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The work-life of the assistant principal in public comprehensive high schools.

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THE WORK-LIFE OF THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
IN
PUBLIC COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

A Dissertation Presented

by

Mary J. McCarthy

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of
Massachusetts in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

February 1987

School of Education

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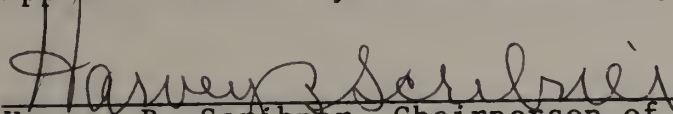
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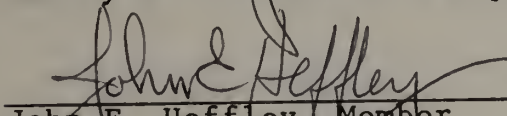
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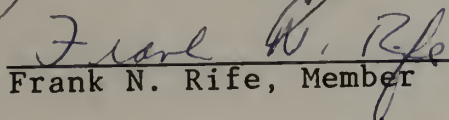
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I have labored over the past year to complete this dissertation, I have ever been aware that it was the support and encouragement of many that brought this work to fruition. Although the words in this study may be largely mine, I am deeply indebted to the following individuals for their involvement.

Dr. Harvey Scribner, Chairperson of my dissertation committee. Over the past two years I have come to value Harvey for his gentle ways, his charming wit and his keen insight. Being the global thinker he is, Harvey pushed me to broader limits, and if this study rises above the ordinary, it is largely due to Harvey's involvement.

Dr. John Heffley, committee member. As a public school administrator and a former assistant principal, Jack brought to my research the perspective of one who looks at schools from within. His input was vital to my work, and his support, both personally and professionally, sustained me.

Dr. Frank Rife, committee member. I consider Frank an expert both in quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, and I am indebted to him for all he taught me. I value, as well, his support and encouragement in my work.

Dr. Robert Maloy, personal friend and professional colleague. Throughout this dissertation study Bob has been a loyal and supportive friend. Without his expertise and willingness to share countless hours with me, this study would not be as it is today. Thank you, Bob.

In concluding, I acknowledge those special people in my life who make all things possible for me: My father and mother, who have sustained and encouraged me, both personally and professionally, throughout my life; my sister Bev, who has always been the standard by which I judge goodness in others; my brother-in-law Phil, who is more "brother" than in-law; and my niece Rebecca, who is one of the joys of my life. Finally, I thank Bill, who came into my life in the midst of this study and whose love brought a special joy and dimension to its completion.

ABSTRACT

THE WORK-LIFE OF THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
IN
PUBLIC COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

(February 1987)

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The role the assistant principal plays in the administration of public comprehensive high schools has not been fully explored beyond this individual's responsibility for student discipline and attendance. An exploration of the realities of the assistant principal's work-life forms the substance of this study.

In this study a combination of survey questionnaires and in-depth interviews was used to determine the roles, responsibilities and leadership styles of assistant principals. The survey was conducted in the winter of 1985-1986. Twenty percent of assistant principals in Massachusetts, representative of each of the seven kinds of communities as identified by the Department of Education, were surveyed.

The survey was a pre-coded instrument containing fourteen close-ended and seven open-ended questions. The

survey was divided into three sections:

1. Demographics
2. Work Realities
3. Leadership Styles and Decision-Making

Findings from the survey are presented in Chapter IV. These findings provided descriptive data regarding a depiction of those in the position of assistant principal, provided a relevant background for building an orientation for the subsequent interviews, and generated questions for further study.

In-depth interviews, approximately 90 minutes in length, were conducted with fourteen assistant principals during the spring and summer of 1986. The goal throughout the interviews was to understand, from the participants' perspective, the work experience of assistant principals, the meanings they attach to this experience and the expression of both in the participants' own words.

As a result of this process, several themes emerged that form the substance of interview findings with respect to the work-life of the assistant principal:

- * The Early Morning Routine
- * Conflict in the Role
- * The Pace of an Unpredictable Day
- * Relationship with the Principal and its Effect on Job Definition and Performance
- * Isolation and the Search for Confidants
- * Job Satisfaction and Career Goals

Chapter V presents conclusions regarding the work-life of the assistant principal and implications for the future of this significant position in secondary school administration.

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C H A P T E R I

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Current research on educational change and effective schools emphasizes that the building principal occupies a central role in school improvement (Boyer, 1983; Lightfoot, 1983). As a result, promoting greater effectiveness of the principal is frequently advocated as a key educational reform agenda.

While principals are important actors in schools, other building administrators also assume key roles and responsibilities in the administration of school buildings. This is especially true in comprehensive high schools whose characteristics typically include large numbers of students, diverse populations, and complex economics and politics. In these schools it is unrealistic to assume that one person, the school principal, runs the building alone. By necessity, the administrative and leadership functions are divided, formally or informally, among several building administrators.

Nevertheless, researchers and reformers have largely neglected the reality of educational leadership beyond the principal's door. This is true despite the fact that many

of the aspects of school management emphasized by researchers and reformers---climate, instructional leadership, curriculum development, staff evaluation, in-service education, and community relations---are handled by persons other than the building principal.

The assistant principal, often described as primarily a student disciplinarian, is one interesting case in point. Like the principal and unlike secondary teachers and other school administrators, the assistant principal has the entire school as part of his/her work responsibilities and on a daily basis interacts with dozens and dozens of students, faculty and staff. Parents, human service personnel and other external people and agencies are also part of his/her daily schedule. Considering the narrowness of definition of the position as described in the literature, these realities and interactions clearly result more from the daily reality of the job than from the formal definition of the position.

Statement of the Problem

This seeming contradiction between definition and actuality, and the resultant lack of clarification of the assistant principalship, form the substance of this study. What are the realities of the assistant principalship? How is the work experienced by those in the position? And, how does this work affect the individual? These are the central questions addressed in this dissertation study.

There are other issues raised by the assistant principalship, and each of these can be viewed in relation to a study of the work-life of the assistant principal:

1. Research notes the extreme dissatisfaction of the assistant principal (Austin and Brown, 1970). What is the source of this dissatisfaction, and what effect does it have on decisions made, on responsibilities assumed, on plans conceived?
2. Research also cites the difficulty of building management and instructional leadership by principal alone (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984). In light of this, have other individuals (in particular, assistant principals) assumed responsibility for these functions? If so, which ones? If not, why?
3. The literature on the assistant principalship, while sometimes defining the position as a training ground for the principalship, fails to address the need for staff development for assistant principals, particularly as it relates to preparation for greater responsibility.
4. The literature on the role of the assistant principal is largely limited to this individual's role as disciplinarian. Is this the extent of the role? If so, what are the effects of this limitation?

5. Differences in assistant principal responsibilities that correlate with school size, student population or community demographics have not been investigated.
6. The relationship between the assistant principal and the principal in terms of the former's involvement in school change and improvement agendas has, similarly, not been discussed.
7. There has not been a nationwide study of the assistant principalship since the National Association of Secondary School Principals' study in 1970. Despite this, there is a growing recognition that the position has, in recent years, been redefined (MSSAA, 1985).
8. Finally, assistant principals have not been asked to describe, in their own words, their work-lives, and, consequently, an understanding of the day-to-day realities of their professional lives remains unexplored.

Purpose of the Study

In investigating the work-lives of secondary school assistant principals, the researcher purposed to illuminate the realities of a significant position in education that has been largely ignored and, as a result, taken-for-granted. In doing so, she further purposed to develop recommendations for staff developers to use in improving the performance of assistant principals.

To reach these ends, the researcher--through surveys of and interviews with selected secondary school assistant principals--asked participants to describe in their own words the realities of their work-lives. What do they do day-to-day? How do they manage the critical relationships of their work (with principals, teachers, students, colleagues and parents)? How do the experiences of their work-lives influence their job satisfaction and their personal and professional growth?

Significance of the Study

The cry for more effective educational leadership on the principal's part (Adler, 1982; Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Lightfoot, 1983; The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Education Association, 1984) is negated by the recognition in much of the same literature that the complexities of the principal's day-to-day work often preclude involvement in issues of educational leadership (Adler, 1982; Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Tyack and Hansot, 1982). Yet, despite this contradiction, there is little that reports on, or even argues for, the leadership of other school administrators, in particular, that of the assistant principal. Given this omission amidst the continuing cry for more effective schools, there is a real need to explore again, define anew, and re-envision how the assistant principal can play a more effective role in secondary school management.

In recent months this process of redefinition has been recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and, here in our home state, by the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association. In December of 1985 the NASSP Board of Directors commissioned a nationwide study of the assistant

principalship that will look at the assistant principalship, the leadership requirements of the assistant principal, and the organizational variables that affect the role of this individual. At the same time, the MSSAA has begun gathering a data base on assistant principals in Massachusetts. This latter study seeks to clarify the role of the assistant principal: "In the past, this role was fairly well defined with duties, responsibilities and salary easily compared. With administrative reorganizations, prompted recently by decreased enrollments, jobs have been redefined and reclassified" (MSSAA, 1985).

Although this researcher seeks much of the same information, her research is more sociological in perspective and more ethnographic in methodology. What one actually does, how one interprets what one is doing and how one conceives of what one might be doing, in one's own words, are the ends of this study. Thus, an analysis of who in the job is more a portrait of personal experience than a statistic, and a determination of one's day-to-day work responsibilities is more a scenario than a data base.

The significance of this orientation lies in the potential for a true understanding of the day-to-day realities of the assistant principal's work-life. In

initiating its study of the assistant principalship, the MSSAA acknowledged that the position was once fairly well-defined in terms of duties and responsibilities. There is little in the history of the literature to support this view: "In spite of the relatively long history and abundance of published works, the nature of the role of the vice principal has escaped clear conceptualization..." (Reed and Connors, 1982, p. 466).

Normative studies (such as those initiated by the MSSAA) yield data bases that can easily reflect the bias of the investigator rather than the perspective of the research subject. In such a design, there is the danger that what is may result from the investigator's definition of what should be. Herbert Blummer explains it in this way:

To try to catch the interpretive process by remaining aloof as a so-called "objective" observer and refusing to take the role of the acting unit is to risk the worst kind of subjectivism---the objective observer is likely to fill in the process of interpretation with his own surmises in place of catching the process as it occurs in the experience of the acting unit which uses it (1969, p. 86).

By contrast, the significance of ethnographic research is that the determination of what should be or what could be evolves from an assessment of what actually is as experienced by subjects and as expressed by them in their

own words. The goal is to experience reality as others have experienced it, to come to "know" the culture through the eyes, the words and the actions of subjects:

Ethnographers adopt a particular stance toward people with whom they work. By words and by action, in subtle ways and direct statements, they say, "I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" (Spradley, 1979, p. 34).

In such a design, the questions to be studied will arise from the culture of the subject rather than from the perspective of the investigator. In this dissertation study the goal is validity, in terms of a realistic description of the work-life of the assistant principal.

Assumptions

This research is based on a number of assumptions. Chief among them is the argument for ethnographic research, in preference to a normative assessment, as a means to exploring the realities of the assistant principalship. Through ethnographic research the investigator enters the culture of the assistant principal's world, experiences that world--its special language and culture--as the subject has experienced it, and captures that world in terms of the subject's perceptions and language. The result is a portrait of the assistant principalship that reveals not only the shared knowledge of assistant principals but also the meaning these individuals give to their experiences.

Another assumption is that the view of the work-lives of assistant principals studied is representative of the culture of all assistant principals in the state of Massachusetts. To insure this, this study proposed to randomly select for study a cross-section of assistant principals representing the diverse communities within the state. It is a well-established fact that the nature and kind of community affect the school. It is equally well-established that schools affect the people within them. The assumption is, therefore, that the experience of assistant principals will reflect the nature and kind of community in which they work.

Finally, research has reported the dissatisfaction of assistant principals as attributable to the nature of the position. One assumption, upon which this study is based, is that the assistant principalship can be made more attractive and more satisfying through staff development that prepares the assistant principal for greater and broader involvement in school leadership issues.

Theoretical Rationale

This dissertation study is grounded in the theoretical perspectives of phenomenology. "Committed to understanding social phenomena from the actor's own perspective," the phenomenologist studies the world as experienced and considers the important reality to be what "people perceive it to be" (Taylor and Bogdan, 1984, p. 2). The ends of this type of research are not best met through quantitative methodologies. It is only through qualitative research methods that the realities of the work-life of the assistant principal can be understood. The goal is validity that neither discounts nor sacrifices reliability and replicability.

Definition of Terms

Assistant Principal: This person is that individual who, by virtue of his or her administrative capacity, is second in line of authority to the building principal. This individual may also be known as "assistant headmaster," "submaster" or "vice-principal." This term does not cover those individuals known as "housemaster," "building master" or "dean" except in those cases where such individuals are second in line of authority.

Educational Reform Literature: This term refers to that body of literature precipitated by, or congruent with, the publication of Nation at Risk by the National Commission on Excellence in Education (1983). The common denominator in this literature is the cry for school reform through--among other recommendations--increased standards, more effective leadership, better preparation of teachers and administrators, and ongoing staff development.

Effective Schools: This term applies to those school practices and characteristics associated with high academic achievement, low rates of absenteeism and vandalism, a sense of community, and a stable staff.

Kind of Community: This term refers to the classification scheme used by the Massachusetts Department of Education to categorize communities within the

Commonwealth according to their shared characteristics. A more detailed description of this scheme is included as Appendix D.

Public Comprehensive Secondary School: In this study this term refers to those public schools within the Commonwealth that offer a comprehensive educational program to students in grades 9-12. Secondary schools including grades 7-8 are not covered by this term unless the school includes grades 7-12. Vocational-technical high schools are not included.

Work-Life: This term refers to the day-to-day realities of the assistant principalship as experienced by subjects and as expressed by them in their own words.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited in that the findings may not be able to be generalized to the nature of the position nationwide. Communities in Massachusetts may not be representative of communities everywhere in that Massachusetts may not be typical in its high technology base, its increasing student enrollments, and its strong economic base.

Another limitation is the researcher's own enculturation in the world of the assistant principal. In ethnography the most productive relationship occurs between one thoroughly encultured (the informant) and one thoroughly unencultured (the interviewer) in the culture under study (Spradley, 1979, p. 50). As a former assistant principal, the researcher is aware that her familiarity with the culture may interfere with her objectivity and, without ongoing watchfulness, could easily lead to taken-for-granted assumptions. Despite this admission, the researcher feels sufficiently removed from the world of the assistant principal to preclude this occurring.

C H A P T E R I I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

One of the prevalent themes in the educational reform literature of the last few years has been the call for strong educational leadership not only on the part of federal, state and local governing bodies but also--and, in many cases, more so--on the part of school building administrators. Simultaneously, these same reports, as well as others, have acknowledged the increasing tendency on the part of school administrators to define educational leadership as building management often at the expense of the instructional leadership for which these reports argue. While acknowledging the growing complexity of school administration that increasingly demands the school principal's attention to management concerns, these reports have, for the most part, neglected to ascertain, report on, or argue for the roles that other building administrators might assume in educational leadership and school improvement agendas.

Congruent with this body of literature on reform and effective schools lies another corpus of literature regarding the narrowness in conception of the role of the

assistant principal and that individual's resultant dissatisfaction with that conception. As a former secondary school assistant principal and as one who has studied the position and shared the realities of the job with many others in similar posts, the researcher has read of, listened to, and herself acknowledged on the part of assistant principals the cry for greater involvement in school change and improvement issues and a lessening preoccupation with student discipline and attendance, so often reported to be the central responsibility of the assistant principalship.

The purpose of this paper is twofold: (1) to examine and report on the recent educational reform literature, in particular, as these reports comment on the role of secondary school principals in school improvement efforts, and (2) to similarly examine and report on the body of literature that ascertains and attempts to clarify the role of the assistant principal in secondary school administration. This paper is divided into two sections. The first section is an overview of the principal's role as an educational leader--the argument for that role, the constraints affecting that role, the recommendations for achieving that role, and the argument for a dispersion of the authority for educational leadership. The second section is an overview of the literature on the role of the

assistant principal and the argument for a
reconceptualization of this individual's position.

Section I: The Principal as Educational Leader

It is not the critics or the central-office people or the university people who really make schools what they are. It is whoever occupies the principal's office (Barth, 1976, p. 216).

Recognition of the centrality of the principal's role in bringing about effectiveness in the school building is not a recent concern only. For some time studies have emphasized this individual's crucial role in effecting school change and improvement (Barth, 1972 & 1976; Bentzen, 1974; Burlingame, 1970; Edmunds and Frederiksen, 1978; Emrick and Peterson, 1978; Gorton and McIntyre, 1978; Lieberman, 1969; Rutter, 1979; Sarason, 1982; Sussman, 1977; Wayson, 1982).

In arguing for a reform of our present system of public education, recent reports have, once again, emphasized the importance of the principal's role (Adler, 1982; Boyer, 1983; Duke, 1982; Goodlad, 1984; Lieberman and Miller, 1984; Lightfoot, 1983; The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Education Association, n.d.; Sarason, 1982; Task Force on Education for Economic Growth of the Education Commission of the States, 1983). Specifically, studies indicate that many of the characteristics one associates with effective schools--a school climate conducive to learning, teacher

satisfaction, high student achievement and a clear sense of community--positively correlate with the leadership ability of the school principal (Boyer, 1983; Edmonds, 1978; Goodlad, 1984; Sarason, 1982).

The importance of change to school improvement and growth is central to virtually all of the reform literature. This is equally so for the effective schools' literature of an earlier period (Austin, 1979; Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Edmonds, 1979; Rutter, 1979; Squires, 1980). In initiating change, in implementing, managing and responding to it, the principal plays a vital role (Barth, 1985; Berman and McLaughlin, 1978; Hall et al., 1984; Sarason, 1982). As Berman and McLaughlin (1978) note, "The principal is the gatekeeper of change. If you had to pick one figure in the school system who really matters in terms of whether you get change or not, it is the principal" (as quoted in Lieberman and Miller, 1984, p. 77).

The change for which these studies argue is one in which the quality and effectiveness of the school program are increased. As such, the argument for educational leadership is rooted in the instructional domain of the principal's position. The report of the National Education Association, An Open Letter to America on Schools, Students and Tomorrow, argues for strengthened school management

particularly in the areas of instruction and staff development. It acknowledges the need for teacher involvement in instructional decisions but emphasizes the principal's role in this process: "Teachers want to work with administrators to bring our mutual expertise to bear on these [instructional] decisions. We realize it will take more than occasional staff meetings to make this collaboration work effectively. School administrators must provide the necessary leadership" (p. 24). In his study of secondary education in America, Boyer (1983) similarly posits the school principal as an instructional leader: "What we seek are high schools in which the school community--students, teachers and principals--sees learning as the primary goal. In such a community, the principal becomes not just the top authority but the key educator too" (p.229).

In contrast with this argument for more effective educational leadership on the principal's part lies the recognition of the enormity of this individual's day-to-day responsibilities that often preclude his or her involvement in educational leadership. The role of the principal is not one but many. This individual is simultaneously an "omniscient overseer," a "confidant and keeper of secrets," a "sifter and sorter of knowledge," a "pace-setter and

routinizer," a "referee," a "linker and broker," a "translator and transformer," a "paper pusher, accountant, clerk," a "plant manager," a "disciplinarian," a "scapegoat," a "moral authority" and an "educational leader" (Lieberman and Miller, 1984, pp. 71-76). Given the complexities of these roles, the goal of instructional leadership is often unattainable: "Every principal wants to be an educational leader. Few get the chance. . . . There is not much time built into the structure of the position for meaningful educational dialogue, planning and evaluation" (Lieberman and Miller, 1984, p. 75).

This view is supported by many other studies on the senior high school principalship. Over and over the theme resounds that despite the plea, the reality is that educational leadership by the building principal is at present rare (Adler, 1982; Fallon, 1979; Goodlad, 1984; Tyack and Hansot, 1982). And even though principals may identify program development and personnel as their top priorities in the position, they report spending more time on building management than on either of these top two priorities (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978). "Educational leadership happens, when it happens at all, within the cracks and around the edges of the job as defined and presently constituted" (Lieberman and Miller, 1984, p. 75).

There are other factors beyond the overwhelming complexities of the job that adversely affect the principal's ability to assume a true educational leadership role. One is the lack of preparedness for the role. By far the most common route of entry to the secondary principalship, after classroom teaching, is the assistant principalship (Gorton and McIntyre, 1978). And although one might assume this to be an excellent training ground, this is not usually the case. Assistant principals do not typically experience the kinds of opportunities that might equip them to handle responsibilities as instructional leaders. "All too often the assistant principal's duties are restricted to one or two narrow areas of responsibility as discipline and/or attendance. The result is experienced assistant principals" (Pellicer, 1982, p. 29) who one day become inexperienced instructional leaders.

Furthermore, those in the position of secondary school principals may or may not have been effective as teachers, and it is "naive and arrogant" (Goodlad, 1984, p. 303) to assume that they can, in their present assignments, maintain an expertise in teaching greater than those who are involved in this activity on a daily basis. Thus, in lacking both the necessary experience and training to be instructional leaders (Fallon, 1979), and faced with the

magnitude of the responsibilities, in making the choice between being "leaders of instruction" or "managers of operations," many opt for the latter (Lieberman and Miller, 1984, p. 55).

A further constraint on the instructional leadership role of the principal is this individual's loss of autonomy in managing the school building (Boyer, 1983; Lortie, 1985; National Education Association, n.d.; Pellicer, 1982; Sarason, 1982). Caught in the center of an "administrative bureaucratic web" (Boyer, 1983, p. 224), the principal's capacity to lead and to voice authority for his or her vision of school leadership is often crippled by the seemingly endless layers of central administrative control (Boyer, 1983). And, in the final analysis, both superiors and subordinates fail to support the principal as an instructional leader and judge this individual more on his or her capacity to manage discipline, student activities and the building itself than on his or her vision of educational leadership. Teachers want principals to manage the building, to keep kids under control and to leave the teaching to teachers (Pellicer, 1982), and central administrators seem content to allow that perspective.

Despite the recognition of the complexities of principals' roles, their lack of preparedness to assume educational leadership roles, and the growing loss of autonomy at the building level, there continues to be a cry for educational leadership on the part of principals (Adler, 1982; Barth, 1980; Boyer, 1983; Dwyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Education Association, n.d.). Teaching and learning are the essence of schools, and all other aspects of school-life must be managed in such a way that they "facilitate the main business" (Adler, 1982, p. 64) of the school. Furthermore, building principals must commit themselves to school change and improvement (Barth, 1985) and should not be "solely or even primarily concerned with running the school efficiently, economically, or merely with keeping the peace of the community" (Adler, 1982, p. 63). Finally, there is the recognition that principals can achieve none of this without the support of state and local governing agencies (Boyer, 1983; Goodlad, 1984; The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; National Education Association, n.d.). In Goodlad's (1984) words, "Better schools will come about through multiple actions" (p. 49). There must be clear mandates from the States, a commitment from central offices to

select and train promising prospective principals, and an ongoing program of administrative professional development (Goodlad, 1984; The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In contrast with the argument for greater educational leadership on the part of school principals is an escalating argument for dispersing the authority for school leadership:

Principals are important; they may even be critical. But they are not the only initiators and supporters of change. They are not our last and only hope. . . . A school in need of leadership may find it somewhere other than in the principal's office (Lieberman and Miller, 1984, p. 79).

