'it had a large, large impact'. Subject two said 'oh, definitely....big, big benefit'. Subject one felt that most people think 'I'll just get a master's...for pay purposes', and in fact, subject three, the higher education professor, said that many people felt they 'might as well have the extra salary as part and parcel of the advanced degree'. A minority of subjects were less enthusiastic about the financial rewards of pursuing graduate coursework. Subject five said he was 'more interested in the career move', while subject eight said that increased salary mattered 'very little, because I was already career ladder three'. The Tennessee Career Ladder system offers teachers a means of earning additional pay for increased duties and responsibility. In most cases the remuneration for career ladder activities was greater than the amount of increase pay realized for earning graduate degrees. This may not have been a fair comparison, because increased pay for degrees earned was given after a degree was conferred, while career ladder funds were generally paid for extended contract work performed by teachers on a per diem basis. Another factor is, at this writing, the career ladder system is

accepting no more new applications and will be phased out through attrition of teachers currently in the system.

The idea that teachers pursued graduate coursework and degrees to earn high pay seemed well grounded but led to a further question. Why did they choose school administration or supervision as a route to graduate degrees rather than something else? Specifically, why did they choose administration over something in their teaching field? Comments were varied and less than conclusive. Subject eight said 'I had already completed another certification', while seven said she 'thought it would just be more challenging'. Subject two said 'everybody else had their masters....I just didn't want them to get ahead of me'. The literature points to a conception that coursework in school administration is somehow less rigorous than coursework in other areas. The subjects in this study were in varied disagreement. A comment by subject eleven summed up the general feeling of many other subjects by stating 'there's probably people who find it easier because they may be more interested in the content'. Subject ten said 'I got my master's in curriculum and instruction, and it was tremendously easier than administration and supervision'. Subject twelve felt that the difficulty someone might have with a particular graduate program 'depends on the person's aptitude for different subjects'. Uniformly, the subjects seemed quite thoughtful on this subject, as if they had each given it consideration before the interview.

Questions were asked that attempted to explore other reasons an individual would pursue graduate coursework in school administration. Of interest is that only one subject, number eleven, stated that it was an attempt at 'self improvement'. This same subject

also stated that he was a good teacher, and as an administrator he could 'do a better job for more students' than as a classroom teacher. It is notable that he was the only subject who mentioned a relationship with students in conjunction with administrative endorsement or coursework. It may be surmised that for whatever reasons an individual obtains administrative degrees or endorsements, his/her relationship with students is not among them.

One of the subjects, when asked how serious she was about becoming a principal, stated that 'none of us really planned to be an administrator'. When pressed, she related the story of how she had approached a local university about bringing a graduate program to her locale. She was told that if enough students committed to a program, the university would make a commitment, and further, that the best program would be one in school administration. Apparently, this program had shown a propensity toward taking coursework off campus in the past. The subject had already organized a group of teachers, all on her faculty, and was representing them to the university. They had informally decided that they wanted a master's degree and that the major area of that degree was of less importance than the degree itself. Seven people earned a graduate degree in school administration as a result. None of them were working as a school administrator at the time of the interview. An arrangement of this type was unique among the subjects interviewed, though it did lead to the investigation of a related phenomena. When looking through the transcripts of all interviews, it was found that without exception all of the subjects had identified a support person or group that had encouraged or assisted them in their graduate degree program. In later interviews, it was

asked if an “I will if you will” atmosphere existed within the peer group the subjects were in. Strong evidence exists for this. Subject two stated that she pursued a master’s because everyone else in her department had one. She also remarked on the value of the network of fellow educators she had cultivated during her time in the graduate program. Subject ten remembered that she had enrolled in a principal preparation program chiefly because ‘I was urged by others’. This same subject recalled a number of times that being in a cohort group during the graduate degree program both aided and accelerated her progress. Subject five, who has since been made a high school principal, recalled that ‘a gentleman who was (working in) the same school started a program with me’. Subject twelve said that she had enrolled in at least one class at a university where the cohort program existed. She was the sole non-cohort member of that class and was convinced that her grade had suffered because of that one fact. Subject ten stated that he had no prompting by anyone to enroll in a graduate school, and went through the program on his own with little or no assistance. Curiously, he then stated that the assistant principal at his school took virtually every graduate course with him, and that he really enjoyed the relationship he had built with this man because of the experience. Another man, subject eleven, said that he had gone through a program alone, mostly by means of self study. He later revealed that the first nine semester hours he had earned were in conjunction with a program that his entire fellow faculty members had participated in, and that they had in fact urged him to continue on for administrative endorsement. Though not clearly supported by comments made during interviews, it seemed that men were less likely to admit to having a support person or group than were women.

Topics Pertinent to the Time Subjects Spent Enrolled in a Graduate Program

The second broad division of the study dealt with experiences the subjects had during their principal preparation program. All of the subjects, it was found, were part time and were working as full time public school teachers while enrolled in graduate school. Initially, subjects were queried about their choice of schools. A few commented about the quality and reputation of the program, but the compelling factor seemed to be the location of the school and the convenience of participation in a given program. Subject fourteen simply said she enrolled at a certain university 'because I lived down the street'. Subject eight said she would have 'loved to been able to travel' to another school, but 'because of (the university's) satellite program....I mean we're within five miles of a community college (where the satellite courses were offered)'. Subject ten said 'I went there because it was convenient, it was close, and really it was economical'. Subject two said 'it was a good university, and number two, it was very close'. Subject nine said 'that's where I got my bachelor's degree from, and it's just more convenient for me to go there'. Subject three, the graduate school professor, said 'I suspect convenience is the most common reason for selecting (a school)'. The related topic of recruitment was broached. Subjects were asked if they were recruited in any way by the university in which they attended graduate school. Subject eleven summed up the typical answer by simply saying 'no'. Subject ten noted that 'they knew of my work at (the school where he worked), but didn't show any favoritism at all'. Subject five said 'once they (the university) found out that there was some interest so far as some of us made contact with them...they encouraged us to come on'.

Financial questions were discussed during the interviews. Tuition costs were of some importance to some of the subjects, but not all. Subject fourteen, when asked if tuition cost had an effect on her decision making process, said 'no, I don't think it was. I think it was reasonable'. However, subject twelve said 'at the time, it definitely was a factor'. Subject eight noted 'we're equidistant between (school X) and (school Y), but there's a difference in the money. A tremendous difference in the money'. Subject eleven considered his choice of a lower priced university and reasoned 'knowing I had a family to support, I couldn't take another \$3000 to go to another university where I could go there for six or seven hundred'. Some of the subjects offered that the differences among various graduate school programs in school administration were not significant to the point of necessitating paying higher tuition, extensive travel, or relocation. Subject seven said 'I have one boy at (school X) and another at (school Y), the education you get at both schools is every bit as good as some of the higher priced schools.'