The principal's capacity to lead, as noted earlier, has its inherent difficulties born of organizational constraints and personal limitations. And, for many, the answer is not as simplistic as the return of building authority or professional development. Given the realities of the position, it is more realistic to enhance educational leadership by transferring authority for its possibility to the classroom teacher. Thus, there lies the argument for the teacher as instructional leader (Goodlad, 1984) and the teacher as master teacher (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). In Lightfoot's (1983) view, in "good" schools teachers are

recognized as the "critical educational authorities" (p. 339). There is no doubt that the principal has a role to play, but "it is simplistic to attribute 'everything' to the quality of the principal's leadership. . . ." (Goodlad, 1984, p. 179).

The acknowledgement is there--the principal can not manage the job alone. Yet, surprisingly, a review of the educational reform research does not indicate any deployment of authority for instructional leadership to other building administrators, in particular, assistant principals. What the assistant principal does and what he or she might do are reported in an entirely separate body of literature.

Section II: The Role of the Assistant Principal in
Secondary Schools

In spite of the relatively long history and abundance of published works, the nature of the role of the vice principal has escaped clear conceptualization and the relationship of the role to the organization has remained elusive (Reed and Connors, 1982, p. 466).

Over the last sixty years there has certainly been no lack of literature on the role of the secondary school assistant principalship. As Reed and Connors (1982, pp. 465-466) note, "The existence and distribution of the position of vice principal have been studied (Austin, et al., 1970; Brandes, 1949; Riggs, 1939; Reavis et al., 1928). The personal characteristics of vice principals have been investigated (Austin et al., 1970; Long, 1957; Martin, 1958; Riggs, 1939; Wright, 1939). The qualities of the role of vice principal have received considerable attention (Austin, 1972; Austin et al., 1970; Boardman et al., 1946; Brown et al., 1973; Coppedge, 1968; Davis et al., 1965; Hurwitz, 1957; Jarrett, 1958; Kindsvatter et al., 1971; Long, 1957; Martin, 1958; McDonough, 1970; Pfeffer, 1955; Riggs, 1939; Strange, 1932; Van Emon, 1926; Weiss, 1953; Wright, 1939). Studies of job satisfaction and attitudes of vice principals have been conducted (Austin et al., 1979; Bolden, 1956; Garawski, 1978;

Kindsvatter et al., 1971; Martin, 1958). Research regarding the area characteristics of individuals who have been or who are vice principals have been reported (Austin et al., 1970; Brown et al., 1973; Wright, 1939)."

A review of the literature of more recent years reveals a similar pattern--an investigation of the assistant principalship from the perspective of what should be at the expense of what is. The result is another large body of literature that analyzes the responsibilities of the job as predetermined by the investigator and, in doing so, fails to shed light on the realities of the position. What has not been achieved is a clarification of the realities of the day-to-day work life of the assistant principal and the relationship of the position to the organization.

The ambiguity inherent in the assistant principalship has received considerable attention. Many have noted the haphazard evolvment of the position, the ambiguity of job descriptions and the lack of role clarity (Bates and Shank, 1983; Black, 1980; Brotzman, 1981; Croft and Norton, 1977; Joly, 1973; Kriekard and Norton, 1980; Landmeier, 1979; Paus, 1973; Reed, 1984; Valentin, 1980). "Defining the assistant principalship is elusive. . . . due in part to the limited attention that has been directed to

the study of this significant administrative role in education" (Kriekard and Norton, 1980, p. 1).

If there is any role of the assistant principalship that has been ascertained as central to this position, it is this individual's role as disciplinarian and building manager (Austin and Brown, 1970; Braukmann, 1983; Culver, 1978; Gross, 1980; Nickerson, 1980; Reed, 1984).

"Repeatedly, we have seen evidence that the one common combination of duties which falls to the desk of the assistant principal or an assistant principal, is the paired duty of dealing with attendance and discipline" (Austin and Brown, 1970, p. 81).

In recognizing this central role of the assistant principal, many have offered recommendations for being a more effective assistant principal by becoming a more effective disciplinarian. The recommendations are for assuming a counseling role in disciplining students (Mitchell, 1980; Welch, 1980), for employing more effective disciplinary strategies (Boettcher, 1973; Smith, 1977; Winston, 1972), for utilizing a team approach to solving problems (Braukmann, 1983; Petruzielo, 1977), and for lessening the presence of discipline problems by eliminating their causes (Collins, 1976).

Simultaneous with this ascertainment of the elusiveness of the assistant principalship and the magnitude of the incumbent's work in student discipline and control is the recognition of how the limitations of this definition serve to affect the satisfaction of those in the position (Austin and Brown, 1970; Black, 1980; Garawski, 1978; Gross, Shapiro and Meehan, 1980; Potter, 1980). "The satisfactions to be found in the assistant principalship are few and unimpressive to most who occupy this office" (Austin and Brown, 1970, p. 78).

The dissatisfaction of the assistant principal is rooted in the hectic pace of the day-to-day work (Black, 1980; Miller and Lieberman, 1982; Reed, 1984) and the limitations of his or her role as a student disciplinarian as noted. One solution lies in enhancing this individual's satisfaction in the position by expanding the scope of his or her responsibility to include involvement in other, more positive, areas of school administration (Austin and Brown, 1970; Gross, Shapiro and Meehan, 1980). The assistant principal needs to be given responsibility for areas for which he or she has a special affinity (Gross, Shapiro and Meehan, 1980) or expertise (Brottman, 1981; Potter, 1980; Valentin, 1980). More specifically, in terms of gaining "authentic administrative" experience (Reed, 1984, p. 1),

and contributing to the overall leadership of the school, the assistant principal should be given responsibility for instructional leadership (Culver, 1978; Landmeier, 1979; Mazzei, 1976; Pink, 1983).

In providing these experiences for the assistant principal and in defining the nature of the position, the principal plays a significant role (Burgess, 1972; Gross, 1980; Hall et al., 1984; Hartley and Brown, 1981; Rankin, 1973; Valentin, 1980). More than anything else, it is the principal's conception of school leadership and the assistant principal's role in this process that determines the nature of the assistant principal's day-to-day work. "Critical to the understanding of any assistant principalship at any time is the peculiar relationship between the principal and the assistant principal. The prime determiner of this relationship is the principal. It is his concept of the role of the assistant principal which will be most influential (Austin and Brown, 1970, p. 77).

Conclusion

The connection between these two bodies of literature--the educational reform reports and the research on the role of the assistant principal--has not been explored. On the one hand, there is in the reform literature the call for more effective instructional leadership on the part of school principals and the recognition of the difficulties in achieving that goal given the complexities of the management of the school building. Conversely, the literature on the assistant principalship indicates that the work of the assistant principal--ambiguous, frenetic and largely limited to student discipline and control--often results in this individual's dissatisfaction with the position. Greater involvement on the assistant principal's part in instructional leadership and how that translates into school reform, as well as into increased job satisfaction, have been largely ignored. Beyond this, the literature on the assistant principalship has contributed little to an understanding of the day-to-day realities of the assistant principal's work life, the social character of the school work setting, the social behaviors of assistant principals and their relationship to the school organization (Greenfield, 1985). There is a call in the literature for

further study of the assistant principalship, which continues to elude understanding (Austin and Brown, 1970; Brottman, 1981; Greenfield, 1985; Reed and Connors, 1982). What is needed, however, is not further explication of what ought to be as determined by normative studies, but the reality of what is.

C H A P T E R I I I

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Introduction

The assistant principalship, despite the abundance of research and commentary on the position, has been largely neglected in its relationship to the literature on school change and effectiveness. School improvement, as noted, is dependent on strong, responsive leadership, but such leadership is, in the final analysis, unattainable when its responsibility lies in the hands of one individual. Thus, there is also a cry for the dispersal of authority for school leadership. One person whose role has been overlooked in this search for school leadership is the assistant principal, whose duties appear narrowly defined, when defined at all.

The assistant principalship is elusive at best. Research studies, both local and nationwide, have attempted to describe the position from the perspective of what seems to be, as defined by the researchers themselves, and have largely neglected the reality of what is. In recognition of economic and societal changes over the last 15 years, both national and state organizations of school administrators have renewed their efforts to define the

assistant principalship. These studies yield an important data base--a composite of the individual in the position, a delineation of his or her work responsibilities, and a description of the organizational structure of the school. The goal of none of these studies, however, is an inside view of the assistant principalship as perceived by the incumbents themselves and as expressed in their own words. Such a view is intrinsic to an understanding of the position.

Procedures

The goal of this dissertation study is to address this gap in the literature by examining the work lives of assistant principals in selected secondary schools throughout Massachusetts. Through surveys of and interviews with assistant principals, the researcher collected data in the following areas: demographics; work realities; leadership styles. From this research, the following issues important to understanding the day-to-day life of the assistant principal were explored:

1. a portrayal of who is in the job;
2. the differing leadership styles and decision-making approaches of these people;
3. job satisfaction as it relates to job expectations;
4. the manner in which organizations structure the work lives of people within them (and how these same people allow that structuring).

Throughout this research the goal was to study the culture of the assistant principalship from the perspective of those in the position, to present a clearer picture of how secondary schools are actually administered and the diversity of roles assumed by those in leadership positions.

Specifically, the procedure for data collection involved a multistep process. The experience of the researcher as an assistant principal and her study of the position led to the design of a pilot survey instrument that focused on substantive issues with respect to the assistant principal's work-life as reported in the literature. The rationale for the design of the instrument and the results of the pilot study are included as appendices (B and C).

Analysis of the pilot survey results led to the next step in the research process: the design of the survey questionnaire. Essentially, the pilot instrument was refined through the elimination of some aspects and the addition of others. Appendix B outlines these changes, and Chapter IV presents the survey findings.

The final stage of the data collection involved the design of the interview orientation. The significant issues in the assistant principal's work-life were utilized by the researcher as an interview guide that elicited participant response to these issues. These included assistant principals' perceptions on conflict, routine, isolation, relationship with the building principal, job satisfaction and career goals.

In reflecting the purpose of in-depth, phenomenological interviewing, the goal throughout the interviews was to understand, from the participant's perspective, the work experience of assistant principals, the meanings they attach to this experience and the expression of both in the participant's own words. To facilitate this goal and to elicit perceptions on issues resulting from the survey study, all participants were asked the same opening question:

What I am really looking for is to get some sense of what it is to be an assistant principal. If I were to follow you around for a day, or if I were to be in your shoes, what is a day like in the life of an assistant principal?

Throughout the interview process, the researcher guided the interview for two purposes only: (1) to redirect the course of the interview when participants appeared to be wandering in their thoughts and (2) to elicit participant responses to the issues that had evolved from the survey findings. In many cases, the interviewer's intervention was minimal as participants, of their own accord, focused on the issues of interest.

The Survey

Pilot Survey

In the spring and summer of 1985 a survey instrument was designed with the intention of piloting it as a preliminary to the actual survey. To do so, the researcher selected at random ten assistant principals from across the state. In July of 1985 the survey was mailed out to them and based on the results, a revised instrument was developed. Included as Appendix B are a description of the instrument and the results of the pilot study. What follows here is a description of the selection procedure used for identifying the population that was surveyed in the winter of 1986 with the revised instrument as well as the survey questions themselves.

Survey Population

According to Department of Education statistics, there are 253 public comprehensive high schools in Massachusetts (of which 49 are regional secondary schools). In light of the intention to focus in-depth on the day-to-day work lives of assistant principals, all of the assistant principals in these high schools (a number over 500) were not surveyed. Rather, 20% of the high schools across the state were randomly selected for study representing each of the seven "Kinds of Communities" as defined by the

Department of Education: (1) Urbanized Centers; (2) Economically-Developed Suburbs; (3) Growth Communities; (4) Residential Suburbs; (5) Rural-Economic Centers; (6) Small Rural Communities; (7) Resort/Retirement and Artistic Communities. A description of these classifications is included as Appendix D.

Research of the 253 high schools yielded the following statistics:

- 70 "Urbanized Center" schools representing 28% of the total number;
- 60 "Economically-Developed Suburb" schools representing 24%;
- 33 "Growth Community" schools representing 13%;
- 36 "Residential Suburb" schools representing 14%;
- 39 "Rural Economic Center" schools representing 15%;
- 6 "Small Rural Community" schools representing 2%;
- 9 "Resort/Retirement and Artistic Community" schools representing 4%.

From these numbers 50 high schools were randomly selected for study in numbers that reflect the percentage of total number of high schools in each category:

- 14 "Urbanized Center" schools;
- 12 "Economically-Developed Suburb" schools;
- 7 "Growth Community" schools;
- 7 "Residential Suburb" schools;
- 7 "Rural-Economic Center" schools;

- 1 "Small Rural Community" school;
- 2 "Resort/Retirement and Artistic Community" Schools.

The number of assistant principals surveyed in these schools reflects a similar ratio of the total number of assistant principals in the Commonwealth as, for example, "Urbanized Center" schools have, by the nature of their size alone, a larger number of assistant principals than those of "Small Rural Community" schools. Thus, in targeting 50 schools for study (20% of the total number of high schools in Massachusetts), 20% of the assistant principals in the state were surveyed. The actual selection of schools reflects the accuracy of this reasoning as the 50 targeted schools yielded a population of 106 assistant principals, which is approximately 20% of the assistant principals in Massachusetts.

The Survey Instrument

The survey instrument is divided into three sections: (1) Demographics; (2) Work realities; and (3) Leadership Styles and Decision-Making. Participants were asked to provide demographic information on themselves, data relating to their job responsibilities and goals as assistant principals, and responses to open-ended questions that presented hypothetical conflict scenarios as those often faced by assistant principals. A copy of the instrument is included as Appendix E.

Purpose of the Survey Questionnaire

It was anticipated that survey data collected in this way would provide solid descriptive data regarding a depiction of those in the position of assistant principal; would provide a relevant background for building the subsequent interviews; and would generate questions for further study. In addition, as all interview participants were also survey participants, it was expected that the survey information would round-out information from the interviews and would preclude the necessity of asking interview participants for background information.

In-depth Interviewing

The interview population was selected at random from participants who expressed a willingness to be interviewed in responding to the survey instrument. As all respondents to the pilot survey expressed this willingness, the assumption was that the actual survey would yield the same results. The intention was to select 15-20 participants for this stage of the research. Selected at random, participants would, nonetheless, reflect a cross-section with regard to type of community.

The interview process is as central to this research study as the survey. It was anticipated that information gleaned from the surveys would yield an important data base with respect to a delineation of who is in the job, what

that job entails, and how that individual responds to critical interactional conflicts. It would also, in doing so, provide a foundation from which to design an initial interview orientation. The intent of the interview went beyond this. Here the goal was to investigate the particular and unique culture of the assistant principalship from the perspective of the participant in order to more fully understand these individuals and the world they share as perceived by them. As Taylor and Bogdan report, "The important reality is what people perceive it to be" (1984, p. 2). Chapter IV presents the interview findings.

C H A P T E R I V

STUDY FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents research findings from a survey of, and interviews with, Massachusetts comprehensive secondary school assistant principals who are representative of each of the seven kinds-of-community schools as defined by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The findings from this study are presented from the general to the specific: first, by the response of the total population and, second, where variances occur between the total population and the specific KOCs, by kind of community school.

The effort here is to address the gap in the literature outlined in Chapter II--the ten-year-old view of the assistant principalship that results largely from a definition of what should be as opposed to the reality of what is. The traditional view--that all schools are the same when it comes to this position--is replaced here by a more contemporary view that recognizes that job roles, responsibilities and definitions are often a reflection of the kind of community school.

Although the interview population was also part of the survey population, the findings are presented in two separate sections: Survey Results and Interview Results. Whereas the design of the former is, for the most part, quantitative in nature, the latter is qualitative. The relationship between these two aspects of the research is addressed in Chapter V.

Survey Results reports the handwritten responses to questions asked in a six page questionnaire. Assistant principal data collected includes demographic information, work realities, and leadership styles and decision-making approaches. Results also provide the orientation for the subsequent interviews with assistant principals.

Interview Results presents the findings from fourteen 90 minute interviews with assistant principals. Analysis of the interview transcriptions yields six subsections describing assistant principal perceptions of the realities of their work-lives.

Survey Results

Introduction

Categorized by school and representative of the seven kinds of communities as classified by the Massachusetts Department of Education, the survey results yielded an overall response rate of 85%. In four of these classifications--urbanized centers, growth communities, residential suburbs and small rural communities--the response rate exceeded 90%. The assistant principals surveyed in these schools (N-106) resulted in a return of 59%.

In terms of percent of return by kind-of-community school, the response was as follows:

Kind of Community	Schools Surveyed	Response
Urbanized Centers	N=14	93% (N=13)
Economically Developed Suburbs	N=12	75 (N= 9)
Growth Communities	N= 7	100 (N= 7)
Residential Suburbs	N= 7	100 (N= 7)
Rural Economic Centers	N= 7	57 (N= 4)
Small Rural Communities	N= 1	100 (N= 1)
Resort/Retirement and Artistic	N= 2	50 (N= 1)
Total Schools	N=50	85% (N=42)

TABLE 1: SURVEY RESPONSE BY SCHOOL

The rate of response by individual assistant principals was as follows:

Kind of Community	A.P. Surveyed	Response
Urbanized Centers	N= 43	61% (N=26)
Economically Developed Suburbs	N= 20	55 (N=11)
Growth Communities	N= 14	57 (N= 8)
Residential Suburbs	N= 15	73 (N=11)
Rural Economic Centers	N= 10	40 (N= 4)
Small Rural Communities	N= 2	100 (N= 2)
Resort/Retirement and Artistic	N= 2	50 (N= 1)
Total Assistant Principals	N=106	59% (N=63)

TABLE 2: SURVEY RESPONSE BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Demographics

Eighty-four percent of the total population was male. In six of the seven kind-of-community schools, the percentage of male assistant principals exceeded 80%. The one exception was in growth community schools, where the percentage of men in the position was 63%.

The largest percentage of assistant principals reported themselves to be between 50 and 59 years of age (37%). Thirty percent of the population were between 40 and 49 years of age; 22% were between 30 and 39; and 6% reported their age to be 60 or older. Five percent of the total population did not indicate their age. The

responses by kind-of-community yielded similar findings (To eliminate repetition, kinds-of-communities (KOC) will hereafter be referred to by number: 1 = urbanized centers; 2 = economically developed suburbs; 3 = growth communities; 4 = residential suburbs; 5 = rural economic centers; 6 = small rural communities; 7 = resort/retirement and artistic):

KOC	% 30-39	% 40-49	% 50-59	% 60+
1	19	31	39	4
2	20	50	30	10
3	25		63	
4	27	36	36	
5	25	25	25	25
6	50	50		
7				100
Total	22	30	37	6

TABLE 3: AGE OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS BY KOC

With the exception of two individuals in growth community schools, assistant principals (92%) classified themselves as "White, non-Hispanic." Five percent of respondents did not provide their ethnic/racial background.

Fifty-one percent of the population carried the title of "assistant principal." Fourteen percent were "vice-principals"; 8% were "assistant headmasters"; 13%, "housemasters"; 3%, "associate principals," and 10% carried some other title such as "class coordinator" or "dean of

students." There were variances in percentages by kind-of-community. In smaller KOCs (4-7), greater than 75% of respondents carried the title of "assistant principal" whereas in larger KOCs (1-2), less than 50% did so:

KOC	% AP	% VP	% AH	% HM	% AS.P	% OTHER
1	27	8	19	27		19
2	46	36		9	9	
3	50	38				13
4	91					
5	75					
6	100					
7	100					
Total	51	14	8	13	3	10

TABLE 4 JOB TITLE BY KOC

AP = assistant principal; VP = vice principal;
 AH = assistant headmaster; HM = house master;
 AS.P = associate principal

Although respondents carried a variety of job titles, all are hereafter referred to as "assistant principals."

By far the largest percentage of the population had been in their present position five years or fewer (41%). Eighteen percent had been 6-10 years as assistant principals; 22%, 11-15 years; 13%, 16-20 years; and 2%, 21 years or more. Table 5 reflects the length of time in the position by kind of community:

KOC	% 0-5	% 6-10	% 11-15	% 16-20	% 21+
1	42	19	27	4	
2	18	27	27	18	9
3	38		25	25	
4	64	18	9	9	
5	50		25	25	
6	50	50			
7				100	
Total	41	18	22	13	2

TABLE 5: YEARS IN THE POSITION BY KOC

For 6% of the population the bachelor's degree was the highest degree held; for 64%, the master's degree; for 16%, the certificate of advanced graduate study; and for 10%, the doctor of education or philosophy. Community analysis revealed that the percentage of the population with advanced degrees (C.A.G.S. or Ed. D./Ph. D.) was restricted to the larger KOCs (1-4):

KOC	% B.A./B.S.	% M.A./M.S.	% C.A.G.S.	% Ed.D./Ph.D.
1		62	23	8
2		64	18	18
3	13	38	25	13
4	18	73		
5	25	75		
6		100		
7		100		
Total	6	64	16	10

TABLE 6: HIGHEST DEGREE EARNED BY KOC

There was a wide range of professional experiences and some commonalities for respondents prior to assuming their

present assistant principalship. Ninety-seven percent of the total population had had classroom teaching experience. Six percent had been guidance counselors at one time; 21% had been program directors or supervisors; 24%, department heads; 16% had been in some other school building leadership role (including administrative internships); and 3% had held central office administrative positions. In addition, 6% had been building principals at one time; 8%, assistant principals in some other setting; and 2%, college teachers before assuming their present responsibility. Many respondents indicated that they had held more than one of these positions, and the percentages reflect these multiple responses. Table 7 (Appendix F) reports these findings by kind of community.