An additional financial consideration dealt with internships associated with the principal preparation program. Typically, graduate schools at most universities involve full-time study. Graduate programs in education, in which most students are part time, are the exception. The question of internships and the potential logistical and financial hardships they may place on a given student was discussed with all the subjects. When asked about a mandatory internship that involved unpaid leave from their jobs, subject eight replied in a way typical of most subjects; 'I would not have been able to. No. No. Because a classroom teacher, or if you have to work, there's no way that you can basically afford to take any extended time off, even though you may be allowed to take

time off with the system.’. However, most subjects agreed that it was a valuable and necessary part of their training in school administration. Subject eleven said ‘I think that an experience...you have to have the experience...’. Subject fourteen said ‘I feel that it was a crucial part to the whole program’. In a classic “Catch 22”, the subjects saw the necessity of a practical internship experience, yet felt that it would cause a great hardship on graduate students who were also working full time to support themselves and a family. An insight was made by subject nine, who said ‘I couldn’t do that. It would take too long to recoup the money that you lose’. The inference is that the additional money made by a school administrator, or by someone who had simply earned a graduate degree in school administration, could not offset the money lost by taking an unpaid leave of absence from their jobs.

In a transition from convenience and financial aspects of graduate programs, the subjects were asked about the total program quality and the quality of instruction they experienced while a graduate student of school administration. Taken as a single body of data, the transcripts of interviews pointed out that the subjects did not view their programs collectively, but as small individual pieces characterized by the professors they had learned from, the experiences they had shared, and the coursework they had completed. Comments such as subject fourteen’s, ‘I remember one class in particular...’ were common. A majority of the subjects mentioned the courses in school law they had taken and were very animated about their value to educators at all levels. A common thread woven throughout the interviews was the mention of specific instructors they had had. There was little mention of the university, less of the graduate school department in

which they were enrolled, but much said about the people who conducted the classes they were enrolled in. Subject twelve went so far as to say 'the best thing was the personality of my instructors, their knowledge, and the way they presented it to us'. Many subjects mentioned professors by name and described their methods. Further, not all comments were complimentary by any means, but they were still directed toward individual instructors rather than programs, departments, and schools.

The topic of practical experiences within the graduate programs brought mixed comments from the subjects. Generally, those interviews were less than enthusiastic. Said subject eleven, 'a lot of role playing, and inbasket outbasket type things, but not as effective as real world situations'. Subject five noted 'in a couple of courses there was a requirement that you got your local principal to allow you to do some administrative activities for a week, or a day here and a day there.'. Subject nine noted that a 'positive thing was being able to visit other schools in other counties in one course', but as far as practical experiences 'we weren't really given an opportunity'. Subject seven said 'to see how it is done in other places, you know, I probably would have put more emphasis on that'. Subject six remembered that 'I worked during the summers, and worked in different schools, in summer schools and things like that', and that 'as far as a full-blown internship, that wasn't happening'. When asked, none of the subjects had sought practical experiences in school administration outside of their coursework.

The majority of the subjects noted that they had signed up for courses as they had become available, rather than as a planned sequence of courses or a cohort program. Subject eight remembered that the university required a minimum of eight persons to

enroll before guaranteeing a course would be offered. This seemed to produce a sort of cohort program in that the same people would get together and enroll to make sure they would get the classes they needed for graduation and subsequent administrative endorsement. Subject eleven noted that his 'advisor had helped him develop a plan....I looked up the university catalog, and said, OK, these are the courses that should help me get there, and everything was approved'. Subject twelve noted 'I was self advised, and I pretty much pegged them out and took a course at a time and then finally just kept checking off until I got all the certification courses necessary'. He noted that this took place in the early 1980s. Subject ten said 'I was on my own. By myself.'. Subject seven took part in a planned program as an individual, while only subject fourteen was in a fully planned cohort program.

The subjects were asked how they would go about improving the program they had completed. Comments were mixed but generally revolved around the concept of more practical experience and more useful information. School law, school finance, and communication were mentioned specifically as areas of great importance. Subject ten noted that 'more important than content are the process skills, process of decision making'. Subject six noted that courses should start 'becoming more realistic on what the expectations are for administrators', while subject ten stated that what was needed was 'an introduction course on administrators that really informed them exactly what responsibility administrators really have.'. While still on the subject of curriculum, subjects were told of the existence of teacher as leader programs at various schools, and asked to comment on that development. Subject eight said 'I think it's a plus', while

subject nine said 'I don't think that would work out. I can't see that making a difference'. Subject seven said 'there isn't a teacher up here who isn't already a leader', with subject fourteen adding 'I think leaders are born. I mean, you can develop leadership skills, but there has to be something there first'. Subject six felt 'that's what they've done to me over the years anyway'.

Topics Pertinent to the Time after Completion of the Graduate Program

The third division of the study dealt with experiences after completion of the program. First, the subject of getting a job as an administrator. It is noteworthy that when asked straight out what it took to get a job, no two subjects responded in exactly the same way. Subject fourteen thought that 'being involved in different aspects of the school that provide the opportunity to be seen...' was important. She also admitted 'I don't know, because I've tried three or four times'. Subject eight simply said 'endurance', while subject five said 'moving into Sumner County, because its larger and there's more turnover'. When asked about the subject of politics, most agreed that it played a part in the process. The school superintendent interviewed noted that 'sure, politics plays a part, but you try to keep it out of it'. Subject eleven said that 'there is some good old boy, good old girl deals...'. Subject five was actively pursuing a principalship, noting 'if and when our current principal decides that he's had all the fun he can stand, then I may at that time elect to move into that position. And hopefully have prepared the groundwork to be the one who would be selected.'. Subject four said 'I have noticed that politics have entered into (it) a great deal'. He also noted 'if I can sum

it all up, it's just that, a feeling of individuals that happen to be in the right spot at the right time.' Comments made by the superintendent seem to bear that out when he noted that some individuals are clearly wrong for certain positions but would be fine for other school principalships. He commented 'someone that could possibly do an excellent job in one school...would be a failure in another community.' Subject nine held a different opinion, saying 'you want the truth? You have to kiss up to board members, and people in politics'.

The comments made by subjects who were full-time teachers left the impression that when they considered moving into an administrative position, their views and concepts were limited to the administration within the school where they worked. When asked if they were willing to leave their school for an administrative position, most said no. Subject eleven said 'I wouldn't want to leave Fentress County, because that's where my home (is), and I didn't want to relocate.' Subject ten said simply 'I would stay in my school'. Subject fourteen noted that she would be willing to go to another school, though made subsequent comments illustrating her overall dissatisfaction with the total program at that school. Subject three, the higher education professor, discussed this phenomena, saying 'they are placebound, finding themselves in a setting where principal selection is more a political issue than it is a quality issue. I think there are people who simply don't want to go where they need to go to get that first job' and further, 'it may well be that in a more remote location, (there may be) ten jobs for which there are only four or five qualified and competent people.' Correspondingly, subjects were asked if their systems were more likely to look within the system or outside for new administrators.

Surprisingly, many said outside. Subject eleven noted that ‘there is a fair shake given to people who are inside the system and people who are outside the system.’. Subject ten said that ‘my system not only looks elsewhere in the state, but in other states.’.