In the larger communities there was a significant percentage of the population that was promoted directly from the classroom to the assistant principalship:

KOC	% Prior Teaching Experience Only
1	27
2	27
3	38
4	27
5	25
6	
7	
Total	27

TABLE 8: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS WITH PRIOR TEACHING EXPERIENCE ONLY

When asked to indicate the three most important factors in their decisions to become assistant principals, respondents provided a variety of reasons:

Factor	% #1	% #2	% #3
To use my special abilities	11	10	21
To exercise leadership	10	16	8
To be creative and original		2	3
To make a good salary	3	11	8
To achieve social status & prestige	2		5
To have an opportunity for further promotion	10	5	8
To assume greater responsibility	11	8	10
To influence the total school program	16	19	10
To have greater professional challenge	22	14	13
Other	3	3	3

TABLE 9: MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS IN DECISION TO BECOME AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

#1: Most Important Reason
 #2: Second Most Important Reason
 #3: Third Most Important Reason

As indicated by Table 9, the most common primary reason for seeking the assistant principalship was "to have greater professional challenge" (22%) while the least common primary reasons were "to achieve social status and prestige" (2%) and "to be creative and original" (no responses). When the results of the three factors were compiled, the frequency of response yielded the same results. Again, the most significant factor in seeking the assistant principalship was "to have greater professional challenge" (51%) while the least significant factors were

"to achieve social status and prestige" (6%) and "to be creative and original" (10%):

Factor	% Respondents
To use my special aptitudes and abilities	43
To exercise leadership	37
To be creative and original	10
To make a good salary	25
To achieve social status and prestige	6
To have an opportunity for further promotion	22
To assume greater responsibility	32
To influence the total school program	48
To have greater professional challenge	52
Other	13

TABLE 10: SIGNIFICANT FACTORS IN DECISION TO
BECOME AN ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

"Other" reasons for seeking the assistant principalship, as reported by respondents, included the following:

1. To work more closely with students
2. Asked to fill a vacancy
3. Classroom teaching had become boring
4. Support of staff
5. Central office position eliminated
6. To help kids
7. To change the negative image that most kids have of assistant principals
8. To protect my butt from alternatives
9. Health
10. District consolidation/Proposition 2 1/2

Work Realities

Relationship with Principal. When asked to characterize their relationship with their principals, 69% of the population characterized it as "very good"; 25%, as "good"; and 2%, as "poor." No one reported the

relationship to be "very poor." Kind of community analysis revealed similar findings:

KOC	Very Poor (%)	Poor (%)	I Do Not Know (%)	Good (%)	Very Good (%)
1		4		31	62
2				27	73
3			13	13	63
4				27	73
5				25	75
6					100
7					100
Total		2	2	25	68

TABLE 11: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS' CHARACTERIZATION OF RELATIONSHIP WITH PRINCIPAL

Work Responsibilities. With regard to work responsibilities, findings indicated that, by far, the common denominator for assistant principals was the responsibility for student discipline and for corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision. Eighty-three percent of the total population reported job emphasis "to a greater extent" on student discipline, and 79%, on corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision. Conversely, 21% indicated that student discipline should be emphasized "to a lesser extent," and 2%, "not at all." Likewise, 24% indicated that corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision should be emphasized "to a lesser extent," and 5%, "not at all."

Other responsibilities reported by the majority of the total population to be emphasized "to a greater extent" in their positions included school improvement and change (57%), teacher evaluation (56%) and parent involvement (54%). In all three areas, a majority of respondents reported that the responsibility should be emphasized to an even greater extent than it was: school improvement and change (73%), teacher evaluation (67%) and parent involvement (56%).

For most of the potential job responsibilities of the assistant principal (9 out of 16 items), the majority of respondents indicated lesser or no emphasis in their positions:

Item	% Indicating Lesser Emphasis	% Indicating No Emphasis
Teacher Selection	46	27
Curriculum and Instruction	60	8
Classroom Supervision	46	11
Program Planning and Grant Writing	46	32
Class Scheduling	37	17
Budgets	41	37
Staff Development	57	11
Community Relations	51	5
Central Office	67	24

TABLE 12: JOB TASKS FOR WHICH ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
HAVE LESSER OR NO RESPONSIBILITY

In three of these areas of responsibility for which assistant principals reported "lesser" or "no" emphasis in

their positions, a majority of respondents indicated that the responsibility should be emphasized "to a greater extent": teacher selection (51%), curriculum and instruction (54%) and classroom supervision (51%).

"Other" responsibilities of assistant principals reported by them (11%) to be emphasized "to a greater extent" include athletics, building maintenance, report cards, daily attendance, student scholarships and running the main office. In addition, 5% of the population indicated emphasis "to a greater extent" on teaching. Table 13 (Appendix G) presents an analysis of responses in all areas of responsibility.

When categorized by kind of community, findings with regard to job responsibilities sometimes yielded a variance in the nature of response from community to community. What follows here is a delineation by kind of community of participant responses to their involvement in particular job responsibilities.

Although 46% of the total population reported emphasis in their positions "to a lesser extent" in teacher selection and another 27% "no emphasis at all," there was a variance in responses by kind of community. In urbanized center schools, 27% of the population reported lesser emphasis while another 46% reported no emphasis at all. Similarly, in economically developed suburb schools, 55% reported lesser emphasis, and 18%, no emphasis at all; and

in rural economic center schools, 25% indicated lesser emphasis while another 50% reported no emphasis on teacher selection in their positions. Conversely, in residential suburb schools, while 73% reported lesser emphasis, there was no response indicating no emphasis at all. Respondents from both growth community and small rural community schools, likewise, did not indicate the total absence of emphasis on this area.

Eighty-three percent of the total population reported great emphasis in their positions on student discipline. For four of the seven kinds of communities--economically developed suburbs, rural economic centers, small rural communities, and resort/retirement and artistic communities--100% of the population responded that this responsibility was emphasized to a greater extent. Only in urbanized centers (77%), growth communities (63%) and residential suburbs (82%) did that percentage fall below 100%.

In response to the degree to which discipline should be emphasized, 100% of the population in the smaller kinds of communities--rural economic centers, small rural communities, and resort/retirement and artistic communities--indicated "to a greater degree." Conversely, 69% of the population in urbanized centers, 55% in economically developed suburbs and 50% in growth communities responded so.

While 27% of the total population reported that curriculum and instruction are emphasized to a greater extent, and 54% that these areas should be so emphasized, no respondents from smaller KOCs--small rural communities and resort/retirement and artistic communities--indicated greater emphasis on these issues.

With one exception, resort/retirement and artistic communities, the percent of the population indicating greater emphasis on classroom supervision increased as the relative size and complexity of the KOC decreased:

KOC	% Reporting Greater Emphasis
1	31
2	36
3	38
4	55
5	50
6	50
7	

TABLE 14: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING GREATER EMPHASIS IN THEIR POSITIONS ON CLASSROOM SUPERVISION

In all seven KOCs, as in the total population findings, the desire for greater emphasis on classroom supervision was equal to, and in most cases, greater than the reality of the emphasis.

For 49% of the total population, the responsibility for student activities is emphasized "to a greater extent"

and should be so emphasized. This strong correlation between what is and what should be was also reported in each of the KOCs. The percent reporting greater emphasis, however, directly correlated with the nature of the KOC. In smaller, less complex KOCs, greater than 75% of the assistant principals reported great emphasis on this role. On the other hand, less than 40% of responses from larger, more complex KOCs indicated this degree of emphasis. The one exception, as in the response to classroom supervision, was from resort/retirement and artistic communities:

KOC	% Reporting Greater Emphasis
1	39
2	36
3	38
4	82
5	75
6	100
7	

TABLE 15: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING GREATER EMPHASIS IN THEIR POSITIONS ON STUDENT ACTIVITIES

The assistant principal's role in program planning and grant writing is emphasized to a greater extent for 17% of the total population. Similarly, in all but one of the seven KOCs, 25% or less of the population so reported. The one exception was in small rural communities, where 50% of the population indicated greater emphasis on this

responsibility. The desire for greater emphasis on this role exceeded the total population response of 21% only in urbanized center communities (31%) and in rural economic centers (25%).

The responsibility for class scheduling is emphasized to a greater extent in the positions of 41% of the total population. This number varied significantly when reported by KOC although there was no correlation between the size and complexity of the KOC and the percent of response. Twenty-seven percent of urbanized center assistant principals and 73% of those from economically developed suburb schools reported greater emphasis on this role. Additionally, 50% of respondents from small rural communities so reported, and there was no indication of greater emphasis from resort/retirement and artistic community schools. As in the response from the total population, there was little or no variance between the degree of emphasis as is and as should be in each KOC.

For the total population, corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision was a primary responsibility: Seventy-nine percent of the total population reported this role as emphasized to a greater extent. This percentage is exceeded in all but one (growth communities--50%) of the seven KOCs. In smaller KOCs--rural economic, small rural, and resort/retirement and artistic--100% of assistant principals indicated greater emphasis on this role. The

findings were reversed in the larger, more complex KOCs (urbanized centers--81%; economically developed suburbs--82%; residential suburbs--82%).

The responsibility for budgets was reported to be emphasized to a greater extent in the position of 17% of the total population. As in responsibility for student activities and class scheduling, the percent of the population reporting greater emphasis on this responsibility increased as the relative size and complexity of the KOC decreased. Again, the one exception was in resort/retirement and artistic community schools:

KOC	% Reporting Greater Emphasis
1	4
2	9
3	25
4	27
5	50
6	100
7	

TABLE 16: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING GREATER EMPHASIS IN THEIR POSITIONS ON BUDGET PREPARATION

The responsibility for staff development is emphasized to a greater extent in the position of 27% of the total population. Forty-six percent of this same group indicated that the role should be emphasized to a greater extent. The responses by KOC were varied and without pattern, and range from 0% of small rural, and resort/retirement and

artistic community respondents to 75% of rural economic center respondents indicating greater emphasis in the position. As in the response of the total population, a higher percentage of respondents (in all instances but one--rural economic centers) reported a desire for greater emphasis on staff development than was the reality.

Fifty-six percent of the total population reported emphasis in their positions to a greater extent on teacher evaluation. As in other areas of involvement, this percentage increased as the KOC decreased in relative size and complexity. Again, the sole exception was in resort/retirement and artistic communities:

KOC	% Reporting Greater Emphasis
1	46
2	55
3	50
4	73
5	75
6	100
7	

TABLE 17: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING GREATER EMPHASIS IN THEIR POSITIONS ON TEACHER EVALUATION

Involvement with parents was reported as emphasized to a greater extent by 54% of the total population, and 56% of this group indicated the role should be so emphasized.

This high correlation between parent involvement as emphasized and as should be emphasized was similarly indicated in responses by KOC. There was, however, a variance, without pattern, in the percentage of respondents by KOC who reported greater emphasis on this role:

KOC	% Reporting Greater Emphasis
1	50
2	55
3	25
4	73
5	65
6	50
7	100

TABLE 18: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING GREATER EMPHASIS IN THEIR POSITIONS ON PARENT INVOLVEMENT

The responsibility for community relations was reported as emphasized to a greater extent for 40% of the total population. Forty-nine percent of this same population reported the responsibility should be so emphasized. When analyzed by KOC, emphasis on responsibility for this role revealed a broad range from 0% in resort/retirement and artistic schools to 64% in residential suburb schools. With the exception of resort/retirement and artistic community schools (0%) and urbanized center schools (39%), 50% or more of respondents

from each of the other KOCs indicated the position should be emphasized to a greater extent.

For 57% of the total population, school improvement and change are emphasized to a greater extent in their positions, and should be so emphasized as reported by 73% of this population. With the exception of resort/retirement and artistic community respondents, at least 50% of all other KOC respondents indicated a desire for greater emphasis on school improvement and change issues. In two of these KOCs--economically developed suburbs and residential suburbs--greater than 90% of assistant principals reported this responsibility should be emphasized to a greater extent.

As reported by 6% of the total population, interaction and involvement with central office is emphasized and should be emphasized to a greater extent. This 6% of the population is representative of only two of the seven KOCs: urbanized centers (12%) and rural economic centers (25%). In addition, although 0% of the residential suburb population reported the role was emphasized to a greater extent, 9% indicated that it should be so emphasized.

Job Satisfaction. Asked to describe their feelings about being assistant principals, 3% of the total population reported they were "very dissatisfied"; 3%,

"more dissatisfied than satisfied"; 11%, "equally satisfied and dissatisfied"; 40%, "more satisfied than dissatisfied"; and 40%, "very satisfied." There was a variance between the response of the total population and that of response by KOC. In each of the four smaller, less complex KOCs--residential suburbs, rural economic centers, small rural communities, and resort/retirement and artistic communities--100% of the population reported themselves to be "more satisfied than dissatisfied" or "very satisfied." On the other hand, this response was reported by 77% of urbanized center, 54% of economically developed suburb, and 75% of growth community center respondents. Additionally (as was not the case in the other KOCs), the percentage of assistant principals in these three KOCs reporting themselves to be "very satisfied" was less than or equivalent to the percentage who reported themselves to be "more satisfied than dissatisfied."

Only urbanized center assistant principals (8%) reported themselves as "very dissatisfied," and only economically developed suburb respondents (9%) and growth community respondents (13%) indicated they were "more dissatisfied than satisfied." Similarly, the category "equally satisfied and dissatisfied" was representative of the responses of urbanized center respondents (12%) and economically developed suburb respondents (36%) only.

Source of Greatest Job Satisfaction. Assistant principals reported a variety of responses to the open-ended question, "What gives you greatest satisfaction in your job?" These responses are categorized under five broad headings:

1. Working with and/or helping students
2. Witnessing student growth and improvement
3. Working with staff
4. Being involved in school improvement agendas
5. Solving problems

Assistant principals' responses often indicated satisfaction from two or more of these areas. In addition, 24% of the total population indicated some "other" source of job satisfaction.

Working with and/or helping students was one of the greatest sources of job satisfaction for 40% of the total population. This percentage reflects five of the seven KOCs. Respondents from smaller, less complex KOCs did not report this as a source of satisfaction:

KOC	% Response
1	50
2	55
3	25
4	27
5	25
6	
7	

TABLE 19: WORKING WITH AND/OR HELPING STUDENTS AS SOURCE OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Often assistant principals indicated that their greatest satisfaction came from helping students in particular ways. In these cases, respondents reported that satisfaction was derived from situations such as those which follow:

- * working closely with troubled youngsters ...despite the great frustration and limited amount of time (KOC 1)
- * helping students to understand the meaning of accountability and responsibility (KOC 1)
- * helping young people...trying to impart values to students that are good (KOC 2)
- * counseling--helping students with various aspects of day-to-day challenges, social and academic (KOC 2)
- * being able to use my special abilities and experience to help young people (KOC 4)
- * helping students to get the most out of the education offered (KOC 5)

In some cases, assistant principals indicated that satisfaction came from working with students in positive, non-disciplinary roles:

- * assisting students in a positive way (KOC 1)
- * working with young people, especially in non-disciplinary situations (KOC 1)
- * being able to reward through the Scholarship Committee those students who need help and have been good school citizens and achieved a good academic position (KOC 3)

One assistant principal from an economically developed suburb school reflected the satisfaction that he derived from filling a very basic student need:

[Job satisfaction comes from] being able to have students come in--every period--to say "hello," tell me something wonderful has happened (new baby, etc.) and to know that the door is always open to discuss anything. Students must feel wanted and needed and must know that someone is in the building who is willing to listen! That's all that most of them want--SOMEONE TO LISTEN.

For another 19% of assistant principals, one of the greatest satisfactions comes from working with staff. This percentage represents responses from four of the seven KOCs: urbanized centers (23%); growth communities (25%); economically developed suburbs (18%); residential suburbs (18%). As one assistant principal from an economically developed suburb school reported, "[My greatest satisfaction] comes from teaching, facilitating and motivating staff."

Eighteen percent of assistant principals reported that witnessing student growth and improvement was one of their greatest sources of satisfaction. This percentage represents 31% of the urbanized center population, 9% of the economically developed suburb population, 25% of the rural economic center population and 100% of the resort/retirement and artistic population. In their responses assistant principals derived satisfaction from the following situations:

- * seeing even a few individuals make progress (KOC 1)
- * a youngster...helped to turn around as a result of my efforts (KOC 1)
- * observing change in the youngster with whom I work. Thank God for that. This position would be very unfulfilling if it were not for that (KOC 1)
- * seeing a student make a complete turn-around in the school setting (KOC 2)
- * seeing a student weather the storm of a bad year or a bad semester, academically or regarding self-discipline, and get back on the right track. Often this involves simply "hanging in" with a student, not giving up on them (KOC 7)

For 16% of assistant principals involvement in school improvement agendas provided one of the greatest satisfactions on the job. With the exception of resort/retirement and artistic community respondents, assistant principals from all KOCs indicated this to be a factor in job satisfaction:

KOC	% Responding
1	8
2	9
3	38
4	18
5	25
6	50
7	

TABLE 20: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AS SOURCE OF JOB SATISFACTION FOR ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Indicators of this source of satisfaction were varied in perspective:

- * seeing the success of programs that I have developed--increased attendance, academic success, greater involvement of students (KOC 1)
- * having a positive influence on a decision because of valid input. Bringing the school scheduling development process to a successful conclusion (KOC 2)
- * completing specific curriculum projects, 9-12, and improving program where possible and necessary (KOC 3)
- * seeing my efforts contribute to greater efficiency and effectiveness of the school (KOC 3)
- * building an excellent school (KOC 4)
- * making the best learning environment possible (KOC 5)
- * effecting positive change in the school (KOC 6)

Ten percent of assistant principals indicated that their greatest satisfaction came from solving problems. This response was reflective of urbanized centers (4%), economically developed suburbs (9%), growth communities (25%) and residential suburbs (18%). Typical of responses was the comment of a residential suburb assistant principal who reported "[My greatest satisfaction comes from] problem solving in terms of teachers' and students' concerns."

For 24% of the population responses indicated that job satisfaction is derived from other than the five

categories above. For these individuals, the source of satisfaction spans a broad range of possibilities:

- * I find this job has much more freedom than classroom teaching (KOC 1)
- * I derive satisfaction from working for change through the state principals' organization (MSSAA) and NEASC evaluations (KOC 2)
- * having the opportunity to budget my own time (KOC 4)
- * rapport with the principal (KOC 5)

Reshaping the Role of the Assistant Principal. When asked what they would be "most likely to change" if they had it in their power to reshape the role of the assistant principal, 38% reported a reduction or elimination of responsibilities currently assigned to them. Half of this group--19% of the total population--would reduce the responsibility for student discipline. Assistant principals from all KOCs but rural economic centers reported this. The other 19% reported a decrease in (or elimination of) responsibility for some other area of involvement including attendance and tardiness; corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision; teacher evaluation; fund raising; supplies; committee work; program of studies; "administrivia"; and/or the overall broadness of responsibilities. With the exception of discipline, as noted, most of the responsibilities reported represented single instances of response. This desire to reduce or eliminate assigned tasks was represented by all KOCs:

KOC	% Discipline	% Other Responsibilities
1	19	15
2	9	27
3	25	13
4	18	9
5		25
6	50	100
7	100	

TABLE 21: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING A DESIRE FOR REDUCTION OR ELIMINATION OF ASSIGNED TASKS

While 38% reported a desire for less responsibility, 41% indicated a desire for increased or added involvement in other areas: teacher selection and evaluation (14%); staff development (13%); curriculum and program development (14%). This 41% of the total population represented five of the seven KOCs. Assistant principals from smaller, less complex KOCs did not report a desire for increased responsibility:

KOC	% Teacher Selection and Evaluation	% Staff Development	% Curr/Prgm Development
1	19	15	19
2	18	27	27
3	13		
4		9	9
5	25		
6			
7			

TABLE 22: ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS REPORTING A DESIRE FOR INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY

Eight percent of assistant principals would change the "bad guy" image associated with their roles. This desire was reported by the larger KOCs only: urbanized centers (12%) and economically developed suburbs (18%). Another 8% would change some other aspect of their roles: elimination of the title "assistant," increase in salary, ability to more effectively impact on school board decisions, and increase in position to full-time. Eleven percent of assistant principals would change nothing about their positions. This eleven percent represents 8% of the urbanized center population, 13% of the growth community population and 36% of the residential suburb population.

Career Goals. While 40% of the total population expected to be in their present positions in five years, only 18% would like to do so. In some cases assistant principals indicated a desire or expectation to be in more than one of the possibilities offered. Eliminating multiple responses, in five years 56% of assistant principals expected to be in some other position, and 63% would like to be. Table 23 represents the percentage of responses in each category.

GOAL	Expectation (%)	Desire (%)
Retired	21	19
Classroom Teacher	3	2
AP (Same School)	40	18
AP (Other School)	2	3
Principal	25	33
Central Office		
Position	10	6
Superintendent	3	2
College Teacher	3	5
Other	2	3
No Response	10	22

TABLE 23: FIVE-YEAR EXPECTED AND DESIRED CAREER GOALS OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

By kind of community, the percentage of assistant principals expecting or desiring to be in some other position in five years was, in most instances, greater than 50% of the population. The one exception was in residential suburbs (KOC 4) where 46% of assistant principals expected to be in some other position in five years. Table 24 reflects the expectation and desire for career change by KOC.

KOC	Expectation (%)	Desire (%)
1	50	65
2	55	64
3	75	75
4	46	55
5	50	75
6	100	100
7	100	

TABLE 24: FIVE YEAR EXPECTATION AND DESIRE FOR CAREER CHANGE BY ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

The Assistant Principalship - A Good Day. Assistant principals characterized a "good day" in a number of ways. Their responses were coded and classified in one or more of eight categories:

- * A day with good attendance (teacher and student);
- * A day without major confrontations or problems;
- * A day without interruptions that interfere with the ability to do the job;
- * A day when some positive interaction occurs;
- * A day when a problem is resolved;
- * A day when a student is helped;
- * A day that allows involvement in school improvement issues;
- * Other.

The most frequently occurring response was that a good day (for 38% of the population) was when some positive interaction occurred. This was an indicator for 35% of the urbanized center population, 46% of the economically developed center population, 25% of the growth community population, 18% of the residential suburb population, 25% of the rural economic center population and 100% of the small rural community population. Assistant principals expressed this indicator in a number of ways:

- * It is a day when I have had some positive discussions with students and parents. (KOC 1)
- * [A good day is when] someone calls and applauds my students and staff; when students/staff come to me and say how "someone" thanked them for something. (KOC 1)

- * A good day is one with...a positive word being said to me that I accomplished something. (KOC 2)
- * [A good day is] one that allows time away from the office--to meet with both students and staff--without problems to discuss. (KOC 3)
- * [A good day is] when the smiles outnumber the frowns. (KOC 4)
- * [A good day is] one in which I feel I have had a positive impact on teachers, students, parents or school in general. (KOC 6)

For 32% of respondents a good day was one that allowed assistant principals to accomplish their work without interruptions. While 39% of the urbanized center, 36% of the economically developed suburb, 25% of the growth community and 36% of the residential suburb populations reported that this was an indicator, assistant principals from the three smaller, less complex KOCs did not report this. For the 32% who indicated this criterion, a good day is characterized by the following conditions:

- * [when] hopefully you won't be inundated with conduct cards. (KOC 1)
- * [when] I am able to accomplish all the tasks that I had planned for the day. Serious discipline crises, staff problems, irate parents absence of key students, pressure of salesmen, etc., have a way of cropping up and destroying the best laid plans, sometimes to the point where I feel I am just reacting to situations instead of controlling and directing them. (KOC 1)
- * Each day I make a list of deeds that I would like to accomplish during the school day. I feel that I have had a good day if I have the time to accomplish these goals. However, because of the constant interruptions, this rarely happens. (KOC 2)

- * Planning ahead works out---no crises other than the "normal" ones! (KOC 3)
- * One in which I am able to effectively help each student who needs and/or seeks it; deal effectively with each discipline problem; properly complete all paper work...have 5-15 minutes to myself. . . . All in all, there are, by my own definition, very few truly good days--but, we get as close as anyone could. (KOC 1)

The third most frequently occurring indicator of a good day (29% of the total population) is the absence of a major confrontation or problem during the school day. This was reported to be a criterion for 39% of the urbanized center, 36% of the economically developed suburb, 13% of the growth community, 9% of the residential suburb, 25% of the rural economic center and 100% of the resort/retirement and artistic community respondents. The responses from community to community were markedly similar in nature:

- * No hard-line confrontations (KOC 1)
- * No serious and stressful encounters with teachers, students or parents (KOC 1)
- * Few confrontations (KOC 2)
- * No major problems on that day (KOC 2)
- * Few discipline problems (KOC 4)
- * No great problems with student body (KOC 5)

Twenty-one percent of assistant principals reported a good day to be one where involvement in school improvement issues occurred. This percentage represented 15% of the urbanized center, 27% of the economically developed suburb,

25% of the growth community, 18% of the residential suburb, 25% of the rural economic center and 50% of the small rural community populations. In virtually all of these instances, a good day was one where assistant principals were out of their offices and in classrooms. A good day, so classified, is one:

[with] the opportunity to successfully improve the quality of instruction at school (KOC 1)

[that involves] stopping by a classroom and observing (KOC 1)

[with] time to visit classrooms (not just for evaluation purposes) (KOC 2)

[when] I have been able to get out of my office to visit some classrooms where I have seen, first-hand, quality teaching (KOC 3)

[when] I observe 1 or 2 classes, meet with the teachers and make a suggestion which works to improve their teaching; [when] I am able to add something to the program (KOC 6)

Other categories of responses to the conditions that determine a good day yielded a smaller percent of response. For 11% of the population, a good day is one when problems are resolved; for another 11%, when student and teacher attendance are good (reported, for the most part, by larger KOCs); and, for 6%, when a student is helped. Six percent of the population indicated some "other" factor was involved in measuring whether the day were good or not. As one urbanized center assistant principal whimsically reported, "A good day is a bright sunny day--not raining."