When asked what steps they had taken toward becoming a school principal, most admitted to not only taking no steps but having little desire to do so. Subject four said ‘to be honest with you, I’m pretty stagnant. I’m very happy with what I’m doing.’. Subject seven said ‘I do not want to be a principal. Nor will I.’. Subject seven said ‘...I think being an administrator would be no fun....and that would be the chief reason I wouldn’t do it.’. Subject eight said ‘they aren’t paying enough money’. Some were seeking principalships with varying degrees of energy. Subject five noted ‘I’ve tried to let people know who would be making those kinds of decisions that I would be interested in that position when the time comes’, referring to the principalship of the school at which he is on the faculty. Subject two, who had held endorsement for several years, noted ‘I applied for an assistant principalship that was open here last year, but I didn’t get it.’. The only subject who was actively pursuing a principalship was fourteen, commenting ‘I’ve interviewed six or eight times. I’ve come close twice.’. In a closely related topic, several subjects commented on some experiences they had since earning administrative endorsement and the impact these experiences had on their potential as administrators. Subject one, the school superintendent, noted the importance of practical experience, saying ‘you help in the office, participate in some of the activities, some of the day to day operations as a volunteer.’. Subject two, who had filled in many times as an assistant principal at her school, noted ‘there are so many things that you don’t get just in the

classroom'. Subject six said 'I've taken a long look at it, and I've seen a lot of principals that are very sick, gotten very old and wrinkled very fast, and decided that maybe that wasn't the way I wanted to make extra money.'. In terms of professional development activities specifically geared toward leadership development or continued training as school administrators, none of the subjects had pursued experiences beyond what they had received as graduate students.

Considerable time was spent during each interview discussing the perceived barriers that exist between an individual seeking employment as a school principal and actually obtaining a job doing so. Subject five noted 'the biggest thing is just, the positions are not there for them to take', though he also noted, 'it takes a special personality to get to the point where you are considered qualified for the position'. Subject one, the school superintendent, supported this latter view by stating 'we have six to ten candidates (for administrative job openings), same ones year after year, and the likelihood of their every becoming principals is very nil'. Subject one also noted, quite emphatically, that the principalship is 'the toughest job on earth, bar none'. Subject three, the higher education professor, noted 'some people, when placed in a situation where they had to do those things a principal do, they couldn't perform.'. He also noted a barrier to employment was an 'unwillingness to move' on the part of many candidates.

Racial issues and their relevance as a barrier to employment were discussed. Bearing in mind that all 14 subjects were Caucasian, none of them saw race as a real barrier to employment as a school principal. Subject seven noted 'I can tell you right now, if there were a black teacher apply, or a black administrator apply, they would get

the job.’. Subject twelve, who had lived and worked in several parts of the United States, commented on racial barriers by saying ‘not so much as it used to...it depends, it plays a part in where they can be a principal more....’.

The topic of gender as a barrier to employment brought more mixed comments. Subject seven stated simply ‘I don’t think gender plays a role.’. Subject eight said ‘I hate to say this, you almost have to be a male. You have to be a good old boy.’. Notably, subject eight’s school system currently employed more female school administrators than male. Further, the three most recent individuals hired into administrative positions were female. Subject ten said being a ‘female is not as important today....I feel like, in administrative positions as it used to be....’. Subject three, the professor, noted ‘slowly but surely the choices are based on competence rather than other factors.’. Subject two offered several noteworthy comments, saying ‘(women) seem to be more accepted on the elementary school and middle school level than on the high school level’, and further, ‘I think it’s more accepted that men can handle discipline better than women, or maybe they can be more authority figures or something.’. Subject two, being a mother of two grown children, also offered ‘I think men are freer to pursue the higher education (necessary for administrative endorsement) earlier in their lives than women are because women feel more responsibility to the family and to the children. Hill and Ragland (1995) support this argument and note that women often will not relocate to an administrative job in order to avoid losing a support base of extended family or friends helping with child rearing.

Age of the principalship candidate did not seem to weight heavily as a barrier to employment among the subjects interviewed. When queried on the subject, none made any mention of a maximum age, though subject one did say 'unless you're in excellent physical condition, you better stay away from it.'. Subject fourteen said 'I think in a certain way you can't be too young'. Though responses on the topic of age were vague, all seemed in agreement that a principal should have spent time as a classroom teacher. Subject seven's comments were typical: 'Do you need to be a classroom teacher before being an administrator? Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.'

While still within the area of experiences after earning administrative endorsement, subjects were asked to comment on the benefit a given school might realize from teachers holding administrative endorsement. The responses were complex and warrant thorough examination. Will a school realize more benefit from a teacher with administrative training or additional graduate training in his or her teaching field? Subject fourteen said 'administrative training may be helpful, but maybe not directly helpful when dealing with kids...'. Subject seven seemed to support that notion by saying 'for me personally, my time would have been better spent in guidance, cause that's what I do. That's what I do in the classroom.'. Subject one, the superintendent, commented on his own experience as a graduate student of administration and as a classroom teacher by saying '(administrative classes) would probably not have helped as much as some subject area classes.'. Subject eight said 'teacher training in teacher areas. Administrative training, or leadership might be a second, but we need expertise in the area.'. Subject ten felt that teachers should pursue 'graduate degrees in their teaching areas, definitely,

because most of those (teachers) don't even want administrative jobs. The opinion that teachers should pursue subject area experiences rather than administrative training was not, however, unanimous. Subject eight noted that 'the training is not wasted', with subject five saying 'it (administrative coursework) should be mandatory. I think it would shed a whole lot of light on a whole lot of teachers if they could get into administrative side and see what happens.'. Subject fourteen said 'people having their degree in administration and supervision might help the school administration more'. Subject six was decisive in saying 'I think administrative training (is more beneficial). Without hesitation. I can give you a teacher's manual (and you can be a teacher)'. Subject nine was less than committal in saying 'I don't really think it makes that much difference...an advanced degree in the area of education, it doesn't matter what certification, I think it's going to improve your teaching.'. The concept of some administrative experiences as part of any graduate program in education seemed attractive to some subjects, though not overly so. Comments such as subject ten's 'some would, yeah. It would help the management of the classroom.' and subject twelve's 'definitely, some' were typical.

Finally, subjects were asked if the administrative coursework they had completed was beneficial to them in ways not associated with their work as a teacher, or with schools in general. Typically, comments were positive. Subject six noted that it 'made you think about things. You've got to know yourself before you can go out and help somebody else. You've got to know your own values.'. Subject eight further noted that it 'allows you to be a little more assertive, a little more independent', with subject two commenting 'it helped me with community things that I've been involved in.'.

Throughout the interview process, subjects were asked to comment on what they thought the qualities of a good principal might be. Though not specifically part of the study, insight may be gained from the responses. Of great moment is the fact that no two subjects gave the same answer, though several are quite relative to others. The following are short quotes gleaned from transcribed interviews describing what a good principal should be: 'current, capable of sifting the fads from the good stuff' 'knowing the curriculum' ' somebody that has a little compassion' ' being able to delegate responsibility....being able to say 'I made a mistake'' 'character' 'good common sense...to take a stand, to be in authority' 'be a good listener, as far as parents are concerned, not try to solve a problem before they know what the problem is' 'leadership...that's the secret...having someone think its their idea, and then getting it done' 'jack of all trades....politician, counselor, mediator, lawyer' 'somebody willing to stand up for their teachers and do what's right. Regardless' 'I would stress personal behavior' 'leadership ability' 'someone who will run out schools within the parameters that have been established', and finally, 'just because I can line a football field doesn't mean I'm going to be a good administrator. The last eight subjects were asked who provided the leadership in their schools, with all answering that the principal did. Several, however, commented that much leadership was provided by faculty members. When asked if they thought they would make good principals, the answers given were all in the same vein as the one offered by subject fourteen, who said 'I still think I have the potential to....yeah'.

CHAPTER 6

THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND COMMENTARY

Introduction

Chapter six is devoted to development of theory based on data gleaned from the 14 transcribed interviews and four non-transcribed interviews used in the literature review section. The chapter is divided into two main sections, the first being theory development and the second section devoted to commentary and recommendations based on any theory developed.

Theory Development

The order and format of this section was based primarily on the Purpose of the Study section outlined in chapter one. There were three primary questions posed. First, why do individuals enroll in principal preparation programs? Secondly, what shared experiences and insights may be described concerning their time in a given program? Lastly, what reasons were expressed by the subjects of this study for not holding an administrative position?

Theory Regarding Graduate School Enrollment and Principal Preparation Programs

Though difficult to quantify, there seemed to be a culture among public school educators that places an expectancy upon individuals to obtain a masters degree. Comments from two individuals offered insight: a high school teacher said that the other

teachers in her department already had their degree, and she didn't want them to get ahead. A middle school teacher said that a group of teachers there, including herself, wanted a 'master's degree, any master's degree'. Several other reasons were expressed by subjects as a basis for deciding to pursue a graduate degree, but the undercurrent of an expectant culture was there.

Theory – a culture exists among K-12 educators that places an expectancy upon teachers to pursue a master's degree as part and parcel of their professional activities.

In Tennessee and other states, teachers obtaining a graduate degree, no matter what the subject matter, receive an increase in pay from their local school systems for their efforts. It is interesting that no subject in this study mentioned this as the first reason for pursuing graduate coursework or for pursuing administrative licensure. It may be speculated that this omission was deliberate: teaching is an altruistic profession, the knowledge of which may well have prevented some subjects from citing so crass a reason as a pay increase as their primary motivation for pursuing a graduate degree. However, it is also true that once the topic of money was broached by the interviewer, most subjects reacted positively and without hesitation that the pay increase was a major factor in their decision to enroll in graduate school. A related phenomenon was the Tennessee Career Ladder system. Some of the subjects were already receiving supplemental pay for extended contracts due to their career ladder status. These contracts are universally more lucrative than the pay increases realized from advanced degrees, and may have had an

impact on a teacher's tendency to place importance on increased pay for earning the master's degree. This suggests a question – does the amount of pay increase realized due to earning an advanced degree have an impact? Also, do other avenues of supplemental pay, such as career ladder contracts and coaching supplements, weigh in an individual's decision to pursue graduate coursework? Comments and insights were not sufficient to develop theory in this area, though the impact of money cannot be overlooked in the whole.

Theory – increased income realized from earning a graduate degree is a positive factor in an individual's decision to pursue graduate coursework and degrees.

It was noteworthy that when asked why they pursued graduate degrees and/or administrative licensure, there was virtually no mention of students in the interviews. It may be speculated that their decision-making process was based on personal wants and needs rather than any benefit that might be realized by their students, present or future. This must be tempered by the fact that the individuals in this study had earned degrees in school administration and endorsements in school administration rather than degrees and endorsements directly related to classroom instruction. It is possible that individuals holding masters degrees in, say, reading education might state that their primary reason for pursuing that degree was to enhance their skills as a teacher. This, of course, is speculation and will not be stated as theory.

It must be stated that cultural expectancy and pay increases were not the only reasons cited for pursuing graduate degrees. It must also be emphasized that a group of teachers holding another sort of graduate degree might have vastly different reasons.

It seems apparent that a master's degree and an endorsement in school administration are considered to be separate entities by the subjects in this study, even in light of the fact that one is part and parcel of the other. While teachers generally felt that they were expected to get a master's degree, there was no expressed expectancy for earning additional endorsement in any area, much less school administration. Why then do individuals choose school administration? One answer might be convenience. University graduate schools offering degrees in school administration leading to principalship endorsement exist in all geographic areas of Tennessee. No individual in the state lives more than a two-hour drive from any school offering such a program. Further, off-campus and distance learning programs offered by many universities have increased accessibility to educational leadership coursework. One teacher noted that she had approached a university for the purpose of establishing an off-campus cohort for several teachers in her system. She was told that the department most likely to work with her was educational leadership. The inference is that virtually any graduate program related to education would have been suitable for their purposes: the program in education leadership offered the greatest convenience and was ultimately selected. Another teacher stated she had selected a given university because it was just down the street from her house. Almost universally, the subjects of this study had attended a graduate school convenient to their home or school system. It is also notable that the

subjects interviewed saw little difference among universities offering graduate programs in school administration. In fact, the tuition cost of the school seemed a greater factor in their decision-making process than the reputation of the school in general. Convenience, then, must be a factor.

Theory – the physical proximity to a university offering a graduate degree program in educational leadership leading to endorsement in school administration is a strong factor in an individual's decision to pursue such a degree. Individuals are more likely to enroll in schools and programs convenient to their locale.

Additional discussion of the above theory is warranted. It has been demonstrated that graduate coursework in school administration is conveniently located to practically all Tennessee educators. It may also be asserted that graduate coursework in other areas of education are in many cases either inconvenient to a given educator's place of work or residence, or not available at all. It is possible, therefore, that individuals have opted for graduate coursework in school administration because few other options have presented themselves.

A line of questioning during the interviews probed the area of administrative coursework versus coursework in a given teaching area. Though the transcripts cannot reflect this, the responses and musings on the part of the subjects were thoughtful, even pensive at times. Generally, the individuals interviewed said that a school could reap some benefit from having faculty members who had completed graduate coursework in

school administration. Little mention of student benefit was made; rather, subjects thought that a clearer understanding of the administrative function of the school would develop as a result of teachers on the faculty having had administrative training. There seemed to be a delineation between those school activities that were directly associated with student learning and those activities that were associated with managing the school as an organizational entity in general. By and large, the subjects within this study said that the school would reap greater benefit from teachers pursuing graduate coursework within their teaching field.

Theory – the graduate training obtained by a teacher on a given faculty is thought to be less beneficial to the school as a whole than would graduate training obtained by that same teacher in their respective teaching field.

Again, this theory must be tempered by the fact that this feeling was neither universal nor undivided. Many subjects asserted that graduate training in school administration was somewhat useful in a school setting, just less so than training more closely associated with a teaching assignment. In a related line of questioning, subjects were asked if they thought their administrative coursework was beneficial to them in areas outside of their work in education. Most agreed that it was, but when pressed to cite specific examples, most had trouble doing so. One subject reflected that it had helped her in her position as an officer in a professional organization she belonged to. Another said that it helped in ‘dealing with people’.