Leadership Styles and Decision-Making Approaches

Introduction. Asked to respond to four open-ended questions about situations of conflict that administrators often face, assistant principals reported a variety of strategies for managing the proposed conflicts. Although varied, their responses, for the most part, could be classified in one of three types of response: the assistant principal would (1) assume responsibility for handling/resolving the conflict; (2) defer responsibility to some other individual; or (3) ignore the situation.

Within each of these categories, there were sub-categories of response. For example, "handling" the conflict sometimes meant involving other key persons in the organization, other times, doing so alone. "Handling" also involved issues of timing and turf: Some would proceed immediately while others expressed the value of postponement; similarly, some valued a meeting in the assistant principal's office while others proposed meeting in the other's (or on neutral) territory. Additionally, deferring responsibility sometimes involved one higher in authority; other times, a subordinate. In all cases, responses, both categorical and sub-categorical, reflected the leadership styles and decision-making skills of assistant principals.

Conflict Resolution: Assistant Principal-Teacher

The first scenario described a conflict between the assistant principal and a teacher:

It is extremely busy in your office, and you have many students around you. A teacher enters, demands to see you immediately, and then angrily states in front of the students that there are trespassers in the hallway who do not belong there "if anyone in administration cares to do anything about it." The teacher then leaves your office before you can reply. Later in the day, the same teacher refuses your request to come to your office to discuss the situation saying "there is nothing to talk about." This is not the first time you and other members of the building administration have had difficulty with this teacher.

Briefly describe what you would do next in this situation.

Although 76% of the total population reported responses indicating they would assume responsibility for handling the situation, there were differences in the definition of the problem, and, consequently, in the handling of it. Interpreting the problem as one of insubordination, 35% of assistant principals reported they would direct the teacher to a meeting in their offices. Twenty-three percent of this group would accompany their directive with a written reprimand. The comments from these assistant principals reflect their interpretation of the problem:

First of all, I would not request but give a directive to report. If the directive were ignored, I would cite the teacher according to school department guidelines and contractual agreement.
(KOC 1)

I would write a letter of reprimand to the teacher and direct the teacher to appear before me and the principal at a designated time. (KOC 2)

Since it was not the first time, a written reprimand about her behavior in the presence of students would be in order. Her presence would then be required, not requested, to discuss her problem. (KOC 2)

I would send a letter requesting to meet in my office. (KOC 4)

I would inform the teacher--in writing--of the scheduled appointment that has to be set up. (KOC 6)

I would demand a meeting with teacher and principal (and superintendent, if necessary). (KOC 7)

Thirty-seven percent of assistant principals, categorized as "handling" the situation, would do so by approaching the teacher on his or her own "turf"--the classroom--or on some neutral territory. One urbanized center assistant principal explained his rationale in this way, "Rather than send for a teacher, I prefer to seek them out personally in order to discuss school issues with which they may be involved." Similarly, another urban assistant principal explained her approach: "I would go to the teacher rather than have the teacher come to me. Meeting the teacher on his/her 'turf' demonstrates an effort on the part of administration that the issue is one of mutual concern." This style was also reported by another urban assistant principal, "In my opinion, the A.P. should not have requested that the teacher go to his/her office. Instead, the A.P. should seek the teacher out (preferably on a free period) and discuss calmly what happened."

Although many assistant principals reported they would go to the teacher themselves, there was indicated, in some responses, as direct an approach in confronting the teacher as in the case of those who would require an office meeting:

I would go and see him--explain procedures--restate expectations--explain that I didn't care for his unprofessional behavior and that if he did not handle his respect--that I would then document and file insubordination charges. (KOC 4)

I would see this teacher during a free period or after school and explain that out of common courtesy that the teacher should show more common sense. Next, I would explain that this teacher also had a first obligation to address the issue and that he/she was remiss in not doing so. (KOC 5)

Unlike assistant principals who would focus on the issues of disrespect and insubordination, there was embedded in the response of many a desire to seek the teacher out in order to get to the cause of the problem. Why had the teacher behaved in this manner? What was the source of the anger? As one assistant principal explained, "I would go to the teacher to discuss the situation. I'd try to elicit the reason for the anger and let the teacher know how I responded to the incident" (KOC 2). Yet another assistant principal reported a similar approach: "I would probably go to the teacher and attempt to find the source of the animosity since it is clearly not the issue of trespassers" (KOC 3).

This willingness to assume the anger was misplaced, was brought on by causes independent of the hallway trespassers, was also indicated in the response of this urbanized center assistant principal: "I would assume an outburst of this type was provoked by unusual pressure on the staff member." Similarly, a residential suburb assistant principal responded, "[I would] wait until people cool down--talk quietly with the teacher examining motives for hostility toward administration."

Approaching the teacher, for some respondents, is an attempt to resolve the conflict by assuming responsibility themselves, i.e., by explaining their actions with regard to the trespassers: "I would go to the teacher and explain what I had done to remove the trespassers" (KOC 3).

Another would approach the teacher and resolve the conflict by praising the teacher's actions:

[I would] go to the teacher--ask him/her to write up a description of the trespassers, praise the teacher for reporting it to the office--in writing mention office procedure: report incidents to the secretary if it is not an emergency. (KOC 4)

It is not unusual, in the style of these assistant principals, to find a desire to "mend bridges." As one urban assistant principal began, "First, I try never to get a staff member against me...." A residential suburb respondent reported, "I would...end [the] conversation on a positive note by offering suggestions for hallway improvement...." Another residential suburb assistant

principal responded, "[I would] discuss the problem in a friendly way." How different this style is from that of the assistant principal who reported, "I'd eat their butt out for being so ignorant in front of students."

Timing was essential in handling the situation for 14% of the total population. "Wait till people cool down," reported one residential suburb respondent. And, another: "I would ask the teacher, once again, to speak to me; however I would ask him the next day." Explaining his rationale for postponing action, an urban respondent reported, "I would avoid the request for a meeting that day. It is more likely a calmer attitude would prevail the next day."

Pointing out the benefit of delayed reaction, an urban assistant principal reported, "I would escalate as slowly as possible, and with all good will and dialogue possible." With a similar approach, another responded, "I believe it would be a mistake to ask the teacher to see me that day. Possibly a cooling off period would be good for both involved" (KOC 2).

Another 8% of the total population indicated by their responses that they would defer resolution of the problem to some other individual. This percentage represented 12% of urbanized center respondents and 18% of residential suburb respondents. One urban assistant principal said, "I would contact the teacher's department head." Another

urban respondent offered as a solution, "Consult the principal," and a third, "I would bring this to the attention of the principal." A residential suburban respondent similarly reported she would "discuss the situation with the principal with the suggestion that he talk to the teacher."

A third category of responses (5%) indicated a desire to ignore the situation, to "let it go." One residential suburb assistant principal simply replied, "Depending on the situation, I might ignore it." Another assistant principal said, "After I checked the immediate situation concerning the alleged intrusion, I would invite the teacher in. Upon the refusal described, I would indicate that the opportunity to speak is available, otherwise, keep quiet!" (KOC 2).

An urban school assistant principal's response indicated his avoidance of the conflict by defining the problem as one of trespassers and by offering a strategy for handling trespassers:

I would immediately smile at the teacher, thank him/her, excuse myself from the students and ask them to wait for me as I will return in a few minutes and look to see who the "trespassers" were. If they did not belong in the school, I would escort them to the nearest exit. If they belong in the school, I would accompany them to my office, ask them to wait, take care of my other students and then try to find out if there were a problem with the trespassers. I would not ask a teacher to come to my office if that situation took place.

Although another urban assistant principal expressed more awareness of the inappropriateness of the teacher's actions, his response indicated that he would, nevertheless, avoid dealing with the issue:

I'm not sure that I would do anything in this situation. I don't like to initiate a confrontation with a teacher that I'm not reasonably sure of winning. Yes, the teacher was rude to interrupt in this manner, but he/she may have perceived a potentially dangerous situation, and yes, the snide remark about administration was uncalled for, but these are not issues that I would press to the limit.

Conflict Resolution: Assistant Principal-Student.

The second scenario described a potential conflict between the assistant principal and a student:

As you sit on stage at the close of the year awards ceremony, you are surprised to hear the principal presenting a perfect attendance award to a particular member of the freshman class. Although the home room records indicate that the student has perfect attendance, as assistant principal, you are aware that this student has cut classes on numerous occasions. The student walks off-stage proudly wearing her award--a shirt with "I'm perfect" printed on the front.

How do you propose to handle this situation with the student?

Sixty-seven percent of the total population indicated, by their response, that they would assume responsibility for handling the proposed situation. As in the previous scenario, there were differences in terms of the definition of the problem and, consequently, differences in terms of the nature of their responses.

Thirty-two percent of respondents interpreted the problem as a flaw in the system of award distribution. For these assistant principals, handling the problem may be defined as addressing and correcting this flaw. For some assistant principals in this group, the focus of the solution lay in revising the system for rewarding perfect attendance so that the situation would not reoccur:

At this time, some format would have to be devised to assure that this didn't happen again. (KOC 2)

Too late! Prevent reoccurrence--attendance system malfunctioned. (KOC 4)

One small rural community assistant principal, expressing a similar view, proposed a solution: "Let's face it. We blew it. We need to set up a procedure for the future where students listed to receive attendance [awards] would be cross-referenced with my records of class-cutting."

Repeatedly, assistant principals who viewed the problem as organizational echoed the theme that the student is not to be punished for the school's oversight: "I would not penalize the student for the school's mistake. After the assembly I would inform the principal that an error was made and that perhaps he should check out the awards before going public with them" (KOC 2). Similarly, an urban school assistant principal noted, "This is not the student's fault. It belongs to the school. I would

initiate an inquiry as to where the chain in the building broke down. Then I would set out to correct this."

Although many perceived the student as blameless--"This has very little to do with the student" (KOC 2)--for others, it is simply a "dead issue with the student" (KOC 4). One urban assistant recognized the student's "getting away with it": "The ground rules should be changed in the future, but the kid walks off free." Another expressed the hope that the student recognized his/her unworthiness: "I would say nothing to the student, who is surely aware of his shortcomings, at the assembly."

For 22% of the population handling the problem meant addressing the issue of the inappropriateness of the award with the student. No respondents in this group made reference to an organizational flaw. Some respondents indicated their desire to inform the student that she/he was not worthy of the award: "I would certainly let the student know that she was not deserving" (KOC 2). Another assistant principal, also from an economically developed suburb high school, shared a similar view: "[I would] indicate to the student that the ceremony is but a brief show; that she "fooled" the observers but cannot fool herself." Similarly, from an urbanized center respondent: "I would. . . in school, good-naturedly but firmly, inform the student that I was aware that he "got away with one"

and that I would be watching to make certain he deserved his next award!" In some detail, an urbanized center assistant principal outlined his strategy:

The next day I would send for the student and discuss the situation at hand. I would bring out the facts that both of us are aware of. I would also ask the guidance counselor to be present to further discuss the matter. It would continue along the lines of this not being a true and valid situation which the student should realistically face. She/He is not entitled to this award and should respectfully make amends to inform the principal of this fact, accompanied by the guidance counselor or myself. Finally, a call to the parents would be made explaining the situation and offering to meet if they so desire.

For most of the respondents in this group, there was a desire to encourage the student to recognize the inappropriateness of the award. As one residential suburb assistant principal suggested:

Call the student into your office the next day, tell him or her it was a mistake as he or she knows--but keep the award to remind the person that no one is perfect--the school or the student.

Likewise, a growth community assistant principal suggested a "follow-up conference to assist student in evaluating the apparent contradiction." Respondents in this category, over and over, asserted the view that it is important to meet "privately" and, as one residential suburb respondent suggested, "to allow the student to come around on his/her own."

Finally, of this group of assistant principals who indicated their desire to resolve the situation (67% of the total population), 13% would address both sides of the issue--the overall flaw in the system of award distribution and the specific flaw in recognizing the student. One urban assistant principal's response was characteristic of this 13%: "I would let the student be aware that I was aware that his attendance was not perfect. It was perfect relative to the criteria being used and in the future the criteria for judgement would be examined."

Handling the situation was someone else's responsibility according to responses of 13% of the population. One urbanized center assistant principal, having suggested a solution, proposed, nevertheless, that it be referred to another for handling: ". . . mention to his guidance counselor that attendance in all classes has not been perfect and should be addressed with the student. . . ."

Other respondents, while not identifying the problem issue, indicated that they would refer the matter to the school principal:

I would present the information to the principal and await his wisdom. (KOC 5)

I would be more likely to consult with the principal and let him handle the student and whatever he decided would be fine with me. (KOC 3)

I would discuss the matter with the principal and allow him to handle it. (KOC 1)

Ten percent of the total population indicated that they would do nothing with respect to the situation occurring. One small rural community assistant principal in response to the question, "How do you propose to handle this situation with the student?" said simply "I don't." "You really don't want this answer," wrote one urbanized center respondent, "but I would not at this point be able to do much. Should I tackle the student before he/she leaves the stage???" Still another, from an economically developed suburb, wrote, "There is little you can do in this case...." Interpreting the award literally, an urbanized center assistant principal responded: "Understanding that the award means attendance in school every day, I would do nothing."

In contrast with earlier respondents whose comments indicated they perceived the situation to be a serious one, an urbanized center assistant principal stated, "There will be three more years to "straighten" out the student's self-perception. There are more important items to deal with."

From a similar point of view but in greater detail, an economically developed suburb assistant principal explained his rationale for ignoring the issue:

I suppose, as the kids say, most of the time, it's "you win some, lose some!" First of all, the "Attendance Award" has to do with coming to school, not going to classes. Therefore, we are comparing

apples with oranges. Secondly, a student who cuts classes is no different from the one who "acts up" in class and is sent to the office. The "good" student who is truant one day--for any reason (mother was drunk, father was arrested, 14 year old sister said she was pregnant, etc.) doesn't get the "perfect attendance" award. She has Honor Roll status, is President of the Student Council, etc. but she was truant one day. What a fallacy to award "Perfect Attendance." To me, it's a joke. If you would like to use some realistic cases, spend a day in my office, any day--UNANNOUNCED-- find out why Amy--14 years old--grade 9--is a hooker on weekends in the Combat Zone; why Eric, age 14 with an I.Q. of 138 took his SAT's at age 12--and is now in level 3 classes (#1 being Honors) getting Cs and Ds.

Conflict Resolution: Assistant Principal-Assistant Principal. When inconsistency in managing discipline issues arises between assistant principals, there is potential for conflict. The third scenario presented such a situation:

You have suspended a non-White student for a week for coming to school under the influence of alcohol; the school discipline policy calls for suspension as a minimum response. Shortly after, it comes to your attention that another assistant principal has allowed three White students caught drinking in the bathroom to remain in school. This is confirmed by a conversation with the teacher who reported the incident.

How would you respond to this action of your colleague?

Sixty-eight percent of the total population indicated by their responses that their first action would be to address this situation by approaching the other assistant

principal. Their reasons for doing so, however--and sometimes their approach--varied.

Although the incident was "confirmed by a conversation with the teacher," many assistant principals expressed the need for more information before proceeding. Their style was reminiscent of those assistant principals in earlier scenarios who spoke of the importance of exercising caution and proceeding slowly: "I would call the colleague and discuss the incidents to verify that the incident did indeed take place. . ." (KOC 1). Similarly, one residential suburb assistant principal said simply, "I would want to verify." Another assistant principal from a growth community school explained his rationale in this way: "I would speak with the other assistant. It is possible the teacher who reported the incident did not have all the facts." Also seeking the "facts," an economically developed suburb assistant principal recognized that there might sometimes be mitigating circumstances:

There are too many missing factors--example, John, age 15, drinks in the bathroom. I suspend him because his mother is at home. Bill, age 15, drinks--I would suspend but Bill's mother is a widow who works full-time and suspending Bill merely gives him a day off to do what he pleases.

An urbanized center respondent expressed a similar view: "I would consult with my colleague to confirm the facts. If the facts stand as indicated, I would ask him what

extenuating circumstances prompted him to temper justice with so much mercy. . . ."

Whereas 19% of assistant principals, categorized as "handling" the problem, defined the problem as addressing the specific instance of unequal treatment of students, the larger group (43%) defined the problem as a broader issue: general inconsistency in the enforcement of the discipline code. As one urban assistant principal responded:

[I would] speak to the colleague and let him know he is making it more difficult for me to do [my] job. [I would] try to convince him that consistency of discipline is essential to the operation of the school.

Another urbanized center respondent acknowledged the same difficulty when inconsistency arises: "I would ask my colleague why she chose not to follow established procedures and point out the difficulties created when we don't follow the same policies. . . ." Consistency was the primary issue for this urbanized respondent as well: "He and I would have a discussion concerning the fact situation and review the need to be consistent in implementing school policy." Yet another assistant principal from the urban sector reported what would resolve the issue for him:

This would depend upon my colleague's track record re: events of this nature. Assuming that this was an accidental oversight or poor judgement, I would privately tell him/her that such violations demand a minimum response from the school, and I would point

out the unfairness and inconsistency in not complying with such a policy. If the response were positive, I would end the situation. . . .

The need for consistency among assistant principals was also indicated in the comments of other respondents. An economically developed suburb respondent expressed a desire for the two administrators to work together to promote consistency: "Both assistants should discuss how they approach discipline. The discipline policy should be adhered to and the two assistants need to come to some common understanding." From the same kind of community, a respondent proposed similar advice: "Confer with colleague to secure consistent policy/procedure." Also wanting to prevent future occurrences, a residential suburb assistant principal shared, "I would talk to him directly and make sure he knows the regs for future incidents." And with the assumption that the assistant principal did know the rules, a rural economic center respondent proposed reminding the colleague of the value of consistency: "I would remind my colleague that inconsistency is the ruination of any system--and in order to gain the confidence and respect of the student body--similar offenses must be treated in the same fashion."

For 19% of the total population, as indicated earlier, resolving the problem meant addressing the specific issue

of inequity in the treatment of the students (as described in the scenario). For these assistant principals the request, and sometimes the demand, was that the other students be suspended. Not surprisingly, considering the issue of White and non-White students, this desire was expressed by 31% of urbanized center respondents, whose schools, in many cases, have large numbers of minority students. This 31% represents two-thirds of the 19% of the total population who identified inequity as the problem to be addressed.

Thus, one urbanized center assistant principal stated, "[I would] demand on the spot the suspension of the three White students." And, from another urban respondent: "I would immediately inform the A.P. of what I had done and would insist that this be done to the other students. It's best to correct late than to live with a mistake." With less demand, another urban center assistant principal said, "I would...strongly urge that he reconsider and suspend." And, with even less insistence--and more emphasis on his own discomfort--another respondent from an urban school reported, "I would go to him and tell him of the predicament he has put me in and to please re-consider. . . ."

Similarly, assistant principals from economically developed suburb schools (27%) identified the issue as

being one of inequity in the specific instance. Their approaches, as in the case of urban school assistant principals, ranged from suggestion and recommendation to insistence:

I would definitely suggest that if the students were caught drinking, that they should also be suspended one week. The discipline in this case must be consistent.

I would recommend that the White students be suspended. . . .

[I would] discuss the situation with him with the intention that his original response be reversed and he follow school policy.

Some assistant principals revealed anger in their responses and their intention to "confront" the other assistant principal. "We would be in one hell of an argument," said one urban school respondent. With greater specificity, an economically developed suburb respondent reported, "I would tell the other assistant principal that he is a jerk. . . ." Despite these indications, for the most part (as indicated in earlier responses), there was an implied attempt to resolve the issue, not inflame the situation; to maintain the relationship, not estrange it. A respondent from a residential suburb high school expressed it in this way: "[The] most difficult part of [the] job is [the] relationship with fellow

assistants--same authority--only position in the school system where two or more have the same authority."

Where 68% of the population would themselves address the issue with the other assistant principal (albeit it in different ways and for different reasons), another 8% of the total population would immediately defer the problem to someone else, in all cases, to the building principal. As would be expected in cases where someone else assumes responsibility for problem solving, their responses were often brief and without proposed resolution. "Principal conference between the three of us," said one urban assistant principal. And, with equal brevity another said, "I would request a meeting with the building principal."

A representative from a growth community school identified the problem to be deferred: "I would bring it to the attention of the principal. Obviously a consistent response is necessary--kids smell bias all too quickly." Similarly, a respondent from a rural economic center school suggested: "Report to principal in presence of colleague--policy exists for all or none."

Ignoring the situation altogether was the response of 5% of the total population. An urban assistant principal who chose not to address the problem explained, "There may have been certain circumstances not known by us that caused this to happen."

Another urban respondent, choosing to ignore the issue, expressed confidence in the fact that he had responded appropriately in suspending the non-White student: "I handled mine right--I have no worry. I can answer to anyone for my actions. Let the other administrator worry about it." A respondent from a rural economic center school expressed a similar view: "Unless I was called upon by my superiors, I may not mention it to him, the assistant principal; however, he would have to answer for his decisions. I would be able to give my stand by following school policy."

Conflict Resolution: Assistant Principal-Principal.

When a teacher's action is interpreted--and responded to--differently by principal and assistant principal, complications may arise. When that action is against school policy and the principal's response overrides a decision made by the assistant principal, the potential for conflict is present. The final scenario in the survey described the latter situation:

One day you reprimand a student for leaving school without permission. After much evasiveness, the student reports that a teacher sent him to the local bakery to buy coffee and doughnuts. As school policy does not allow this, you approach the teacher, who denies having sent the student anywhere.