The literature holds that individuals enrolled in principal preparation programs throughout the country as largely self-selected. Efforts at recruiting strong candidates to graduate programs in school administration are being developed. However, none of the subjects in this study had been recruited in any way by the institution in which they received their coursework. The higher education person interviewed as part of this study related a story in which strong candidates for the principalship had been identified in an innovative program based in Virginia. These candidates were carefully screened, placed in a thoughtfully devised program, and given whatever assistance necessary in developing themselves into strong school leaders. Though the program met with success, it was being systematically dismantled, according to the individual interviewed, by the state legislature due to funding constraints and political pressure. Thus, the review of literature, anecdotal evidence from individuals having first hand knowledge of programs in other states and the data gleaned from subjects in this study point to the same conclusion.

Theory – individuals enrolling in graduate programs in school leadership are largely self-selected.

During the interviews it was found that each subject identified at least one other person who had either supported his/her decision to enroll in a graduate program in school administration or had actually enrolled with her/him. This person or group of persons acted as a sort of support group, and was typically from the subject's body of

professional colleagues. The literature clearly shows the benefit of a cohort group while working through a graduate program; the interviews in this study point to the importance of support prior to enrollment. None of the subjects had enrolled in a principal preparation program without prior encouragement from another person. Further, if an informal support structure did not exist at the outset of an individual's time in a program, a support structure was quickly formed among the students in the program. Though not clearly supported by the data gleaned from interviews, it may be hypothesized that a formal cohort structure created by the graduate school actually increases the rate at which group social norming occurs.

Questions arise from this line of thinking. Because individuals in this study strongly identified with a support person or group, do acting school administrators share the same experience? Further, absent a support person or group helping an individual make the decision to enroll in a principal preparation program, would that person have enrolled anyway? This study was not designed to address these questions, but it is possible to project the following:

Theory – individuals identify an informal support person or group that aid them in the decision to pursue graduate coursework in school administration. This person or group may or may not enroll with the individual.

Theory Regarding Experiences Shared by Graduate School Programs in School

Administration Enrollees

The subjects of this study had memory of their time as students of school administration that closely reflect the evolution in principal preparation in Tennessee. Individuals who had held administrative endorsement for several years remembered their graduate programs as disjointed, stand-alone courses that were prescribed by state government. Individuals who had received endorsements in later years remembered structured curricula, including individualized programs of study and participation in formal cohort programs.

The teachers interviewed as part of this study had been part-time students while attending graduate school. Also, the school director interviewed had been a part-time student. This is representative of master's programs in education throughout Tennessee in that typically enrollees are full-time teachers and part time students. It is also typical of graduate programs in education that some sort of practical experience is a requirement for completion of a degree. What then is the relationship between the student who is working full time and possibly supporting a family with the requirement of some type of extensive internship in a graduate school? The literature points to a need for an increase in the quality of and time spent in practical activities for prospective school administrators. However, the subjects interviewed in this study indicated that had a full-time internship been required as part of their graduate program of study, they would have been unable to participate, citing financial responsibilities and constraints as the primary reason. Conversely, the subjects all but universally stated that the graduate program they had completed had included internship or other practical activities that were less than

adequate. Further, when asked what could be done to improve the curriculum they had completed, many stated an increase in such activities would be essential.

Theory – although an increase in internship activities is seen as an essential component in improved principal preparation programs, a full time internship would prevent many individuals from enrolling in such a program.

Much time during the interviews was devoted to the quality and characteristics of the graduate programs completed by the subjects. They seemed generally pleased, and talked extensively about what they had experienced. Several cited courses in school finance and law as being particularly beneficial. Practical experiences and internships were also spoken of as being effective instructional tools. However, when asked about the most satisfying and beneficial aspect of the program they completed, the subjects spoke at greatest length about the relationships they had fostered with their instructors. There was little if any mention of the university in general or the educational leadership department specifically; it seemed that their memories were focused on those individuals who made up the graduate faculties. Reviews of the teaching abilities of these professors were mixed. Two subjects in this study, graduates of two separate universities, cited strong differences between the style of management taught in class and their own personal views on management. Three other subjects related that at least one course they had taken was a complete waste of time due to the inadequacy of their professor. Inversely, all the subjects spoke of experiences that were positive and worthwhile. They

related a sense of admiration for the instructors they had learned from, often mentioning them by name. A review of transcripts revealed that at least one instructor employed by every graduate school of educational leadership represented by the subjects of this study was mentioned in a positive light during the interview process.

Theory – individuals in this study tended to identify with the professors they had had during their course of instruction to a greater extent than the school or university.

In light of the above theory, it may be argued that the single greatest factor governing the outcomes a student realizes from a principal preparation program is the relationship that student had with his or her instructors. It may further be argued that the quality of the instructional staff is of paramount importance to the overall quality of a graduate department of educational leadership, perhaps even more important than the curriculum itself.

Theory Regarding Obtaining Employment as a Principal

Questions were asked of the subjects concerning their desire to actually be a principal when they first began coursework leading to administrative endorsement and their present feelings about pursuing an administrative position. None of the subjects admitted a strong inclination to pursue a principalship at the outset. The overall impression left from the interview sessions was that most of the subjects would have accepted a principalship only if they were initially approached about the job rather than

taking the more proactive position of applying for it. In other words, a job would have to be offered rather than sought. Evidence of this is the fact that only two of the twelve had ever actually applied for an administrative position, and of those two, one of them had applied only once. Two others, both male, had made preliminary inquiries about an administrative job, but had never actually made application or sat for an interview. One comment made was 'it just wasn't meant to be right now'. Dialogue with the subjects suggests that they would consider taking an administrative position only on their rather exacting terms.

Theory – the subjects of this study exhibited only moderate motivation to become principals at the outset of their pursuit of administrative licensure.

Theory – the subjects of this study had predetermined highly exacting conditions under which they would accept a position as a school principal.

The attitudes toward becoming a school administrator had changed since the outset of their pursuit of administrative endorsement, both by the training they had received and by the experiences they had had in the time between completion of their course requirements and the time of the interview for this study. By and large, their desire to become a school principal had lessened, some to the point of no desire whatsoever. Several stated that their time as a student of school administration had awakened them to the realities of the job. Others had observed the principals they

associated with on a daily basis and decided to remain in positions that they perceived were less stressful. The review of literature revealed research maintaining that if an individual had obtained administrative licensure and not been hired as a principal within a three-year period, his/her chances of ever obtaining a principalship diminished significantly thereafter. The findings of that research and the data gleaned from interviews conducted in this study may be related. The following may be postulated:

Theory – after having received administrative endorsement, the subjects in this study exhibited progressively diminished desire to become a school principal.

The subjects were asked to comment on what it took to get a job as a school principal, as well as any perceived barriers to obtaining a principalship. They seemed quite convinced that age and race were no real barrier. Gender was considered by a minority to be a factor in the pursuit of an administrative job, but not to an extent that any theory might be derived. On the topic of what it took to get a job, no two subjects, including the director of schools and the higher education professor, gave the same answer. The subject of politics was discussed, though no exhaustive definition of the term was arrived at. The school system director and the higher education professor both maintained that some individuals who repeatedly applied for administrative positions were simply not viable candidates, and would likely never be hired as principals. One of the other subjects said it was only a matter of being in the right place at the right time.