Later on in the day, as you are about to suspend the student for the incident, it becomes clear that the teacher has lied. You discuss the seriousness of the incident with the teacher and tell him/her you are considering some form of disciplinary action. Before

you can do so, however, the teacher approaches the principal, who dismisses the incident. You are upset with the principal's response and even more upset with his/her failure to consult you.

How will you handle this situation?

Seventy percent of the total population indicated that they would "handle" this situation and would do so by approaching the principal themselves. As in previous responses to conflict situations, however, their reasons for speaking to the principal, their style and their manner of approach varied.

Making sure the principal had all the "facts" motivated some assistant principals to approach their principal: "I would discuss the matter with the principal and make certain he was aware of all the facts and circumstances..." (KOC 1). Another urban assistant principal reported a similar rationale: "Obviously the principal has misunderstood what happened. I would meet immediately with the principal to be sure he understood exactly what happened." A growth community respondent similarly reported his desire to "explain [the] background to the principal. . . .", and a residential suburb assistant would act on the assumption that the principal had not had the necessary information before responding to the teacher: "I would ask [the] principal if he/she received or was aware of some information (i.e., the lie on

the part of the teacher). If not I would inform him/her of lie. . . ."

Despite these responses, the majority of assistant principals indicated that their assumption was that the principal had had all the necessary facts. Consequently, their reason for approaching her or him was to register displeasure with the action (or lack of it). In many cases, respondents indicated a resignation to the principal's action. As one urban assistant principal said: "I will have to accept the principal's dismissal of the incident [but] would make the principal aware of my feelings." Likewise, another urban respondent reported: "In a polite way you tell off the boss but always interject, 'You are the boss and I'll do what you say but I feel obligated to tell you what has happened and how I feel.'" From an economically developed suburb school, an assistant principal shared a similar approach: "I would simply tell the principal that I was upset with his/her decision but--'the boss isn't always right, but he/she is always the boss.'"

The inevitability of accepting the principal's decision was not satisfactory for some assistant principals, and, in these cases, the anger in their responses was often overt. Three urban respondents reflected this:

I would tell the principal that I received the complaint and that I have a recommendation that I expect to be supported.

[I would] ask for a meeting with the headmaster to get him to admit his lack of intestinal fortitude. If not, I will approach the teacher to tell him how I feel about the whole incident. . . .

Head on! At no time will I allow anyone to compromise my position, my authority, my self respect! In a clear--cut violation such as this, there can be no "dismissal" of the incident. . . .

An economically developed suburban school respondent expressed a similar degree of anger with the principal's action: "If the principal dismissed the incident, I would ask to meet with him to express my concern and anger. I would then ask the principal to show support by having a meeting with the teacher and me." A residential suburb school respondent answered briefly but similarly, "I would chew out the principal," and another, more strongly, but no less succinctly: "I would kick the principal right in the ass! And take the kid out for coffee and doughnuts."

The situation, as described, was serious enough for some assistant principals to warrant a job change:

I would want to discuss the issue at length with the principal. I would also begin a vigorous job search. (KOC 2)

Discuss incident with the principal--probably look for a new job. (KOC 4)

Tough one! If this happened to me, I think I would realize I am working for a real stiff. Long range plan--look for a new school. (KOC 6)

Confront the principal....If symptomatic of a poor relationship, start looking for a new job. (KOC 7)

Where 70% of the population indicated they would assume responsibility for approaching the principal, 10% of assistant principals responded by saying that they would ignore the principal's action. One residential suburb school respondent said simply that she would "probably have an extra glass of wine that evening." Similarly, two urban respondents said:

Lump this one, but file it for future reference.
Every dog has his day.

I would....let either the teacher or principal make the next move if any, and then let the chips fall where they may.

One respondent, who chose not to handle the situation, nevertheless, outlined a strategy of non-involvement for the future: "I would 'back-off' in this situation and become less aggressive in supervising teachers (i.e., checking arrival and departure times; the issuing of corridor pass slips; staying after school to assist students)" (KOC 2).

Only 4% of the total population indicated they would defer the incident to some other person--in both instances to the Superintendent of Schools. In one case (KOC 2), this action would be taken if the principal failed to rescind her or his original decision: "I would inform the

principal of my concerns and ask that he reconsider his decision. If he refuses, I would then ask for a clarification from the Superintendent." An urban school respondent indicated that he would take such action immediately: "I'd go over the nimcompoop's head to whomever the principal answers to and request a hearing."

Willingness to be Interviewed

The final question in the survey asked respondents to indicate their willingness to participate in a follow-up interview concerning their work as assistant principals. Seventy-five percent of assistant principals indicated a positive response. From this population, the interview candidates were selected. The next section of this chapter presents the findings with respect to these interviews.

Interview Results

Introduction

From April through July of 1986 interviews were conducted with fourteen secondary school assistant principals representative of each of the seven kinds of community schools as identified by the Massachusetts Department of Education. The original intention was to conduct fifteen interviews, the number of interviews in each kind of community school to be directly proportional to the actual percentage of schools across the Commonwealth within each category. This goal was realized in all but one category--residential suburbs--where only one assistant principal was interviewed. By kind of community, the number of assistant principals interviewed was as follows:

Kind of Community	# Interviews
1	4
2	3
3	2
4	1
5	2
6	1
7	1
Total	14

TABLE 25: INTERVIEW POPULATION BY KOC

Each interview was approximately 90 minutes in length, and all but one were conducted in the participant's work environment. The one exception took place in the participant's home for the convenience of both the interviewer and the participant.

All participants agreed to a tape-recorded interview, and the resultant tapes were transcribed by the researcher and a disinterested third party. The result was nearly 200 pages of single-spaced, typed transcripts. The interview excerpts that are presented here are verbatim transcriptions that have been edited by the researcher only to eliminate, where necessary, syntactical irregularities and repetitions common to oral speech.

In determining the interview findings, a three-part process was employed as recommended by Seidman (1985, p.23) in his ethnographic study of community college faculty: (1) transcripts were read and reread and passages of interest marked; (2) marked passages were labeled according to categories that began to emerge; and (3), categories were analyzed for common themes. As a result of this process, several themes emerged that form the substance of interview findings with respect to the work-life of the assistant principal:

* The Early Morning Routine

* Conflict in the Role

- * The Pace of an Unpredictable Day
- * Relationship with the Principal and its Effect on Job Definition and Performance
- * Isolation and the Search for Confidants
- * Job Satisfaction and Career Goals

Throughout the presentation of the findings, excerpts from the interview transcriptions are woven together around the six themes that connect the experience of assistant principals. From this methodology a profile of the work experience of the assistant principal in a variety of settings emerges.

The Early Morning Routine

The leading question posed by the interviewer asked participants to describe a typical day, and the result was opening comments that reflected a marked similarity of activities and roles in the assistant principal's work experience. For the majority of assistant principals, there is almost an early morning routine that was consistent from interviewee to interviewee.

The routine begins at the point where the assistant principal arrives at school, be it 6 or 7 a.m., and concludes only when the morning tasks are accomplished. Assistant principals arrive early on the job, sometimes to deal with the placement of substitute teachers, other times

to plan an agenda for the day. And, when the first bell rings, virtually all assistant principals are "off and running," handling everything from yesterday's unresolved discipline issues to today's tardy and absentee students. This is true for most urbanized center respondents, and it is equally characteristic of the work-life of respondents in smaller, less complex kind of community schools. The only exception lies in those instances (3 of the 14 interviewees) where the assistant principal is not responsible for student discipline. In all instances, the early morning routine continues until tasks are accomplished (sometimes running into the better part of the morning) and becomes the one constant in a day largely undetermined, unscheduled and sometimes uncontrolled.

Mr. Charles is an assistant principal in an economically developed suburb high school. At the time of the interview, Mr. Charles was in his late 50s and had been an assistant principal for close to 15 years, all of which had been spent in the same high school. He describes the pattern of his arrival on the job:

Both vice-principals get in about 7:30 in the morning. School starts at 7:55 a.m. I do different things naturally. The thing I do is come in and worry about substitutes. Where are we for teacher substitutes? And, so that is the first thing we do in the morning. By the time we know who is out, who has cover, and so on, this is about the time school starts, about 7:55 a.m. Then we have to worry about the kids coming in. In my part over here, I take attendance so,

therefore, we worry about tardy students. The school is broken down basically into two sections--two vice principals. My job is the sophomores and juniors, like the principal of the sophomores and juniors. Mr. R [the other vice-principal] is the principal of the freshmen and seniors. So, anyone who is tardy to school will go with the office they're going to be tardy to. They know what they have to do to get tardy slips. While that is going on, we will naturally, on the loud speaker, take the problems that carried over from the day before. . . . calling the kids, mainly reminding some of them how much detention they have, or some kids were truant from school, or cut out early, or whatever it was. . . . That takes about--oh, discipline takes about 50% of our time.

Mr. Davidson is a first year assistant principal in his late 30s, also from an economically developed suburb high school. Although he carries the additional responsibility of securing substitute teachers for the day, otherwise, he describes a noticeably similar routine that had evolved for him in his eight months on the job:

I'm responsible for, first of all, handling all the "subs" and making sure that classes are covered and that kids get where they're supposed to be. So, I'll get calls starting at 5:30 in the morning and then I have to scurry around, scramble around and call people up and make sure that they're here. . . . I don't arrive here until about ten minutes after seven. School is essentially underway at 7:30 a.m. So, in that 20 minute period of time I have to deal with making sure that the schedules are set up for teachers, getting homework or, let's say, daily assignments ready for the substitute coming in, going around unlocking the doors, and just making sure for that first period and that homeroom period that classes are covered. At the same time I usually get a list of, or have already set up a list the night before, of kids that are going to be called down in the morning right after homeroom for

disciplinary action. . . . And, I'll try to call students down during the homeroom announcements. . . . So, I begin every day with bringing kids down, and it generally runs anywhere from 5 to 8 so-called "discipline cases" that I have to handle. . . . It's almost a Pavlovian situation. You've got to run to make sure that the kids are called down.

Mr. Deeney, also from an economically developed suburb school is in his second principalship. In his late 30s, he has been in his position for six years. He describes a typical school day and the routine he tries to establish:

Well, this starts off early in the morning with the people who are sick, or who will not be attending school for whatever reason, calling me about 6 in the morning and then I have to obtain substitutes for the day. . . . Then, when I arrive at school, it's a matter of making sure that things are covered that I can, getting things off. I usually have teachers coming in, stopping me first thing in the morning with a request for something during the day. Then we go out, and I try to patrol the halls during the homeroom or just before the homeroom period to see what's going on. Then you check to see the teachers are on duty. The principal does the opening announcements and opening exercises while I'm out doing those kinds of things. Many times I can't do that because I get interrupted with a phone call or a parent might come in unannounced, that kind of thing. So, it's not really a regular routine; it's something I try to establish as a routine. And I'll usually have a list of kids I have to see for some kind of discipline. . . . I would say I see anywhere from 20-40 students during the course of a school day for some form of discipline. There are other days when that number can go much higher.

Mr. James, an urbanized center assistant principal, is in his early 50s and has been an assistant principal for seven years. Although he says that there is "no set

pattern" to his day's beginning, he describes a markedly similar early morning routine:

If you followed me around, you'd be tired. Typically, I usually get into the building around 7:00 to 7:15 a.m., and my first job is to see what has been added since I left the previous afternoon. . . . Then, about 7:30 a.m. the kids are coming into the school so that my first concern then is to make sure that everything is going well, and I usually get myself out into the corridors right away, and just kind of flow around. There is no set pattern, but just to be visible in the corridors as the kids are entering. . . . There are teachers on assignment to certain duties. That's the other thing that I want to do--to make sure that the teachers are, more or less, where we want them to be once the kids come into the building. . . . [Then] I leave the corridors and go down to the small cafeteria where we establish our cut list of kids that were, for whatever reason, not in class. It is presumed that they cut class, and we're checking it out. . . . On a typical day we probably would have 30-35 kids that we would check.

Mr. Roberts, in his middle 40s, is an urbanized center assistant principal, who has been in his position for four years. He begins, similar to Mr. James, by expressing the view that each day is different. Despite this, his depiction of his morning agenda is like that of other assistant principals:

There is no typical day. If there is a kind of fixed routine, when I come in in the morning, I'll generally come to the desk and look at the discipline charts that I've assembled, slips I've arranged from the previous day. I try to stay after school an hour or so, so everything is ready to roll the next day. My first plan of attack is to check the homerooms. . . . for a large number of students who didn't serve an after school detention or have a cut slip that I can't account for. . . . I put out slips to homeroom teachers to send a certain number of students to see me after they have registered in homeroom. . . . I try

to deal with the various problems that weren't resolved the previous day. Sometimes it runs long--perhaps a parent will come in at that time about a student that has been suspended. . . . At 8:15 a.m. I will go over to the Attendance Office across the hall. . . . I'll take over for a half-hour or so and [then] the third assistant will take over. Thus, any student entering our building from 7:40 a.m. to 9:15 a.m. is meeting an administrator. . . . This greatly diminishes our tardies. . . . But, that ties up the early part of my morning. Parent conferences take up a good part of my day. . . . After that it can be much of anything.

A residential suburb assistant principal with six years of experience that included some time in an urbanized center school, Mr. Richards, 32, arrives early on the job for some quiet time before the routine begins. Although his high school does not open with a home room session, Mr. Richards' initial involvements reflect the same nature of activities:

Normally what I do is come in at 6:45 a.m. I like to get here approximately an hour before the students. It's just that my first cup of coffee is a quiet one. I arrive here at approximately that time. The other assistant principal arrives, and the principal will arrive shortly afterwards. So, if we have to get anything run off or appointment slips in mailboxes, it is a nice quiet time to do that. First period starts here at 7:45 a.m. During that time I usually schedule my appointments. I referred earlier to referrals that teachers fill out if the situation gets out of hand or beyond their control and they feel that they need help with a situation. Those referrals are responded to by me during first period when I set up appointments with students. . . . I schedule two every five minutes for as long as I need to get the batch out of the way for that day. . . . The rest of the day is pretty much--wait and see what happens.

Another first year assistant principal, Dr. White, 39, is female and works in a growth community high school. She, too, before the day opens, establishes her list of students to be seen and then spends the better part of the morning addressing that list:

I get here shortly after 7 in the morning and essentially help out in making sure that "subs" know where they're going. . . . Then, the kids come in to hand in dismissal notes, to clarify any particular problems they might have with a locker or something to that effect. . . . or if kids start coming in late, we check their sign-in time. . . . That essentially takes care of everything up until about 8 a.m. Typically, I have the day before prepared a list of maybe 10 of the 30-40 kids that I see in a day for disciplinary reasons, that I call down. Usually, I know in advance whom I want to see unless I'm unorganized and haven't put that half-hour aside for that the day before. . . . I have a list that the principal announces, kids that I want to see--called the "hit list" by the kids. . . . I will have those kids called down then so I don't have to interrupt the classes, and I will handle that group and proceed forward for a good three hours a day, I would say.

For 19 years, Mr. Matthews, in his middle 50s, has been an assistant principal. All of those years have been spent in the same rural economic center high school. He, unhesitatingly, describes a morning routine that has become a well-established pattern in his work-life:

[This job] means you're tied down to practically the entire goings-on in the school, supervising or assisting and all the little mundane types of things that make a school run. For example, the first thing in the a.m. you're checking over the building physically and checking people on posts and so on and so forth. Then, you're in the office. You're dealing with tardy students; you're assessing

them if they show a weakness. You're picking some of them out and calling for parental conferences. You're checking notes occasionally in the morning; you're checking students that are interested in dismissals, and then the a.m. notices are read, and you're going over lists of students who are possibly cutting classes and checking into their whereabouts and why. Then, in the meanwhile, you might have scheduled a few parental conferences on class skipping, discipline of some sort or another, or excessive tardiness, and you're dealing with maybe 2 or 3 parents along that line. . . . You're touring corridors, checking corridors for wandering students or whatever--checking classrooms as you're going by, both upstairs and downstairs. . . . All morning is just going from one thing to another. Depending on what you've scheduled, the day just seems to be in front of you.

Mr. Francis is in his late 30s and has been associate principal of a rural economic center high school for four years. He describes his day as atypical, one of "reaction" to people and events around him. Despite this, he presents the same early morning routine:

There is no typical day. I think this job is reaction. It's very seldom action. The action takes place during the summer; it takes place beforehand, and then once the school year starts, you're kind of 9-3--you're in the thick of it. You're reacting to whatever happened so a typical day doesn't typically happen. My day starts off, if you're looking at a time schedule, starts off getting here at 7 a.m., getting coffee. That's the most important part of my day. Then, checking through anything in my mail that may have come in after I left and reminding myself of what I have to do for the day. I will get discipline slips and any problems that teachers had with students, cut slips, anything like this. . . . I will look through those to see if there are any surprises or if it's just general run-of-the-mill type of thing. . . . At 7:45 homeroom begins--standard morning exercises and things like that. I try to be back in my office because part of the morning announcements are the

cherubs that I will be seeing at that time. That usually numbers anywhere between 10 and 25 students that I have to see during homeroom and part of "A" period. . . . The rest of the day is highly unscheduled. . . it's real tough to say what's going to happen.

Mr. Mackin is in his 60s and looking forward to retirement. He has been assistant principal of a resort/retirement and artistic community high school for over 18 years. After serving under one principal--who was also a close friend--for all of those years, this year he works with a new principal, who has instituted many changes that affect his position as assistant principal and his early morning routine. The "informal" routine and relationship he had established with his previous principal--"we worked hand in hand for 18 years, almost like husband and wife"--are replaced by a more systematic approach to responsibilities that is simultaneously reminiscent of the routine of other assistant principals:

At 7 o'clock I get here. In line with the principal's single-minded, steadfast determination that we're here for the kids, in addition to no interruptions in the classroom [over the public address system], he's concerned about supervision. The kids, in a sense, should be supervised from the time they get off the bus until they get on the bus. This is something we were never too concerned about much in the past. . . . Now, at 7 o'clock in the morning I am out on the front steps greeting kids as they come, the buses as they come. The principal is in the lobby. . . . We keep the kids out of the classroom wings and in the corridors or the cafeteria until 7:30 a.m. So, there are new rules and regulations with him [the principal]. . . . After the homeroom bell has rung and the class is in

session, it's 8:30 a.m., and we've done the attendance and I'll record tardies, check dismissal notes. These have to come through me. I'll record in my records the tardies so that we can keep track of them if they become too excessive. Generally, then, it's going through the previous night's detention--who reported, who didn't report, who has more days to make up, who will be added for excessive tardiness, and so on. We have an after-school detention. Now, without the use of the intercom, I have to rely on getting messages to students by way of homeroom. For a while, at the start of the year, it was a matter of my trying to reach the kids at the end of a period, and it was very difficult. I was used to, for 18 years, having all the kids pile in here right after homeroom, calling them over the intercom--these twenty kids report to the office immediately after homeroom--and then trying to deal with these twenty kids. So, I've got it down now to a couple of sets of forms that are put in teachers' mailboxes the night before, that they distribute during homeroom in the morning--one of them instructs the student to come up here immediately after homeroom because I want to talk to him, the other simply informs them that they have detention for whatever the offense is. It means that they have to chase me rather than the other way around.

For four assistant principals, the early morning routine is a vastly different one reflecting, in one instance, a small rural community school of 425 students whose assistant principal freely admits that discipline problems are at a minimum, and in other instances the assignment of responsibility for student discipline to some other individual within the school organization. Thus, the prevalent pattern of checking attendance and tardiness, of contacting students who failed to serve detention, and of

summoning students on whom discipline reports have been sent is not the early morning agenda.

Mr. Goberts is assistant principal of a small rural community high school of 425 students. In his middle 40s, Mr. Goberts had previously for five years been principal of his school. Through administrative reorganization as a result of revenue limitations imposed by Proposition 2 1/2, he was reassigned to the assistant principalship, a position he has held for five years. Although he describes an established morning routine, his agenda differs from that of most assistant principals, and he acknowledges the "uniqueness" of his role:

I pretty much set what my typical day looks like. . . . My normal day, personally starts very early. I'm usually here by 6:15 a.m. Teachers do not have to be present until 7:30 a.m. . . . My day is involvement with students for a variety of reasons-- not all of which is negative. We're lucky enough with a population of 425 students, I don't have any massive, overt discipline problems. I would say that less than 20% of my school day I'm involved with discipline, which is rather unique, I think, for most assistant principals. . . . Kids come to school; they're here on time; they don't cut classes; they don't have anywhere to go, and they don't get away with it. . . . So, 6:15 a.m. is a quiet time when I can get a lot done, a lot of written reports that I have to do. . . . A lot of the paper work gets done in the morning, a lot of preparation for the day. . . . I do a lot of planning for what's going to occur over the course of the day. Because I do feel that I'm involved in a lot and busy, I try to lay out my day, leaving vast chunks and blocks for emergencies, crises and other things that descend upon you in this position. I'm here in the morning to meet with the staff. . . . Also in the morning, I have a lot of mundane things. I have a lot of locker passes. I have a.m. announcements. I have little nasty notes

that I hand to some of my teachers. . . . Okay, so obviously I don't do much in the a.m. when I'm here except shoot the bull with a lot of teachers and do some of the nitty, gritty mundane things.

An urban school assistant headmaster, Mr. Thomas is in his late 30s and has been in his position for four years. The responsibility for student discipline is decentralized, and the result is other individuals who deal with these issues. This decentralization was implemented by Mr. Thomas:

Four years ago I started as AP and the first thing that needed to be changed was the discipline. I saw the AP, and his day was spent just doing discipline and dealing with foolish problems. And, I realized to avoid high blood pressure in the stressful, aggravating job I was taking, that I would reorganize the people in the school that I thought could help me.

As a result, all minor discipline cases are referred to two individuals: a work/study coordinator who had been dissatisfied with the limitations of his prior position and a department head whose low enrollment classes were consolidated to allow unscheduled time. Despite this assistance, Mr. Thomas still devotes over two hours of his day to class attendance:

My main concern or task here is that I deal every day for about 2 1/2 hours with cutting classes, kids not going to class. We have a tremendous cut rate. I took it out of the discipline offices because they can't handle it. I put it in my office.

Despite this similarity between Mr. Thomas' responsibilities and those of other assistant principals with respect to class attendance, he describes an atypical early morning routine that reflects his responsibility for budgets and personnel matters:

At 6:30 a.m. I come into school. My day depends on the different times of the year, but basically if I had to lump it together, we're constantly ordering supplies and texts. It's a year long thing. Our major order is now for next year. During the year teachers want things and so forth, and I help them with that. It's very minor. It does not take a lot of time, but it's important to them. Budget and keeping track of the money is a daily task because in my office we're constantly running the financial part, which is the check book, and I have to give reports into town of every account, money we spend, money we take in, where it went, what we spent it on. I also have. . . requisitions and purchase orders. . . . I [also] do all "personnel transactions" I'll call them. You have to have, I'll call it a "responsibility center manager," which I am here, for the transactions that have to be done. If someone is going to change their name, someone gets married, if they move, if they have a salary line change, there's a form for it that I have to process.

Another urbanized center assistant headmaster from the same city as Mr. Thomas, Ms. Marlin is in her early 40s and has been in her position for three years. Discipline in her school is also assigned to someone else--in this case to building housemasters. The result, for Ms. Marlin, is primary responsibility for other duties. Not surprisingly, her early morning routine is as unique as that of Mr.

Thomas' and quite diverse from that of other assistant principals:

The first period of the day, which starts about 7:45 a.m., usually half of that is spent with the headmaster having coffee in the cafeteria, and he's just finished monitoring the breakfast program. We talk about a variety of subjects from what's going on politically in the system to instructional issues, priorities and focuses this particular week or year. We do get to instructional issues besides the nuts and bolts. That takes about 15-20 minutes and the rest of the period usually is put into paperwork, you know, answering memos from the district office or from central office. The second period I have certain portions to continue working, conferencing maybe with the head of a department or with a teacher, and now it's homeroom time. I'm supposed to be always up on the floors during homeroom just monitoring, disciplining, facilitating and helping the housemaster. . . . Then we start the lunch room. This year has been very unusual--this is the first year that the cafeteria has dominated my day because there's no way that I can get out of it and I have to be there for three lunches--so two hours in there.

Conflict in the Role

Conflict is no stranger to the assistant principals interviewed in this study. They face it on a daily basis--in the corridors, in the classrooms, in the lunchroom. And every encounter, in a day of constant interaction, brings with it the potential for conflict. The teacher who demands support, the student who misbehaves, the parent who questions the assistant principal's authority--each brings his or her case to the assistant principal's door, and each expects that his or

her perspective is shared and understood. The result is satisfaction for some at the expense of others, and sometimes dissatisfaction for all. And, for the assistant principal, who must juggle the perspectives of all and decide for the satisfaction of some, the tension can be unending. As found in the survey results, a good day for the largest percentage of assistant principals is when what they saw as some positive interaction occurred. This view is equally prevalent in the interview transcriptions, where, without exception, assistant principals referred to the stressful conflicts in their day that sometimes came to be the hallmark of their work-lives.

Mr. Deeney, who expresses both pleasure and pride in the strength and quality of his relationships with students, reveals the source of his conflict to be, more often than not, teachers. As he says, "There is not a lot of cooperation here from teachers." It is not surprising, therefore, that his vision of a improved work-life would involve more interaction with those very individuals from whom he derives so much satisfaction: "I like to deal with the kids. . . . What I would like is to spend more time with my kids." His comments on the realities of his position justify his choice:

[Most of my day] is dealing with conflict. When I answered the survey, I was asked, "What is a good day like for you?" and I think I said "when somebody says I did something right or somebody said something

nice to me." And I'm serious when I say that. . . . because once in a while I'll get, "Gee, you really did a great job with that kid,". . . . but, most of the time if something comes out well, you don't hear about it. . . . You'll get conflicts with parents, making suspension phone calls. . . . and teacher-student conflicts. The teachers will come down and they'll make demands like, "I don't ever want to see that kid again. That kid's not coming in my class again." And sometimes it's harder to calm the teacher down than it is the kid. And it seems like the teachers who have been here the longest, the 30-year veterans, cannot understand how the times have changed. . . . Calming the teachers down, especially the old-timers, is really tough. And it always starts off with their telling me what's going to happen.

For Mr. James the same conflicts are present in a position that ever results in his being "thrust in the middle." Although his position is largely one of student discipline, it is not the students who create the conflicts in his day-to-day work--it is the response of teachers and parents to student misbehavior. His description of the conservative teacher is reminiscent of Mr. Deeney's one of the "old-timers":

Everyone feels they can take pot shots at you in this job. I'd like to see that change. I really would. . . . People ought to know that there are certain things that have to go on, and, sure, we want to deal with your concerns and priorities too. . . . You're right in the middle [between] parents, teachers and students. . . . There are some people on the staff that are so conservative that they hang the kid up. . . . No room for any error. And when you try to go back to that teacher and say that so-and-so is making progress. . . and has all of this baggage he is bringing to school with him. . . they look at you like, "Oh, my God, you're too easy, and the school will fall apart." Then, with parents--they're constantly questioning you, taking

you to court (or at least threatening to take you to court) and all of these suits will be on you for the way in which you abused or contributed to the whatever of their child. So, yeah, you do constantly run the gamut of being thrust in the middle.

Mr. Roberts, too, faces conflict in his position, but, unlike the two previous assistant principals, he is able, at least temporarily, to "shrug it off" as part of the job. When conflict occurs, he finds his release in the people who most understand, his principal and his wife:

I can talk to the boss. We can laugh. Humor is important. I'm not a person who can internalize at all. That would make me sick. I talk to my wife at home about the difficulties. She's a teacher. She'll listen. I'll burn her ear until I get it out of me, and those generally are releases.

Despite this support, he acknowledges that the conflicts, and particularly those that result from student discipline, diminish his enthusiasm for remaining in the position:

I've had many conflicts here. . . specifically with students, most obviously with parents and teachers. Those are the three areas where I have had my difficulties. . . . What most threatens my view of it [the assistant principalship] is the conflict and the discipline, that the A.P. gets to know only the difficult kids in the school. . . . After four years I'm tiring of the disciplinary role.

Another assistant principal who equates conflict with handling student discipline, Mr. Richards finds his escape in positive interaction with students. Unlike assistant

principals for whom lunchroom duty is required but not enjoyed, for Mr. Richards the four periods a day he spends there are rewarding:

There are a lot of conflicts. I'm in a position where 90% of the time I'm talking to students, I'm disciplining them. That's why I love the lunchroom as chaotic as it may be. It's just the one time during the day where I can finally just talk sports and talk to someone who has just received an award and compliment them on that, or just shoot the bull about whatever as opposed to when I'm in here [his office]. . . [where] there are always conflicts.

As noted earlier, Mr. Thomas has reassigned student discipline to other individuals within his school. Although one cause of conflict may be removed, working in a highly complex urban school as he does, he, nevertheless, faces conflict on a daily basis:

This job is constant conflict for which sometimes the only answer is compromise rather than "yes" or "no" type of answers. I am constantly bringing people together who are not getting along with one another. You have those bad days when parents are yelling at you, and everyone is yelling at you, and those are the toughest times. . . . There's always going to be another problem. That's what I think administrators have to learn. . . . It's a never-ending battle. It's just not going to go away.

Ms. Marlin's work environment is akin to that of Mr. Thomas'. Her school, in the midst of the same large urban city, is characterized by a majority of minority students, poverty and high absenteeism. As assistant headmaster, she

is not the first line of authority in handling student discipline problems. Despite this, she describes a day of conflict that results largely from her commitment to school improvement and change. Although she does not apply the terms "old timer" or "conservative" in describing her staff, she faces the same resistance from them as she tries to implement change:

[Conflict] is the main stress for me. This just seems to be an adversarial [position]. It just seems to come with a new name, a new classification. You've now left the ranks of the teacher and moved into administration. Also, if you choose to be an administrator that's not complacent and that's going to push and drive, change is sometimes unpleasant for a lot of people. You have to say to yourself, "That's what it's all about, and I'm going to have guts and be misunderstood, and along the line I'm going to be misjudged, and the people are going to think that I'm not genuine. But, hopefully, if I am persistent, they will eventually come to realize that I'm not interested in just climbing. I'm interested in improving education."

Ms. Marlin goes on to describe the ever-present conflict situations that present themselves throughout the day:

I process 500 kids a day through the cafeteria, and every one of those days is an opportunity for conflict with kids and tension. . . . [You run into conflict] even walking through the halls. You're an administrator, and you're the one who is observing if the teacher isn't on his or her post. You're always in an evaluative role, and that is bound not to be appreciated. Why be comfortable with a person who might speak to you and the next minute say, "Listen you have to get out on your post, and you have to get out there on time. I need you there." You're peers, and you're brought up to be like that.

The system has programmed you to be peers. So, who is this highfalutin person who's telling me this when it's really my job? I really want to do it [remind teachers of their responsibility] because I feel it's very important to the big picture, but, in some cases maybe, in their minds they're saying, "She just wants to pull rank, or she's just a pain in the neck." It's tough. Teachers have always been independent. [They] don't have bosses, and they are not used to that relationship. I'm learning to adjust to [the negative stresses]. It was very, very difficult the last couple of years when there was tension between the faculty and the administration--that lack of trust, that communication breakdown. As you walked through the halls, you didn't feel warmth and friendliness, and that has its effect on you. They don't love me and I don't love them, and that is very disconcerting.

Ms. Marlin recognizes that the conflicts and negative stresses result more from her own interpretation of her role than from the nature of the position. She perceives that it could be different if she were willing to "let up" a little, if she were to be more like the other assistant headmaster, but she is not willing to make that sacrifice:

The other assistant headmaster is down in the head office. He's an older gentleman. The headmaster respects Mr. S, but Mr. S is mostly into operations, that is, if a window is broken or the heat is off, call Mr. S. He is very well-received by the faculty. He's fatherly. But, I was very happy to hear from a recent study that effective schools do not have the highest morale, and don't fall into that trap of using that as an indicator. He said morale is sometimes the lowest in effective schools because you're pushing and driving and you're not going to give up. Mr. S says, "Relax--don't get upset about things." I think there's plenty of time to relax later on in life.

Mr. Davidson is another assistant principal who recognizes the conflict and tension that often arise from implementing change efforts. There are everyday tensions that arise in dealing with students, but the real issues come from staff. In his position for only eight months, in a short time he has come to recognize, as Ms. Marlin, the conflicts that can arise when working with a veteran staff:

The staff, like you're typically seeing in Massachusetts, tends to be a staff where most people have been here anywhere from 15 to 25 years. The mean age is probably 42, 47, in that vicinity. Most people, although they're very, very good teachers, view change as something that's extremely threatening . . . so that, from an administrative standpoint, to even initiate something as program evaluation was directly threatening and was perceived as that, and there was tremendous pressure not to do it, not to get involved. It means, "Who the hell does he think he is coming in telling me how to do my job? His background is in science. What do you mean he's going to tell me how to teach history? He has no knowledge of that." And, in fact, the department head in social studies resigned, I think, partly because of the continued charge to look at what was going on and to get people involved. . . . That's the type of thing that goes on, where people either actively will not carry out certain kinds of responsibilities or even more so, it's passive resistance. It's like, you know, "I'm not going to respond to you. I'm not going to do anything for you."

Unlike these younger, less-veteran assistant principals, who accept change as a primary responsibility in their roles, Mr. Matthews has been 19 years on the job, and although he faces conflict, it comes more from teacher-student relationships and his own responsibility

for resolving their differences. The conflicts for him do not arise from his attempt to redefine his role or involve teachers in change issues. Regardless, he identifies the tension that arises from dealing with unsupportive staff:

Teachers sometimes send kids to the office for sharpening a pencil when they weren't supposed to or for chewing gum, "when I said 'throw it out' twice." Yet, they want backing. It makes it a little difficult because you can't have peace on both sides. I find conflict quite a bit, and I find that sometimes you get labeled more for one group than for the other. . . . This position would be more satisfying if some of the teachers would take a more honest appraisal of what services you have to offer them, if they'd meet you halfway instead of always being negative or always being critical or always being frustrated. . . . I get mad at some of them sometimes. I get to the point where I feel like ignoring them, or whatever, because they don't meet me halfway. They don't try to understand what I'm trying to do. I do laugh sometimes when many of them will criticize what I do and seem to have more knowledge about my job than I have about their job.

Mr. Rames is in his middle 50s and in his fourth year as vice-principal of a growth community high school. One of two assistant principals, he is assigned almost exclusively to program and curriculum development while his colleague assumes the major responsibility for student discipline. He describes the unending conflicts faced by his colleague:

The other assistant principal--his job is a continual series of dealing with student problems from discipline to detention to students reported for smoking, and it could be a drug situation. But, it's one continual problem after another with students, student-teacher relationships,

student-school relationships. . . . In all candidness, I think he's getting tired of the job.

Despite this division of responsibility, Mr. Raney spends about 20% of his time on student discipline problems, and this along with the problems that result from his own areas of involvement results in days sometimes marked by conflict and crisis:

My job covers everything from the sublime to the ridiculous. I would say much of my time is taken up dealing with people problems--conflicts between teachers and students, misunderstandings between counselors and teachers, misunderstandings between teachers themselves. . . . I would say one-third of the job is crisis management. There are some days when I can not get out of my office because of crises of all kinds.

Mr. Francis talks of the conflicts he faces as an associate principal, but rather than enervation, he finds satisfaction in being in the "the midst of things." He also acknowledges this to be the role of the assistant principal:

Part of my job I see as acting interference. I am the person who answers those questions. I am the person who receives the buck, who deals with the irate parent first, or with the kid who is upset or with the teacher who is upset or all the rest of it. That's part of the job. My day is designed to be more hectic. To a certain extent I enjoy that--that being in the midst of things, making things happen, correcting problems. . . . The principal's day is, and should be, a lot more structured. Somebody has to be there who can just flip-flop it. . . . Somebody has to do it.

Despite this, Mr. Francis would like a little more of the principal's role and a little less of his own. He has dreams of one day being a principal, when those goals can be realized:

I'd like to be principal. I'd like to be able to effect more change. I'd like to have some of the [power to effect change]. As I said, the principal and I are equal, but I'd like a little more of that equality, but I'm not complaining about this particular position because it couldn't be done any other way.

The Pace of an Unpredictable Day

Assistant principals report a hectic, sometimes frenetic work day. Once the early morning routine has passed, the day looms ahead. As Mr. Richards reports, after the routine of the early morning, "It's pretty much, wait and see what happens." And what happens is all of the mundane, unpredictable, unforeseeable events that arise in the course of a typical day. Students are sent to the office for misbehavior, an upset teacher needs help immediately, parents stop by unannounced, and, all the while, the phone continues to ring. Although there are quiet days, such times are more the exception than the rule for the assistant principal. And in the midst of chaotic days, the plans conceived before the start of school and the agendas mapped out are put aside while "brush fires are put out."

Mr. Davidson acknowledges that attempts to structure his day are often unsuccessful. He outlines all of the kinds of events that interfere with any attempts to plan:

I think if you're one that is going to structure, that attempts to structure your day, to say, "Today I will get through all this in a limited amount of time," it just never happens. What interferes is all of the unpredictable--the calls from different individuals or a student being sent out of a classroom or a parent that wants to come right down and see you for some particular reason, or the school committee member that calls up on miscommunication between the office and the teacher and trying to deal with that.

Mr. Deeney begins by describing what he considers to be an atypical day in his work life--the day before a school vacation is to begin. On a typical day, he might see anywhere from 20-40 students for disciplinary reasons, but, "There are other days where the number can go much higher":

Take last Friday. This was not really a typical day because it's the day before a vacation, but I had 21 suspensions on Friday. And, I was so busy doing other things just besides the suspensions that I forgot when I was describing my day to someone else that I suspended 21 students because I was involved in searching a motor vehicle out in the parking lot. I had called the police for some assistance because I had a report that this kid was bringing drugs onto the school grounds, and that took a good part of my day. Then, I had a theft of some computer disks out of a special needs room. And, we had information they were in a kid's locker, and this same kid was involved in \$175.00 worth of vandalism to a fire alarm system in another building where these kids go to work in the afternoon. And, that took a good part of the day. And just the things that come up before a vacation. It seems that kids have more problems. They want to come in and tell you about something that happened at home or something that happened in the community.

You know, just all kinds of disruptions. I could not plan a day like Friday. I could not say that at 10 o'clock I was going to evaluate a teacher and at 11 o'clock I was going to do this. In fact, my lunch period--where I have regular assigned lunch duty--I missed half of that.

Although this day was not typical in Mr. Denney's work-life, he acknowledges that most days, while not so unpredictable and crisis-oriented, are, nevertheless, as hectic and as fast-paced:

I would say that during the course of an average school day, it's difficult for me to take ten steps outside of the office without someone stopping me for something or other, be it a custodian or a bus driver coming in with some kind of a complaint or someone from the kitchen or a student or a teacher or someone else. There's a very big dependence upon the assistant principal in this school to get things done. I think the staff in a way is spoiled on that point. They've been told that that's the way it is, and it makes it very difficult for me to follow up on things to do and really start something and see it all the way through to the finish and give it really good service. . . . I have to evaluate teachers. . . . If I plan to see somebody period 2 on Monday, I can come in and something can happen period 1 that I feel I just can't let go, and I have to take care of that problem at that time so I won't make it to that observation.

Mr. James describes a similar pace, and he likens his position to that of the downhill skier who loses control and struggles to regain it:

There are emergencies that crop up, which you can never know about--the insubordinations, the fights, the things that just blow up on a given day. You're really going from 7 to 3 without stop, more or less. Then, there are the mail and the phone calls from this assistant in that building, who says, "So and so, who I think is one of yours, was over in our building today." And then you try to run down and

spend some time checking it out. . . . Then, you have those cases where there are thefts to solve. Those are always tough. Someone will go back to his or her locker and say, "Gee, I had my coat in there, and I went to get it, and now it's gone." You try to search it out and then you get a call where somebody thinks they smell pot, and you have to check that out. You're constantly going. Do you ski? Sometimes you're in control, and there are times when you're not really in control. You really know when you're not in control, and I think oftentimes those are the battles as an assistant principal. You know where you want to be, but you know right now you're not there, and you try to struggle to get back in control all the time.

Mr. Roberts was interviewed in the middle of June, when the seniors had already left for the year, and the school year was beginning to wind down. Thus, it was a quieter, a calmer time for him. He acknowledges, however, that there are "frantic" days, this despite the fact that his school of fewer than 1,000 students has three full-time assistant principals:

Some days are frantic. Today has been quite busy. Other days there will be a lull. The kids will be a little calmer. I think the last two or three weeks have been pretty good. Our seniors have been gone, and that has been a breather. Sometimes you're just on the go all day. If you take 60-70% of your school day for discipline, and I've done that for four years, you grow tired of that. I don't aspire to be chasing kids the rest of my life.

As a residential suburb assistant principal, who was once assistant principal in an urban school, Mr. Richards is acutely aware of the differences in his job in the two kinds of communities. He describes his urban experience:

I chased kids 90% of the day--by "chase" I mean students cutting classes and trying to get them into school. There was an attendance difference just because of the make-up of the school, with no reflection on the school as much as the type of students I was dealing with, the family situations I was dealing with. It just was incredibly different to the point where I had to spend most of my time disciplining because if I didn't, things would be chaotic.

Despite the difference in the residential suburb population, Mr. Richards describes a day that is as charged with activity. He explains the reason:

I'm not chasing kids all day that are truant. I'm not handling severe crises every day. But, everything seems to search out and find its own level of importance. Something that you wouldn't bat an eye at in a larger school maybe is a big deal here. That happens so that it does fall into place that those small everyday disciplinary situations happen to keep you busy, and that's the brunt of my work on a daily basis. . . . I have found over the years, through experience, that whatever I planned may not happen. I can not say that I'm definitely going to have a meeting at a certain time. . . . I could have three meetings scheduled, but if a real crisis happens in a classroom, then that obviously needs immediate attention to carry that through to the end. Sometimes it could mean talking to four or five students and sometimes it might be a crisis with just one student. Sometimes it could involve a parent and I'm on and off the phone with the parent, and those are things that I can't control. Everything else pretty much comes to a stop.

Dr. White is the only assistant principal in a growth community high school of 730 students. Because she handles all of the discipline for her school, she describes a day without extra minutes:

There are a thousand things that happen [during the course of a school day], and most of the time it is putting out brush fires, so to speak. . . . Teachers essentially hand everything to me, whether it is something major or minor. So, I will be handling issues like that. . . . When I was hired, I was told I was doing 65% of the discipline, but I do 99.9% of the discipline with 730 kids, so the principal doesn't do anything. So, the custodian might come in and say, "this is going on," or somebody might say that a kid is smoking in the girls' room. So, I will have to handle that. Or, if somebody wants to talk to you about this, I'll end up doing that. . . . I barely have time to read in this job. If I'm lucky, I would take a half-hour. That was including work. I might take 15 or 20 minutes to read and eat at the same time. I thought that was being elegant, but I did it anyway.

Mr. Matthews feels strongly about being visible, about being in the corridors, but he explains that the pace of his day often precludes that happening:

I try to spend more time out of the office although if you have four or five parental conferences, you don't get out of the office. . . . Some days you're inundated [with discipline referrals]. Sometimes, for some reason, if a particular teacher is not in a good mood for external things not pertaining to education, he or she might send an inordinate number of people down. . . . Being an assistant principal means you're tied down to practically the entire goings-on in the school--supervising or assisting and all the mundane types of things that make a school run.

Mr. Francis describes a typical day as coming to school and waiting "for it to happen." As in the case of so many assistant principals, his plans for the day sometimes never take place:

There are days where it's like five minutes, and it's already the end of the day because the pace has been so hectic. You may have seven or eight parents come

in. You might have a teacher that blew up with some kids, and you have to deal with that for an hour. The biggest difference between this job and being a teacher is that a teacher is able to plan the day, and when I was a teacher, I knew how it was going to go. . . . In this job, there is no planning. You wake up in the a.m., you get here, and you wait for it to happen. Some days I plan that I'm going to do three evaluations that particular day, and it's a real nice day. I've had it planned and everything else, and then my secretary is making phone calls to the teachers saying, "There's no way he's going to be up there," or "There's no way that he's going to be able to do this." So, it's not really easy--but I can't say my day is terrible every day. . . . It's not easy to say what the pace will be.

Mr. Goberts earlier described what he perceived to be a uniqueness in his position in a small rural community high school. With few discipline problems to be expected, he takes the time each morning to plan out his agenda for the day. Despite these plans and Mr. Goberts' expectation in carrying them out, few are accomplished, as he describes:

There are constant, nonstop interruptions. My plan or the activity that I develop on the way down to school and before school never gets completed. I know what I'm going to accomplish. There are fifteen things that, no doubt, aren't going to get done. I just keep them in mind. Usually about 2 or 3% of those things do get done over the course of the day. . . . We have a unique situation in that the Superintendent of Schools is in our building. So it's not very hard for him to call [with a request]. I get requests all the time. Parents feel very free, as I want them to feel, so I get an awful lot of calls from parents.

Two assistant principals in urbanized center schools in the largest city in the state, did not stress a

quicken pace, a lack of control or an inability to set an agenda for the day in their positions. Thus, Mr. Thomas spends at least part of three out of five school days observing instructional activities in classrooms. As he says, "I find time because I make the time." Similarly, Ms. Marlin describes finding at least some time to accomplish planned activities: setting up a professional library for teachers, running workshops for department heads and meeting with her headmaster on a daily basis.

Relationship with the Principal and its Effect on Job Definition and Performance

As referred to in Chapter II, the principal's conception of school leadership and the assistant principal's role in this process are the crucial determiners of the realities and responsibilities of the assistant principal's day-to-day work. Throughout the interviews, participants referred to their personal and professional relationship with their principals and the effect this had on the definition of their roles. Virtually all assistant principals expressed the view that it was the principal's concept of the role of the assistant principal that was most influential in determining what they were involved in on a day-to-day basis.