Another subject said it was all a matter of 'kissing up to the right people'. No clear attitude toward politics as a hindrance or aid emerged, save to say that it was a "factor". How can this "factor" be quantified? In reality, the political position of a candidate for a school principalship is as varied as the people who apply for such jobs. No two persons know the same people, are friends with the same people, are related to the same people, or count the same people as enemies. If, then, political maneuvering is a factor in the process of obtaining a principalship, the process is different for every person involved. No theory can be derived from this.

It became clear after interviewing several subjects that they tended to think of working as principals in terms of their own school. The concept of applying for a job at another school, or in another school system, did not seem to come readily to mind. When asked directly, the subjects almost universally indicated they would rather not leave their own system to accept a principalship. Remarkably, when asked if their school systems were more likely to hire new administrators from within or without the system, most either said that it wouldn't matter, or that the system would actually be more likely to hire an outsider. This triangulates well with the comments of the higher education professor who noted that many viable candidates for principalships do not obtain jobs because they are unwilling to move.

Theory – among the subjects in this study, a major barrier to obtaining a principalship is an unwillingness on the part of the subject to relocate. These individuals may be described as placebound.

Commentary

It must first be vigorously stated that the subjects interviewed in this study are not representative of all individuals who have finished a graduate degree in school administration and/or obtained administrative licensure. Rather, only that segment of the aforementioned group that did not hold an administrative position at the time of the study is represented.

The first major section of this study dealt with the time frame prior to an individual initially enrolling in a graduate program of study leading to administrative endorsement. The factors motivating an individual to enroll were varied, but one consistent factor seemed to be the simple expectancy of their peers that they would at some point pursue a graduate degree of some sort as part and parcel of being an educator. For these subjects, the fact that they had enrolled in a principal preparation program was secondary in importance to the fact that they were pursuing a graduate degree of some sort. Their desire to become principals could not be described as strong, though some motivation certainly existed. A few subjects actually stated that they only wanted to increase their job options, though they may never actually exercise that option.

Another important factor, as expected, was increased salary as a result of earning graduate hours and degrees. It has been demonstrated that the number of new candidates being certified for the principalship by the various graduate schools in Tennessee are entering the job market at roughly twice the rate they can be absorbed. The gap, then, between the number of principals and the number of individuals holding principalship licensure is widening. This study has also shown that among the people who are

currently licensed to serve as principals but who do not have an administrative job, the desire to become a principal is irresolute or nonexistent. Further, by their own admission, the benefit a school realizes from a classroom teacher pursuing administrative training may be marginal at best. The question may well be asked if whether or not the schools should reexamine the policy of paying supplementary wages to professional employees for additional degrees in areas of study not related to their classroom assignment.

A cursory examination of the great number of individuals holding administrative licensure in Tennessee could suggest that there are simply too many people being trained and licensed for the principalship. However, the results of this study do not support this line of thinking. It has been clearly demonstrated that people enrolling in school leadership programs are self selected. This one fact tends to suggest that the overall quality of administrative candidates emerging from these programs is likely lower than if a structured system of identifying and recruiting high quality students were used. This study has also shown that a certain segment of these individuals has little or no intention of pursuing a principalship, and if they do entertain thoughts of being a principal, they are generally unwilling to relocate to fill a position. Further, it has been shown that after a certain period of time, people holding administrative licensure become less likely to obtain a principalship. These factors combine to create a scenario in which school systems are finding it increasingly difficult to locate and hire high quality school administrators, in spite of the apparent high number of candidates.

With this in mind, the question of whether or not there are too many educational leadership programs producing too many principalship candidates becomes moot. The

real issue is the means by which students come to these programs. Clearly, an emphasis should be placed on identifying and recruiting individuals who exhibit great potential as school leaders. The onus is perhaps more on the school systems than on the graduate programs to do this; they are in a better position to observe young teachers and stand to reap a greater benefit. However, there must be a coordinated effort between the two entities if improvement is to occur.

Development of a coordinated effort to identify potential school administrators need not involve the implementation of some highly structured program. The demands currently placed on school and school system administrators often prevent them from seeking out and developing potential principals. Concurrently, recruiting of high quality candidates on the part of educational leadership programs is often pushed to the back burner in the face of serving the needs of students currently enrolled. Strategies must be adopted that allow school administrators to quickly and easily bring together university personnel and potential school administrators. Also, and this is a critical point, educational leadership programs must not only develop the leadership skills of the students they are preparing for the principalship, they must also train these individuals to identify and develop these abilities in others.

This study identified a phenomenon in which individuals initiating enrollment in a program of educational leadership identified a support person or group that helped them make the decision to do so. Much can be derived from this. If a family member or teaching colleague encouraged a person to try their hand at being a principal, how much more powerful would the effect be of a practicing school principal encouraging a person

to do the same? What benefit might be realized by a school system that actively encouraged practicing school principals to identify potential leaders on their own faculties? How much more effective could this activity be if the principals had been trained during their time in an educational leadership program to effectively identify others who are potential principals?

The second division of the study dealt with the educational leadership programs themselves. Two themes emerged from this part of the investigation. One, the subjects seemed to identify with the individuals who guided their learning rather than the university or department within which they were enrolled. Time and again the subjects mentioned their professors, often by name. The most memorable experiences discussed by the subjects were associated with their professors, not with a given university or graduate department. It also seemed that the beliefs and conduct of their professors had a more indelible impact than the curriculum itself. This being the case, it may be said that the instructional staff of an educational leadership program may be of greater importance than the curriculum.

Secondly, the need for increased practical experiences resonated throughout the comments made by subjects participating in this study. Classroom instruction has its place, but it cannot replace field experience. The financial burden of a full-time internship, however, prevents the great majority of educational leadership students from ever participating in a truly meaningful, long-term experience.

The answer to this dilemma would seem to be local school systems sponsoring paid leave/internships for potential school leaders identified internally. The logic of this

plan would be that it would insure a supply of high quality school administrators for the system. The reality is that only the largest and best funded school systems could ever afford such a luxury within existing budgets.

The third and last division of the study dealt with the experiences shared by the subjects after they had completed a graduate program. The study sought to find reasons these individuals did not hold a principalship, or at least why they thought they didn't. The casual observer might simply note the large number of licensed candidates and the comparatively small number of available positions and leave it at that. Consider, however, this argument; if a position becomes available at a given school for a school administrator, and ten people apply for it, nine of them will not get it. There may be dozens if not hundreds of reasons those nine people were not hired, but the availability of a position was not one of them. There was a job opening: they just didn't get it.

To a large extent, the subjects of this study disregarded age, gender, and race as a barrier to employment as a school principal. Quantitative study in this and other geographic regions may contradict this finding, but it must be noted that this study only reported the opinions of the subjects, not facts gleaned from statistics. Of greater significance by far in terms of a barrier to employment were the conditions placed on employment by the subjects themselves. None were willing to move from their residence to take an administrative position. None seemed willing to consider working in another school system, and most weren't willing to pursue a principalship in a school other than the one in which they were currently working as a teacher.