For some respondents the relationship with the principal involved limited team planning, communication or involvement. This was not a problem for those who viewed this as non-interference and the opportunity to perform their responsibilities as they defined them. In fact, some perceived this as a supportive gesture on the part of a principal. As one respondent indicated, "Whatever I want to do, I can do." For others, who wanted more direction and more opportunity for joint decision-making and team-building, this lack of communication created a void in their professional lives.

Mr. Davidson, as indicated earlier, is a first-year assistant principal, who struggles with his commitment to school change and improvement agendas and the pressures that result from working with resistant and, often, unsupportive staff members. Although he is appreciative of the autonomy and authority that allow him to implement new programs and procedures--"In this particular role, the principal allows me to do essentially my job"--he recognizes that he is largely alone in his commitment to these issues. He can not enlist the aid of a principal whose "strong allegiances" to staff members preclude his getting involved:

He's a more traditional principal, has been here for years and years, taught within the system, came up through the system. I think because of that he has formed real strong allegiances with a number of

individuals. And, I think that he finds it extremely difficult to come in and say, "You can't do this versus that" because it interferes with that relationship that has been formed between that principal and the various teachers.

Mr. Davidson recognizes that there is another factor at work in the lack of shared planning between him and his principal. The nature of his position, rather than being determined at the building level, is decided at Central Office:

The communication is directly between me and the Superintendent. The principal has his own targets [goals]. In many cases--not in many, but in some cases--there may be some overlap [between his goals and mine]. But, it's pretty much individual that this is a target whether it's your own personal management or leadership style, or it's something that you're particularly interested in, or it's something that is just a system need and has to be done.

Mr. Deeney's situation in an economically developed suburb school is a similar one. He interprets the lack of communication between him and his principal regarding his own role as an indicator of his principal's confidence in his ability. At the same time, he acknowledges that his principal's attempt to open the lines of communication are often unsatisfying in the absence of any discussion of what he perceives as substantive issues:

Jim really gives me a free hand [in defining my role]. I think he has a lot of confidence in what I do. He knows I get along very well with the public. And, for a person who's always involved in the uncomfortable situations--making the phone calls that you son's been busted for drugs and that kind of

thing--I do very well with those people, people who are in those crisis times. I think Jim sees that as a strength of mine. In fact, I sometimes think he's a little envious because he knows that I'm held in pretty high regard. So, he sort of gives me a free hand. There are deadlines on the things like evaluations, and I'm pretty good at meeting deadlines. I believe in that. I am in charge of the custodians so we'll go along for a period of time; then, he may just ask me how things are going with that. He doesn't really get involved. . . . Sometimes he complains about the fact that we don't meet often enough. And, from my point of view, it's because he has more time to meet with me that he feels that way, and I really don't have the time to meet with him because I'm on the go constantly. . . . He'll sometimes ask me what's going on, and I'll begin to tell him, and he'll say something like--"Oh, did you see the new baseball hat?" and I'll say "Jim, I don't have time for baseball hats." And then I'll stop telling my story, and it's almost like, well, he's heard enough so he doesn't really want me to go on and on because he doesn't want to hear all of it. He just wants to know, I guess, that I'm occupied.

Mr. Charles likens the administrative structure of his building to that of a school with three principals: "I'm like the principal of the sophomores and juniors, and the other assistant principal is the principal of the freshmen and seniors." Throughout the interview, he referred to the "three" principals of the high school, with himself and the other assistant principal running things inside the building, and the principal assuming responsibility for things "outside the school and public relations." He contrasts what he views as a shared leadership approach with the style of his previous principal: "Under the first principal, he ran the building. That was it. He assigned

jobs, and that was all. He was old-fashioned. He was the principal."

Despite this shared authority, he expresses the view that meetings among the administrative staff are infrequent: "We meet or are scheduled to meet every week or every second week at 10 o'clock on Tuesday. We do and we don't, but if something important comes up, we do." And when meetings do occur, he acknowledges and accepts the fact that the principal is the final authority in decision-making:

Remember, I work for him [the principal]. . . . As far as I'm concerned, I can agree with him when I agree with him. But the only thing I ever wanted--and each principal gave it to me--was to give my opinions out. But, if the principal wants to do it this way, we will go along with his way because he has listened to what we felt. . . . So basically, our job is to work with the principal of the building, and we have to accept his philosophy. It doesn't mean we have to agree with his philosophy on how to run the building, but we have to accept it and work with it.

In his nineteen years as an assistant principal, Mr. Matthews had worked under principals who defined his role for him--largely, responsibility for supplies and student discipline. At the time of his interview, a new principal had arrived only the day before. Having lost out on this principalship himself, Mr. Matthews begins to reflect on what his position might be with broadened responsibility

for curriculum development. He acknowledges that the decision is in the principal's hands:

Originally, there was some sort of a job description [for this position], but then it evolved into whatever the principal felt were the things he wanted you to be doing. For example, I take care of all the supplies and things like that--so that the school can function better, so the principal can spend more time with evaluations and curriculum development, and whatever he had to be doing, feeling as though I would take care of the other things. I almost exclusively took care of the discipline. Now, some schools like to share it. . . . Another thing that people sometimes get away from is who can do it best. Instead, it's you should be doing 50% that, 30% that and 20% this, all neat and orderly and whatever, and that's not real life. That's not what makes it work or not work. It's who can do it. I would say it's true that [the prime determiner of] what my job involves is the principal. It certainly behooves him or her to look at the assistant principal and see what that individual can do successfully, and welcome that and not nit-pick. . . . What I want to do is attack the curriculum. I would like to get into that, to get in there because I read a lot, and I can't do it on an individual basis as an assistant principal. I don't have the power, which I want, to mandate a curriculum or powerfully suggest it. [If the principal gave me that power], I'd do it.

Ms. Marlin describes a strong personal relationship with her headmaster. She views him as her "mentor" and a superior administrator from whom she still has much to learn before thinking of a principalship herself. She acknowledges that he determines her role and responsibilities. As assistant headmaster, once primarily responsible for staff development, this year she has been assigned to cafeteria duty for two hours a day and next

year will take on additional responsibility for student discipline as housemasters are assigned to teaching responsibilities. She is good-natured about these changes as well as his request that she prepare coffee for committee meetings. Despite some regret over lost time for staff development issues, she describes her relationship with him in very positive terms:

I have such respect for him, and I'm learning so much from him. I consider him my mentor, and I feel I still have more to learn. . . . I don't think every person has this advantage of working with a person that they respect so much and that they admire and learn from. I've very close to him, and there's a core group on the faculty that will come with complaints to me, and I have his ear and they know it. Some people resent it in a way. . . . We are so close and have such a strong relationship, and it's rare. I try to keep remembering that it could antagonize others. . . . but he's given me that stimulation and dialogue that maybe isn't as important to others. He doesn't make me feel like a fool because I want to discuss Madeline Hunter's model or how to improve evaluations. What I love about him is that we don't talk about people, we mostly talk about ideas. I remember from my parochial school days--"Small minds discuss people, mediocre minds discuss events, and great minds discuss ideas." He brings you right back to ideas all the time.

On the other hand, Dr. White, a first-year assistant principal, describes a nonexistent relationship with her principal, the struggle to define her role in isolation, and her growing dissatisfaction:

Occasionally, I meet with the principal, but rarely. He doesn't essentially talk to me. It sounds so bizarre, but that's the way it is. Occasionally I might meet with the principal for half an hour to 45 minutes a week. I spent the first half of the year

trying to figure out what the hell the guy wanted me to do. And then I finally figured out he wanted me to do everything and just make sure he didn't have to do anything that had to do with the building or the kids or the teachers. . . . He does not essentially tell me what to do. He tells me what he's going to do and then correctly assumes that I will pick up what has to be done and do it. . . . In fact, if things don't work, he doesn't care. I infer he's pleased with what I'm doing because he doesn't tell me he's displeased. He's complimented me twice this year. That's his style. I wish I could work with him. I come from school systems where I saw principal and assistant principal as a team. I never saw them as being one here and one over there. They were always male, of course. I sometimes wonder. I don't like thinking like this, but sometimes it occurs to me that maybe it's because [I'm a woman].

Despite these instances of limited or no team-building between school administrators, other assistant principals described relationships of shared authority that resulted in greater satisfaction and job effectiveness. In some instances, assistant principals were given the authority to determine what their roles would be. In other instances, job definition, roles and responsibilities resulted from ongoing communication between principal and assistant principal.

As assistant headmaster at a large urban high school, Mr. Thomas also has worked, as a teacher, a department head and an assistant headmaster, under two principals with vastly different leadership styles and, consequently, vastly different responsibilities in terms of his own work. As a result of his principal's shared-leadership

style that results in dispersed authority for decision-making, he perceives his present role, which he has essentially defined for himself, as broader, more satisfying and more effective:

I have the freedom to run this building. It's a very satisfying position, and I'm not disillusioned yet. I feel I'm on the same level as the main man, really. Many people tell me that people look at me as another headmaster of the building. . . . The principal believes in a team to run a school, and he will give me [authority]. Since I've started to work with him, whatever I want to do, I can do. I don't have to go to him first. . . . He's great to work for. If I had to run to him for every decision I had to make, I wouldn't be effective. He may not always agree, but he trusts me completely to run this building. . . . When people come to me, they know if I make a decision, it's not going to change. [The previous principal] did everything. He handled everything himself. He wouldn't let anyone make the decisions. Consequently, the other people--the department heads and the assistant headmaster--weren't effective.

Mr. Roberts is another assistant principal who was given the authority to carve out a niche for himself in a strong area of interest. Planning for his role as a curriculum developer has been his work alone, but he has done so with the support of his principal, whom he describes as giving "a lot of latitude" to the assistant principals:

We have a large and a tremendous rapport with our principal. He's young, dynamic and a very good combination of scholar and disciplinarian, and I guess he has given us a lot of latitude. No one has ever insisted that anything be done. I define my role. These things [curriculum work] I enjoy doing, and I think they are educationally sound, and I want them at the school that I work at. My principal gives me

support and encouragement. If I say I would like to try some of these things and say "May I?", he says "Go right ahead." I've never really had anyone say "no."

For another group of assistant principals, school administration is a shared effort of ongoing dialogue between assistant principal and principal. Constant and close communication results in continual evolvement of the assistant principal's responsibilities. Decision-making is shared, and the result is involvement in a broad range of school issues.

For seven years Mr. James has been assistant principal at a large urban high school. For the previous two years he had worked under a principal whose style was vastly different from that of his present principal. Under his present principal, he views the building administrators as a team sharing concerns, viewpoints and responsibilities. He contrasts the styles of these two principals and their effects on his position as an assistant principal:

Every morning we usually have a meeting with the principal, usually have coffee and the three of us will meet, just to go over what happened yesterday, what we think might happen today. . . . Initially, we probably had a meeting once a week or something like that, and then it was decided, collectively I think, that maybe we ought to meet more often. . . . We just thought it [every morning] would be a good time since she [the principal] could come down and grab a coffee and the three of us would go over things in general. . . . Under the former principal, if we met twice in his two years, it was a lot. That was terrible. You just didn't know what was going on. You have to function as a team, and you really have to be comfortable with each other and really know what is going on and what's

in the offing and just vent with each other from time to time, so it's extremely important. You just never know what will come up at the meeting either. There is no agenda--nothing like that--just sit together and go at it. Usually we will have one or two items that we definitely want to speak about, but then, like anything, one thing leads to another and so forth. [My role changed] dramatically under the new principal in that I was given much greater responsibility in all areas of school life. I was just treated as a totally different professional. . . . I think that with the new principal that I felt, for the first time, that I was asked for advice or that the advice that I gave was at least considered--whether it was acted on is another issue. I just truly felt that you were part of a team, whereas before, there was lip service to that and, in effect, you weren't. With the new principal I just felt as if the thing that you were doing was important. You were given the responsibility, and you were watched in the development of that responsibility. . . . Before, you didn't ever get out of the building. You were kind of locked in here, and it was strictly discipline. There is a willingness on the part of this principal to share responsibility and to work as a team. Before there was no such willingness, and the principal walked on water. The only things that happened were things done by him.

Mr. Richards describes a reshaping of the assistant principalship in his school. What was once a fairly well-established position from the central office level takes on a broader and evolving focus with the relationship between him and his principal:

My position was pretty much established before I got here. The principal had defined the responsibilities, and the superintendent had job descriptions on file. But [now] pretty much it has worked out within the building here. Decisions are made here, usually joint decisions. The principal will ask me, "Will you take this on?" We co-run the building. We share a lot. . . . The principal and I are taking an administrative course here in thinking skills. It's a really exciting program to get involved in. . . . We are both

involved. We both plan out department head workshops, and we have a nice system here.

Similarly, Mr. Francis, as associate principal, describes the shared responsibility for administering a rural economic center high school:

The relationship between the principal and me determines 99.5% of what my job involves. I think I can say that he and I have a lot of trust in each other. We understand where each of us is coming from and what we're doing and all the rest of it. So, it works out very well. There is no written job description. It's not unusual for me to say, "Look, Bob, there a middle school assembly and a high school assembly. Which one are you taking?" Or, "Hey, look, Bob, I'm doing this, and there seems to be a problem here--go for it." That's not unusual, but that type of freedom probably couldn't be if there weren't a lot of friendship between us also. Because he's the principal, Bob could basically say, "Do this. . . ." or "Do that. . . ." It's difficult to explain how my responsibilities evolve. It happens like most good working relationships. There's not a good formula. There are some good formulas you put in place which will make things adequate, but in this working relationship it just happens. . . . It's just kind of talking things through and getting them to work out. We know the tasks we have to accomplish. . . . [Being an associate principal] is sharing in a partnership.

Isolation and the Search for Confidants

As reported by interview subjects, the work-life of the assistant principal is, for many, a work-life characterized by constant interaction, a frenetic pace, the presence of conflict and many in-office hours. There is another commonality in the professional lives of these individuals--their sense of isolation. For some, the

isolation appears to be self-imposed in the realization that one can not get too close to the staff one supervises. For others, the isolation is indigenous to a position that ever results in interpersonal conflicts. In most cases, to alleviate this isolation, assistant principals find someone within the school organization to talk to and share burdens with.

Less than one year in the position, Mr. Davidson tries to effect change and deal with school improvement issues. He does so with a resistant, veteran staff and without the support of his principal. He speaks of the loneliness of this position and his growing realization that other administrators face the same issues:

There's really no one [to talk to]. It's extremely tough. As I said, there were days, at least in the first part of the year, where you went home and really questioned whether that was what you wanted to do because whenever you made a decision. . . . there was no one there to help you out. There's no one that I think I would say to, "Well, you're a really good friend," and I can sit down and say, "You know, this was one hell of a day. It was lousy." We can talk about ideas, we can talk about decision-making, but the actual feelings in it, I don't think come out. . . . [When in administration], I would guess there are fewer and fewer people that give you that kind of support. I would guess the support comes from dealing with other assistant principals, with other schools. Going to a recent conference for assistant principals was great because, all of a sudden, you found out that the crazy things that are going on in your school happen. . . in all of these other places. They go on. They exist. And, you knew it all the time, but it was nice to sit down and just lay it on the table and say, "Oh, my gosh, her day or his day--they're both equally crazy."

To ease his isolation and to find a support system for decision-making, he turns, hesitatingly at first, to the Superintendent of Schools:

I've started to form a much stronger relationship with the superintendent. And although he was very encouraging at the beginning and still is now, his whole point was, "You've got to call me; you've got to talk to me every day. That's an absolute must. We have to share information all the time." I didn't do that, and I didn't do it because I was trying to say, "Well, I can do this on my own, and I don't need anybody else to help me out." And, in a mid-year evaluation we sat down and really discussed the whole issue. And, I said, "Look, I didn't call you, and I didn't ask for your opinion because if I did, then it would be perceived as "Couldn't he make that decision?" or "Couldn't he handle that particular issue?" I think it's important that this time now I understand that if you're going to make decisions, as much as you can, you've got to talk them over with other people and know that you can do that.

Ms. Marlin describes the same kind of isolation that results from her attempts to focus her position on staff development. The result is separation from the staff, but as reported earlier, she has a strong personal and professional relationship with her headmaster that sustains her:

I don't feel isolated from the other administrators. I do get the dialogue going with them. I feel the gap between teachers and administrators very strongly, but I feel that as a whole teachers are too close-minded. You have to say to yourself sometimes, "Well, my image is still tarnished out there with the teachers, but I'm just going to keep in there, and I'm going to keep driving, and, sooner or later, they'll figure out or come to the conclusion that I'm genuine. . . ." I know I'm misunderstood, and I know if you talked to the average faculty member. . . some would say, "She is a climber," and they don't know I've turned down

principalships. . . . I don't think I'd find this job as satisfying without the mentor relationship I have with my headmaster.

Similarly, Mr. Rames acknowledges his isolation on the job and the role his principal plays in alleviating the resultant loneliness:

I think I'm pretty much alone. . . . However, I think that in my school I am very fortunate to work with and for an extraordinary principal, who is just a wonderful man. I never have to look over my shoulder, and I think his sensitivity and understanding of what I do make my job tolerable. . . . We administrators meet when we can to discuss observations and concerns, but normally during the school day, we're all too busy. . . . I think that's one of the characteristics of being a principal or vice-principal. . . . You really are very much alone. You're on your own, and you are alone.

Although Mr. Francis earlier described the associate principalship advantageously as "being in a partnership," he recognizes that despite the benefits, there are drawbacks. One of them is an aloneness that results from taking full responsibility for having made an unpopular decision. Despite the closeness of his relationship with the principal, he acknowledges that, at such times, it is the school psychologist that is his confidant:

There are days where you feel you are out there on your own. As I said, there are two administrators [principal and associate principal] in this building, and the principal might see a problem very differently from me. There is a problem when you share power. . . . You're kind of hanging by yourself because he's saying "I can't support that particular position" and vice-versa. That's not unfair, but at times, it's so much easier to be told, "Here's how you're going to do

it." Then, it's not your problem. You can say, "Hey, he told me to do it." Sometimes you're feeling very much on your own when the staff may see a problem and you look at it from a much broader perspective. . . . At least I can talk to the [school psychologist] about how I view things. We have some really divergent views on things, but at least that [relationship] has been a real plus for me and, I think, a real necessity for me--just to have him say, "What's your objective? Are you achieving it?"

Mr. Matthews acknowledges the isolation from staff that sometimes occurs in his position. After 19 years on the job, he views his rejection by teachers as ironic and does not express the same loneliness and need for support that younger, less-experienced assistant principals reported earlier:

You can feel isolated in this job. I try to get teachers to see me as a figure who wants to work with them and be a help to them. Now, if they want to turn me off--fine. The ironic part of it is that they can turn me off, but when they really need something they come to me--Johnny on the Spot--but they won't talk to me for the rest of the day. . . . I get mad at some of them sometimes. I get to a point where I feel like ignoring them, or whatever, because they don't meet me halfway. They don't try to understand what I'm trying to do. I do laugh sometimes when many of them will criticize what I do and seem to have more knowledge about my job than I have about their job.

Some assistant principals expressed the view that they were not isolated in their positions while simultaneously acknowledging their separation from the teaching staff, a separation that they themselves supported and even encouraged. Mr. Deeney is one case in point:

I describe myself as being friendly, but not so much with the teachers. I keep a certain amount of distance, professional distance, with teachers because I was a teacher at one time and I was one of the good-old-boys. In my position, I don't think I can really afford to be that close to teachers.

According to Mr. Deeney, this separation does not result in isolation--"not at all, not at all." Despite this, he acknowledges the need for a confidant, for someone to share ideas with. He finds this in the in-school suspension coordinator, an individual who had temporarily assumed his position the year before when Mr. Deeney filled in as an interim acting principal for a local elementary school. In Mr. Deeney's view, only an individual who has experienced his position could understand what it really involves:

The in-school suspension coordinator was in my office for the three months I was at the other school last year, and he got his feet wet. So, he understands the kinds of problems the faculty can create for him, the kinds of demands that they put on him, that sort of thing. He is the only person I can talk to about the day-to-day things that I do. I can talk to the principal if I wanted to run something by him and just say, "What do you think of this idea?" Or if I needed his approval for something. . . . But, I would say my man in in-school suspension is the only one I can really talk to, the only one who would really understand what you're talking about when you talk about this job.

Similarly, Mr. Richards acknowledges that although he has a warm, friendly personality, he chooses to keep a

distance from teachers. The result is an individual who stays "pretty much" to himself:

I don't feel isolated at all. One, I say that's human relations. I'm a firm believer in being up front. I feel I have a warm, very easy-to-get-along-with personality--at the same time keeping that respect I have. I don't try to be buddy-buddy, and I've never had many friendships with teachers, and I've never really been close to other than one or two. . . . That's not my goal to do that. I don't feel that's necessary. I want the respect, and I don't want the friendship. . . . I want, first and foremost, a business situation. I want that to be clear. I want that business relationship to be a working relationship. That's what I'm looking for, and that's how I feel in my position. I stay pretty much to myself.

At the other end of involvement is Mr. Goberts, who describes a number of instances of close interactions with staff. Despite, this, he acknowledges a need for "someone to talk to," and he finds this in a classroom teacher who had been an assistant principal earlier in his career:

As an administrator, philosophically I guess, and maybe from experience too, I am very close to teachers and my teaching staff. I will continue to go to bat for them in all cases. Since I am close to my teaching staff, I even socialize with some of them. We do canoe trips together. We visit each other's houses, and somehow I still manage to walk into work. I still manage to "chew ass," and that's accepted. I don't feel isolated at all. I have a cow at home I talk to, and there is at least one person in this building who readily comes to mind, a teacher. Brian and I talk a lot. We're very close. He's my confidant.

Of all the interviewees, Dr. White described the most extreme case of isolation on the job. In her first year as

assistant principal, she works with a principal with whom she has no relationship. As reported earlier, "Occasionally I meet with the principal but rarely. He doesn't essentially talk to me. It sounds so bizarre, but that's the way it is." She acknowledges that her relationship with the assistant superintendent is what saves her from being isolated:

[I would feel isolated] if I didn't have the assistant superintendent to talk to whenever I want to, and I do. He was hired about the same time I was and is inexperienced as an assistant superintendent so we, sort of, have something similar. He's very interested in the same things I am, and right from the beginning, I figured I better get to know this guy and be honest and work with him and try to be part of a team with him because I've discovered that I would like to be part of a team. I love it when I meet the other principals. I like thinking about from here to there. I don't like pieces. I like patterns. If you have one person to say, "Try it," or "I support and trust you," that's what I personally need. I need a person who is going to say, "I trust that you will do your best, and I trust that if you say you can't do something, that that's indeed true."