The level of motivation toward becoming a school administrator seemed low in the subjects participating in this study. Further, an evolution of motivational level became evident. During the time the subjects were going through the process of deciding to pursue a graduate degree in school administration, they profess to having a relatively high level of motivation toward obtaining a principalship. For various reasons, this motivation level waned with the passing of time. This decline in motivation seemed directly related to the amount of exposure the subjects had had to the administrative functions of education. In other words, the more they knew about the principalship, they less they wanted to be one.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
Initial Interview Guide

Initial Interview Guide

1. What reasons would you give for initially deciding to pursue your administrative license?
 - 1a. Why did you pick the school you went to for the training needed to get your license?

2. Please describe your experiences during the time you were in the principal preparation program.
 - 2a. Do you feel that the principal preparation curriculum you completed helped you in ways other than preparing you to become an administrator?

3. What have you done since completing the principal preparation program in terms of pursuing a principalship?
 - 3a. Do you perceive any barriers preventing you from becoming a principal?

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide, Second permutation

Interview Guide
Second permutation

1. What reasons would you give for initially deciding to pursue administrative licensure?

- 1a. Do you feel like you knew what you were getting into?
 - 1aa. Did you begin your coursework with someone you knew, or by yourself?
 - 1ab. Are you a leader on your faculty?
- 1b. Why did you choose administration/supervision over something in your teaching field?
 - 1ba. Is administration/supervision an easier route to a graduate degree than something in another field?
- 1c. If you knew then what you know now, would you have pursued administrative endorsement?
 - 1ca. Do people pursue administrative endorsement to achieve higher status?
- 1d. At the time you began graduate classes toward administrative endorsement, how serious would you say you were about becoming a principal?
 - 1da. Do you think you'd make a good principal?
- 1e. How big an impact was increased pay for hours earned on your decision to pursue administrative licensure?
 - 1ea. If the same university offered the same degree for coursework in your teaching field, would you have pursued that instead?

2. Why did you pick the school you went to for the training needed to get your license?

- 2a. Could you imagine a scenario that would have enticed you to go to another school?
 - 2aa. Were you recruited in any way?
 - 2ab. Did the university work with you to make courses and class schedules fit in with your needs?
 - 2ac. Does any one university really have an advantage over another university in the area of principal preparation?
 - 2aca. What might that advantage be?

2b. Was the cost of getting your endorsement ever a factor in your decision making process?

2c. If there had been an extensive, long term internship involved in the program, would your decision to enroll been affected?

2ca. Is an internship a practical requirement for graduate programs of this type?

3. Please describe your experiences during the time you were in the principal preparation program.

3a. What positive experiences stand out?

3aa. Finish this sentence; "The best thing about the principal preparation program was...."

3b. What negative experiences stand out?

3ba. Did you feel, at any point, that you were wasting your time?

3c. In what ways could the school improve on what it did to prepare you for the principalship?

3ca. Did the instruction reflect real world situations?

3d. Were you in a planned program, a cohort group, a series of random classes...describe the program.

3da. Do you think you were more interested in getting the advanced degree or getting the additional endorsement?

3e. Do you feel you were given sufficient opportunities for practical experiences?

3ea. If you had had to take time off from your regular teaching job, would your school system have been supportive?

4. Do you feel that completing coursework toward your administrative endorsement helped you in ways not associated with being a school principal?

4a. Could your time have been better spent pursuing a degree or coursework in some other area?

4b. Which would be more beneficial to a school: teachers obtaining administrative coursework or coursework in their teaching area?

4ba. Would you say that administrative training would be beneficial for all teachers?

4c. There is a shift toward 'teacher as leader' curricula in various graduate schools. What is your opinion of this trend?

4ca. Who provides the leadership in your school?

5. Since receiving your endorsement, what have you done, if anything, about becoming a principal?

5a. What sort of things might an individual do to make him/herself a stronger candidate for a principalship?

5aa. What sort of professional development activities do you participate in?

5b. What does it take to become a principal in this school system?

5ba. Hypothetically, would you be more likely to pursue the principalship of this school, or would you rather be principal in another school?

5bb. Is the administrative of this school system more likely to look within the system or outside the system for new principal?

5bc. Could a complete stranger to this school system apply for a principalship and reasonably expect to be hired?

5c. The pool of licensed principalship candidates in Tennessee is quite large? How does someone go about making themselves stand out in the crowd?

5ca. Are there individuals out there who hold the proper endorsement but just aren't principal 'material'?

6. What barriers to people face when attempting to obtain employment as a principal?

6a. Do race or gender come into play?

6b. Is age a barrier?

6c. What makes a good principal?

6ca. What is the single most important characteristic of a good principal - give me one word.

APPENDIX C

Qualitative Questionnaire used at the end of each Interview

APPENDIX D
School System Permission Form

School System Permission Form

Principal Investigator: William R. Flanary

Title of Project: Reasons Cited by Tennessee Educators for Pursuing
Professional Development Training in School
Administration and never working as such in an
Educational Setting

Please place a check by one of the following statements and return this form in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

_____ I agree to allow William R. Flanary to contact five or less teachers in the
XXXXXXXX school system for the purpose of holding taped interview
sessions. I understand that questions asked during these interviews will
focus on their reasons for pursuing administrative licensure, their
experiences during their training, and their experiences afterward.

_____ I do not agree to allow William R. Flanary to contact five or less teachers
in the XXXXXX school system for the purpose of holding taped
interview sessions. I understand that questions asked during these
interviews will focus on their reasons for pursuing administrative
licensure, their experiences during their training, and their experiences
afterward.

signature of the superintendent/director

date

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

APPENDIX E
Informed Consent Form

East Tennessee State University
College of Education
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: William R. Flanary

TITLE OF PROJECT: Reasons cited by Educators for Pursuing Professional Development Training in School Administration and Never Working as a Principal in an Educational Setting

The purpose of this study is to uncover reasons educators have for pursuing professional development in school leadership, their impressions of the experiences had during the formal training process, and their experiences in pursuing a principalship after initial licensure. Each participant will be interviewed in depth regarding these topics.

Expected inconveniences are minimal. Maximum time for any interview will be one hour. You may refuse to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable, and you may make any comments you feel necessary in answering the questions. Participation is strictly voluntary, and you may terminate an interview at any time.

All interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. An additional question sheet will be given to each interviewee for supplemental data. All interview transcripts, answers to written questions, and supplemental notes will be kept strictly confidential. No reference to individuals will be divulged at any point during the study or in the final report.

I understand the procedures to be used in this study. I also understand that participation in this study is strictly voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time by notifying William R. Flanary.

I understand that if there are any questions or research related problems at any time during this study, I may contact William R. Flanary at 257-3750 or Marie Hill at 929-4244. I consent to participate in this study.

date

signature of respondent

date

signature of investigator

APPENDIX F

List of NUD-IST Nodes

NUD-IST Nodes

Comments made by the subjects participating in this study were transcribed into the NUD-IST software program. Specific statements concerning various topics were indexed by means of assigning them to 'nodes' set up by the researcher. Following are the nodes used in this study and a brief description of each.

<u>Node</u>	<u>Subject indexed at that node</u>
1	The process of making the decision to pursue a principalship
1-1	the subjects level of desire to become a principal
1-2	the impact of increased salary for graduate hours earned toward a master's degree
1-3	the degree to which the subject was influenced by others to pursue a graduate degree and/or administrative endorsement
1-4	reasons the subject pursued administrative endorsement over additional coursework in their respective teaching fields
1-5	the desire to increase one's job options by adding administrative endorsements
1-6	the motivation level toward earning an advanced degree
1-6-1	difficulty of a degree program in educational leadership versus a degree program in another field
1-7	subject's desire to develop their own leadership ability
1-8	subject's desire to elevate their own status among their peers
2	general experiences during their graduate degree program
	educational leadership
2-1	comments about the subject's choice of schools/universities
2-1-1	the impact of tuition costs on their choice of schools
2-1-2	the impact of a mandatory internship on their decision to pursue a graduate degree in educational leadership
2-1-3	the impact of geographic convenience on their choice of schools/universities
2-1-4	comments about the quality of the total program and curriculum of program they experienced
2-1-5	comments about the quality of instruction provided within the program they experienced
2-2	comments about the subject's opportunities for practical experiences during their time in an educational leadership program
2-2-1	practical experiences garnered on their own
2-2-2	practical experiences garnered as part of the program of instruction within the educational leadership program

- 2-3 comments about the presentation of coursework; random classes, sequence of classes, or a cohort group
- 2-4 personal opinions on how the curriculum might be improved
- 2-5 opinions on the advent of ‘teacher as leader’ curriculae in graduate programs of educational leadership
- 2-6 reaction to question, ‘could your time have been better spent pursuing some other degree/endorsement?’
- 3 general comments concerning the subject’s experiences since completing their graduate programs in educational leadership
- 3-1 reaction to question, ‘what does it take to get a job as a principal in your school system?’
- 3-1-1 the role of politics in obtaining an administrative job
- 3-1-2 the willingness to relocate to obtain a principalship
- 3-1-3 their own school system’s penchant for looking within or without for new administrators
- 3-1-4 any steps they may have taken toward obtaining an administrative position for themselves
- 3-2 professional growth experiences since completing their graduate degree programs
- 3-2-1 practical experiences in school administration
- 3-2-2 professional development activities in school administration
- 3-3 perceived barriers to becoming a school administrator
- 3-3-1 race as a barrier to employment as a school administrator
- 3-3-2 gender as a barrier to employment as a school administrator
- 3-3-3 age as a barrier to employment as a school administrator
- 3-3-4 defining politics as a barrier to employment as a school administrator
- 3-3-5 the likelihood their own system would look to its own employees or outside the system for new principals
- 3-4 comments on whether the school realized greater benefit from teachers having administrative training or additional training in their teaching areas
- 3-4-1 observations on whether or not a teacher should have a limited amount of administrative training
- 3-5 beneficial aspects of the program they completed beyond their school/classroom duties
- 4 stated qualities of a good principal
- 4-1 response to the question, ‘would you make a good principal?’
- 4-2 response to the question, ‘who provides the leadership in your school?’

VITA

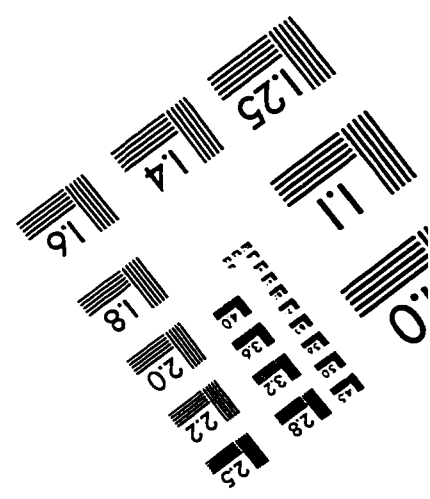
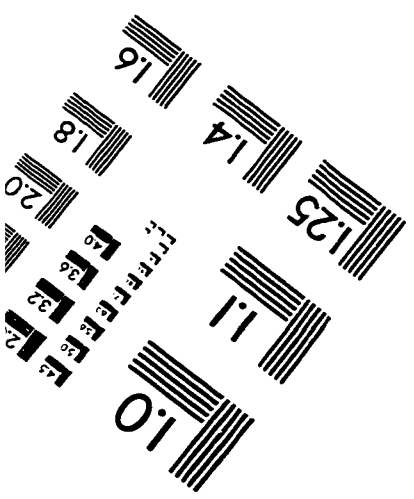
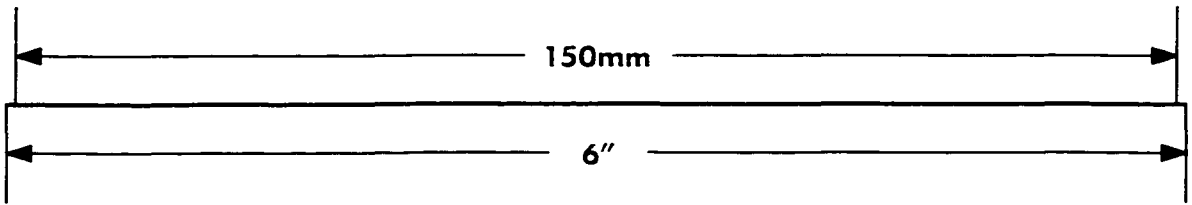
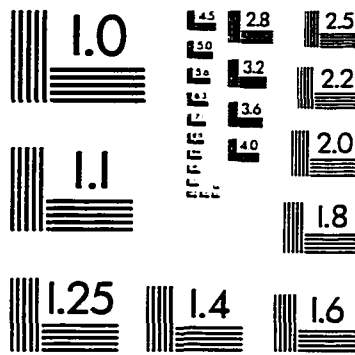
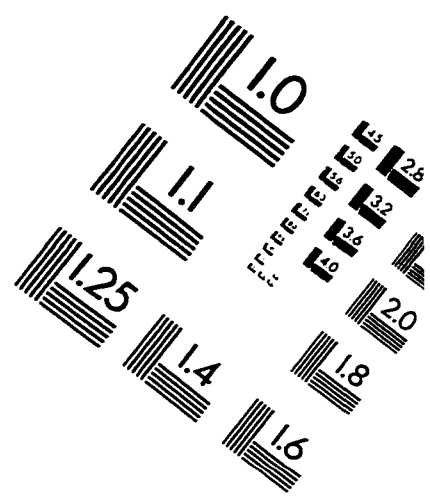
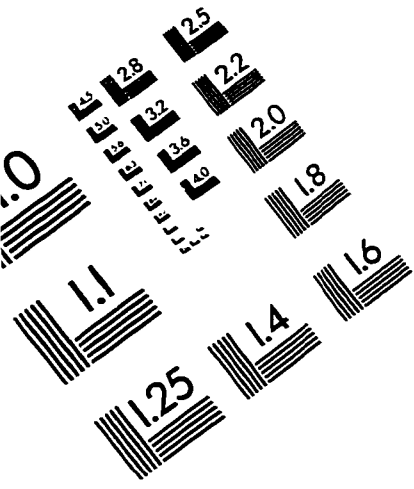
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IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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