Job Satisfaction and Career Goals

In an earlier period, the NASSP study on the assistant principalship reported on the general dissatisfaction of those in the position: "The satisfactions to be found in the position are few and unimpressive to most who occupy this office" (Austin and Brown, 1970, p. 78). Furthermore, this same study found

that, for most assistant principals, the position is seldom viewed as a career:

Only one fourth of the men, and half of the women reported that they intended to make this a career position; the larger fraction of women may be accounted for by the feeling expressed by several that this is probably the highest rung they can reach on the administrative ladder and is, therefore, accepted as a career. For men, this is much more commonly a position to be endured until a principalship or other promotional escape appears; but for many, a final resignation to remain in the position or to return to classroom teaching is the sad conclusion to an ambitious program of professional growth (Austin and Brown, 1970, p. 78).

Similar findings resulted from the interview population. Almost without exception, interviewees referred to the conflicts, the pressures and the overall negative stresses in their work-lives that affected their satisfaction in the position and eventually their commitment to remaining assistant principals. Virtually all interviewees, at some point in their careers, had viewed (or continued to view) their positions as stepping-stones to job advancement, and, for some, attempts to do so had met with failure. Of the 14 assistant principals interviewed, only one expressed a desire to be in the position in five years. This individual, Mr. Charles, was in his late 50s, and, having made more than one attempt to secure a principalship, he expressed resignation to an inevitable reality. Six of the 14

interviewees are looking toward a principalship within five years; four, toward a central office administrative position; three, toward a college faculty position; and one anticipates being retired.

Assistant principals expressed their dissatisfaction with the position and their longing for "promotional escape" in a number of ways. In his position less than one year, Mr. Davidson acknowledges the appeal of returning to his former school as an assistant principal but is cognizant that the issues and pressures he presently faces would be there as well, that they are, in fact, indigenous to the position:

[The job] is not easy. In fact, after seven months, there were cases where I would be calling up my other school and talking to people there. . . . In fact, it was interesting--I had a call from some people where I worked before, and the assistant principalship is open there, and they wanted me to apply for it. . . . At first it sounded really attractive, and the reason it sounded really attractive is it's a familiar background. There are a lot of people that are friendly there that I can talk to, but if you stop to think about it, that's from the standpoint of one teacher to another teacher. Sure, I have lots of friends there because I was a teacher and they were teachers, but to apply for a position like that would be really difficult, even if I got the job, because you're coming from an entirely different perspective because at some point you've got to make a decision. You go with whatever data base you have or the input that you perceive, but, still, you're the one to make the decision. . . . I view this job as a training for something else. I would say no more than two to three years here, and then I would look for something else. I would like to see eventually, ultimately a superintendency. Now, when it comes right down to it, although I enjoy dealing with kids on a daily basis, I

don't enjoy totally dealing with the negative aspects of it. . . . I'd shoot myself [if I couldn't move on.]

Throughout the interview process Mr. Deeney referred to the negative stresses that have become a way of life in his position. Relatively young when first elected to the assistant principalship, he has made more than one attempt to secure a principalship. Although he expresses doubt whether he now wants to make that move, he continues to look and expresses the hope that he will continue to be effective in his work, that he "won't get sloppy" in what he does:

In my second year here I applied for the principalship of another high school. . . . At that time I really wanted to be a principal, and I would have accepted that job if I had been elected. Now, I'm a lot more selective. And, in fact, my wife will even say to me, "Are you sure you want to be a principal?" I think that I would enjoy being principal of this high school because I know it so well. And I see things that I think need to be changed, that the principal has let happen over the eight or nine years that he has been principal, and there are some things that I would do a little differently. So, I'm not sure I would want to be principal just anyplace. I would have maybe three years ago. So, I would be a lot more selective now. I was a finalist at F__, and I withdrew. . . . That was not an ideal setting for a principalship. So, I think I'd be more selective. I'd go with the better type communities. I [continue to look for positions], but there hasn't been much opening up. I think principalships have maybe dried up this last year or two. And, I would expect that they'd open up again, that there would be another rush. . . . You know, I'm here five years. I could see myself remaining for the next few years, and after that I'm hoping that I don't get sloppy in what I do. I can't tell what's going to happen in the future, but I figure I've got a few good years left at this. Beyond that, I don't really know. . . . I really don't want to make another lateral

move. . . . So, I would have to move up, and I'm not really counting on it being here.

As noted earlier, Mr. Charles was the one assistant principal interviewed who expressed a desire to be in his present position in five years. Given the fact that he is approaching 60 years of age and that previous attempts to secure a principalship were unsuccessful, he expresses this career goal with more resignation than desire. He speaks of the frustrations of his job and offers advice to younger assistant principals:

I would say that, usually, most days are good days. I know that I have no problems dealing with kids whatsoever, maybe because I forgive kids so easily. I have harder problems, I would say, dealing with parents. . . . I am not as forgiving with the parents as with the kids. Basically, being a middle administrator. . . it is very, very hard. You have a lot of demands from students and parents below you, and you have different demands from the superintendent, the superintendent's office and the business management above you. You're kind of squeezed. This is the most frustrating part [of this job]. . . . I think the most important thing [is humor]. You saw it at the vice-principals' convention. I know I looked around (and no one likes to admit that they're getting old) and saw so many young vice-principals there, which is good. The most important thing is that they have to have a sense of humor. They have to know that everything is not going to fall in, and that there is always someone worse than they are. . . . I really don't want to be principal now. I thought of it ten years ago, but I don't think of it now, but I think what many towns want of a principal, I'm not ready to give. I'm not ready to give three nights a week. . . . At the present time, I'm not ready to do that. Maybe ten years ago.

Mr. James had found few satisfactions in his position under his previous principal, who had been unwilling to disperse the authority for school leadership. The result was a position largely focused on discipline at the exclusion of other areas of involvement. Mr. James describes the resultant dissatisfaction: "Frankly [under the previous principal], I found myself having to take a couple of extra mental health days just to deal with myself. . . . I think under that kind of a stifling attitude, you begin to become more negative yourself."

Under his new principal, whose leadership style encourages the sharing of responsibility for school leadership, Mr. James finds a more satisfying position. Despite this, as his principal moved into an assistant superintendency, he had hoped to assume the principalship in his building. His candidacy was unsuccessful, and in his mid-50s, he faces the realities of having lost the principalship, of a transfer to another school and of continuing as an assistant principal. Not surprisingly, the prospect of returning to classroom teaching is appealing:

I think there's going to be a point in time when the physical demands of this job might be more than I'm ready to give. . . . You're running all the time. You're moving all over this building, and if you can't do that, then I don't think you should even consider this job. . . . Mostly I think this is a satisfying job. . . but I think before I hang up my shoes, I'm going to go back to teaching. I think I'm going to

give this up and request a transfer back to the unit and teach again. I love teaching. I love working with kids, and I think I'd like to do it. . . . I really think before I'm done I would like to go back to that.

As an urban school assistant principal, Mr. Roberts contrasts the 60-70% of the day he devotes to disciplining students with his real interest--curriculum development and improvement. He acknowledges the necessity for an orderly building and his role in encouraging that, but he looks toward the day when he can assume a central office position:

After four years I'm tired of the disciplinary role. This position can essentially become the launching pad for a principalship or a central office position, and I've thought that at some point I would really like to be in Central Office. . . . I'd like to think of moving on at some point. I would hate to be a person who ten years from now, because I'm still fairly young, twenty years from now, would still be here. That may be--I don't know. I think from the very beginning, I took this job with the hopes that some day I would be something other.

Mr. Thomas presents himself as relatively satisfied in his position and attributes this satisfaction to the shared leadership style that is characteristic of his school and the fact that other individuals within his school's organization have assumed responsibility for student discipline. As he says, "I'm not disillusioned yet [after four years]. I feel as though I'm on the same level as the principal really. Many people tell me that they look at me

as another headmaster of the building." He acknowledges that his situation is unique and expresses sympathy for the experience of other urban school assistant principals:

If I were handling what I'm doing now, plus those foolish discipline problems that have to be dealt with, I probably would not be satisfied at all. Those discipline problems--minor and foolish, people not getting along, boyfriend and girlfriend problems--they're a waste of time, a pain in the neck. And, if I were doing that all day long, I'd not be very happy in this job at all. The problems never go away, and every year there are the same problems with different names on them. I wouldn't have a very enjoyable day at all. I would probably want to go back to the classroom as I loved teaching. . . . You have to hang loose. It's a damn shame how things are. I've never been in other schools, but it's like this in the city. I think the assistant principals spend the whole day disciplining all day long--the ones that I've talked to. You don't get any satisfaction out of that.

Despite this expressed satisfaction, he freely acknowledges that the satisfactions are few and far between and not equal to those he found as a classroom teacher: "I loved teaching. I had a lot of fun teaching, and I had a lot of satisfaction out of teaching, and I felt a sense of accomplishment. . . . I don't have that satisfaction anymore."

As reported earlier, Dr. White, as a first year assistant principal, has found herself in a very unsatisfying position, a condition she attributes more to

the leadership style of her building principal than to conditions inherent to her position. Thus, in less than a year, she actively seeks another assistant principalship with the realization that she has more to learn before moving on:

I don't intend to stay here. I can do anything for a period of time if I have a master plan. I'm trying right now [for another assistant principalship]. It's not a bad job. I would imagine in a carefully thought out system, in the real sense of the word, that one could find rather interesting things to do because the problem with Central Office is that you don't touch the kids or the teachers. You don't touch them the way you do if you're in the building and you see them every day. . . . When I was hired, I said I would stay only a couple of years. Someone else will hire me. I need this because I see there's a great deal I don't know. I tend to like to operate from a position of strength so I would rather go to another job saying, "I know this, and I know it well. Let me show you."

Mr. Matthews, as noted earlier, has been assistant principal for 19 years. He acknowledges the difficulties of his position, the isolation, the conflicts with staff and the "headaches" in disciplining students. Having just lost a bid for the principalship of his high school, he expresses disappointment but acknowledges that job satisfaction is more a condition of one's response to difficult situations rather than the situations themselves:

There are a lot of headaches [in this job]. A lot of people say they couldn't handle this type of work because they couldn't stand the ups and downs, the rejections. They couldn't stand not seeing immediate results. A lot of people have that problem. They have to see immediate results. If you're satisfied, you don't see immediate results and you can take a

good beating once in a while to win the war. A lot of people don't want to pay the price. . . . I suppose the key is that you don't get personal in the sense that you take every little problem home with you.

As assistant principal of a growth community high school, Mr. Rames carries primary responsibility for curriculum development. Despite his minimal involvement with student discipline and its related problems, he acknowledges a growing dissatisfaction with his position and the reality of his age, late 50s, that precludes his moving on, much as he would like to:

I would say, basically, this job is relatively thankless. I derive my satisfaction in the job from knowing that I have defined an observable effect on what is taught in the classroom. I also derive a great deal of satisfaction from dealing with kids. I guess if I get any positive feedback, it comes from the kids and beyond that, from their parents. But, as far as the school professional setting is concerned, I don't think that most people have any understanding or appreciation for what I do. . . . To be honest about it, I'm probably getting a little tired of it. I probably would like to have a wider range of responsibilities than just the high school. I say this because I don't think there is a great deal more that I can do here. . . . I have looked over the past two years at different possibilities, but at my age, and at this point in my career, I have to be realistic also.

As a fitting close to this discussion, Mr. Mackin--in his 60s, over 18 years an assistant principal and unsuccessful in past attempts to secure a principalship--offers advice to young, ambitious assistant principals:

If you're surveying young people who have a goal in sight of becoming a principal, assistant superintendent or superintendent somewhere, I can see where the anxieties come from if they have a goal, say, that "I'll be assistant principal for four years, then principal and then, so on." If they're not meeting those goals, then there's some difficulty. . . . I think if you see it as a stepping-stone, you can be frustrated by certain areas over which you have no control.

C H A P T E R V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS: THE WORK-LIVES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

Introduction

From this study there emerged a portrait of the secondary school assistant principal broader in scope and more diversified in terms of work-life realities than that described in the literature. Characteristic of the position as the dual responsibility for discipline and attendance may be, there are other common denominators equally significant in the work experience of assistant principals. Additionally, the experience of assistant principals, even in terms of this individual's responsibility for discipline and attendance, is often a reflection of the kind of community in which the school is located.

From the perceptions of assistant principals, there evolved a description of a work-life presented as a series of balancing acts between opposing conditions. Assistant principals walk a tightrope between control and its loss; between conflict and isolation; between the building principal's vision of school leadership and the impact of

that vision on the assistant principal's work-life; and, finally, between the nature of work experiences and job satisfaction. What follows here is (1) a discussion of these characteristics of the work-lives of assistant principals and (2) implications for staff developers, school principals, central office administrators and university faculty who are seeking to enhance this significant position in secondary school leadership.

Conclusions: Characteristics of the Work-Lives of
Assistant Principals

Control

The routine that is so familiar and so characteristic of the high school teacher's work-life--the specified number of classes and students, the division of the work day into equal segments of time, the regularity of class meeting time, lunch time, corridor duty, etc.--is all but nonexistent for assistant principals. By contrast, their work-lives are characterized by irregularity, by interruption, by unpredictable crises and by the inability to follow a schedule for the day. Periods of quiet calmness quickly and unaccountably become hours of frenzy. Conversely, the anticipated and dreaded storm passes without touching down.

To minimize this lack of control, assistant principals attempt to establish some routine in their work-lives. For most, there is the daily activity of clearing the desk and establishing the agenda for the day to come. There are students to contact, parents to call, tasks to be accomplished; and, before the first bell rings, the agenda is established.

From this planning there emerges an early morning routine of checking corridors and summoning students, of addressing yesterday's unresolved problems and facing the issue of today's tardy and absentee students. Even this routine, however, is sometimes broken by an unanticipated interruption or early-morning crisis.

Once the early-morning routine has taken place, the remainder of the day looms ahead, largely unstructured. If there is a predictableness to the assistant principal's day, it is that it will be characterized by unpredictableness. Just when things seem quietest, and when control is in place, frenzied activity and even chaos can erupt. As one assistant principal said, "The day is pretty much, 'Wait and see what happens.'"

Assistant principals work alone, but their doors remain open. And while they are, students and faculty, parents and community members walk in or out, by choice or otherwise. Surrounded by individuals whose concerns, for

the most part, are problematic, the assistant principal puts plans aside and readjusts the agenda. The stroll through the corridors will have to wait; the classroom observation must be put off until another day; the meeting is postponed. Even the well-established routine of supervising the cafeterias during lunch periods is often abandoned when crises arise.

Whereas the patterns and routines of the teacher's work-life are established by school committee and school building regulations, the assistant principalship is characterized by an undetermined and unstructured day that, ironically, provides less freedom of choice in job activity and involvement than that of the classroom teacher. The largely unstructured day is quickly overstructured, overscheduled by the variety of groups and individuals with whom the assistant principal continually interacts.

Many of these interactions are time-consuming and trivial, and most are ever-repeating patterns of student offenses. As one assistant principal noted, "The problems reappear year after year--the same problems with different faces."

The constant struggle for the assistant principal is to maintain control--to get back on track before going too far astray. Thus, there are the rituals, the patterns of handling as many issues as possible in the early morning

hours and of establishing a day's beginning that is regular, orderly and predictable. The assistant principal might have to "wait and see what happens" after the early morning routine, but at least one part of the day can be predicted and planned.

Conflict

As noted, the assistant principal's work-life is characterized by continual interaction with a wide variety of individuals on a wide variety of issues. Most of these interactions involve people in conflict with some other individual or some aspect of the school setting, and many of the issues are ongoing, repetitive and trivial. For the assistant principal, the consequence is playing the intermediary and, sometimes, playing Solomon between individuals in conflict situations--two students, a student and a teacher, two teachers or a parent and a teacher. And, as in so many instances where one plays this role, anger is often deflected and redirected toward the assistant principal. The initial conflict between teacher and student easily evolves into one between student and assistant principal or, more commonly, between teacher and assistant principal. Thus, other people's problems, more often than not, become those of the assistant principal.

Interestingly enough, the real conflicts, the real sources of tension and dissatisfaction are not the result of student-assistant principal interaction. Although the hallmark of the assistant principal's encounter with students is often punitive--reprimand, detention, suspension and, on occasion, expulsion and exclusion--the conflicts that ensue are, for the most part, resolvable.

This minimum of conflict in a relationship that has the potential to be highly adversarial is a reflection of assistant principals' perceptions of their role with respect to the students they supervise. Although the world-at-large may perceive assistant principals as the "bad guys" in the school organization, few present or attempt to project this image of self. Much as they are the safekeepers of an orderly school environment, they are as much the students' counselors, the students' advocates. "I'm a gentle giant," says one assistant principal; and another, "I forgive kids very easily."

So, where are the conflicts for the assistant principal? From whence originate the real tensions, if not with students? In some instances, there are conflicts with parents who do not share the assistant principal's decision with respect to their child. In other instances, there are differing points of view with Central Office administrators. In the majority of instances, however, the

real conflicts are a by-product of interaction with staff, most especially with jaded, long-tenured teachers who bring their frustrations, their disappointments and dissatisfactions to the work environment.

At the moment of conflict, teachers do not share the assistant principal's commitment to helping the student who has disrupted class, created a disturbance in the cafeteria or challenged their authority. Nor do they express hope or optimism for the well-being of either the student or the school organization.

This, then, is the difference between the teacher and the assistant principal and is often the center of the conflict. In the teacher's view, as expressed by assistant principals, every problematic action, every error is, at the moment of occurrence, symptomatic of some larger problem that is not being addressed. The frustration extends beyond the problem at hand and often involves a myriad of tangentially related issues. To the assistant principal, on the other hand, most instances of student misbehavior are just that--instances to be dealt with accordingly.

Resolution is not so easy in the view of the teacher in distress, and the result, for the assistant principal, is an ever-growing sense of isolation from staff. As conflicts arise, as they escalate, the assistant principal

retreats. For some, this withdrawal from staff is permanent as they begin to define their professional relationships with other than teachers. For many, the answer lies in a close, supportive relationship with students. For others, there is at least one confidant within the school organization who eases the burden of isolation.

The Building Principal

In spite of job descriptions, the directives from Central Office, experience, preparation or academic background, there is no one or nothing more crucial in determining the nature of the assistant principal's work than the building principal. Her or his conception of school leadership and the assistant principal's role in that process determine how minimal or how great will be the assistant principal's involvement; how trivial or how significant will be her or his experiences; to what degree this individual will grow or stagnate; and, ultimately, how effective and how satisfied the assistant principal will be. Essentially, the relationship between these two administrators is of paramount importance.

In some schools the relationship is one closely monitored and controlled by the principal. Such a principal releases power hesitatingly, and the assistant

principal is, as a result, involved only in what the principal allows, usually discipline, attendance and cafeteria supervision. Every decision, regardless of the scope or the complexity, is approved by, or at least shared with, the principal. Although there is ongoing communication, the direction is one-way.

At the other end of the spectrum lies the nonexistent relationship between principal and assistant principal. Because of the principal's non-involvement, there appears the opportunity for the assistant principal to explore work-life opportunities. For the novice, there may be a false sense of optimism in a newly-acquired autonomy and the principal's faith in one's ability to do the job. Soon, however, this optimism is replaced by resentment and diminishing job effectiveness as the assistant principal realizes there is no one to share the burden of difficult decisions, no one to talk to regarding common concerns, and no one to assist in the definition and meaning of one's professional life. The separation from staff, compounded by this issue, creates further isolation for the assistant principal.

Somewhere between these two extremes of non-communication and exclusively one-way communication lies a more balanced relationship of open two-way communication, the results of which are shared leadership

and respect for varying perspectives and abilities.

Although this relationship is more the exception than the rule in public high schools, there are schools where it is not easy to distinguish between the roles of the principal and the assistant principal, so closely shared are school responsibilities. In such a situation, job effectiveness and satisfaction are high as the assistant principal grows through both experience and collegiality.

Assistant principals with the greatest degree of job satisfaction fall into this latter category in terms of relationship with the building principal. Conversely, those with the least satisfaction are those who find themselves in a highly principal-directed position that results in little input from the assistant principal.

Nature of Work Experiences

As this study found, the most common primary reasons for seeking the assistant principalship are to have greater professional challenge and to influence the total school program. The reality, however, is that assistant principals report few opportunities for professional challenge and little involvement in other than supervision of students, corridors, cafeterias and schoolyards. Given the enormity of their responsibility in these areas and an organizational structure that allows this, the assistant

principal's desire for greater involvement in teacher selection and evaluation, in staff development issues, and in curriculum development and program development remains largely unaccomplished.

The result for assistant principals is a generally unsatisfying work-life. The role limitations result in repetition of activities, in oftentimes trivial tasks and in professional stagnation. More than this, given the nature of the defined role, the involvements present few opportunities for positive encounters and professional growth. It is hardly surprising that only 18% of the survey population and virtually none of the interview population expressed interest in remaining in their positions.

Given the fact that 63% of assistant principals hope to be in some other position in five years (and that 37% of assistant principals surveyed are in their 50s and see retirement looming closer), the limitation in work responsibilities becomes more than an issue of dissatisfaction on the job. Limited to student discipline and control, experienced assistant principals are vastly inexperienced in terms of their preparedness for the broader responsibilities of a principalship or a central office position.

Kind-of-Community Impact

It is a well-established fact that the nature and kind of community affect the school. It is equally well-established that schools affect the people within them. One assumption of this study--that the experience of assistant principals would reflect the nature and kind of community in which they worked--was borne out by both survey and interview findings. The traditional view--that the nature of the position is universally experienced--is replaced here by a more contemporary view that recognizes the impact of community on the school.

The work experience of assistant principals, as noted, is a significant factor in their job satisfaction. In general, as the size and complexity of the kind of community decrease, the scope and broadness of job responsibility increase. Assistant principals in smaller, less complex kind of community schools have greater involvement in classroom supervision, in teacher evaluation and in student activities than do their counterparts in larger, more complex kind of community schools. Assistant principals in smaller kinds of communities also experience greater satisfaction in their positions and less of a desire to increase involvement on the job.

In larger, more complex kind of community schools there is virtually single-minded concentration on building stability and student control. Additionally, it was in the largest kind of community only--urbanized centers--where assistant principals reported themselves to be very dissatisfied with their work. The one exception to this occurred with assistant principals from the largest urban center in the Commonwealth, where the organizational structure within the building supported a decentralization of authority for student discipline. Even with this transfer of authority, however--given the vast complexities of this urban setting--assistant principals reported a day as characterized by conflict, tension and interruption as did their counterparts in less complex work environments.

Significant as these factors are in terms of kind of community influence, the impact of the principal's role on the assistant principal's work-life is not negated. There are highly complex urban settings where a team effort in school administration is nonexistent and, conversely, those where leadership and authority are shared. This is equally true for all schools regardless of kind of community.

Implications: The Future of the Assistant Principalship
Introduction

The general dissatisfaction of assistant principals and the desire for promotional escape must be reckoned with by those in leadership positions--by those who have the authority to impact on the assistant principal's work-life. These individuals include university faculty whose course work provides the philosophical underpinnings and theoretical framework for educational leadership; central office administrators who establish system-wide school goals and the assistant principal's role in effecting those goals; staff developers who conceive of programs and practices to increase the effectiveness of this individual; and, most essential of all, building principals whose view, as noted, is the single most significant factor in determining the work-experience and, ultimately, the job satisfaction of the assistant principal. This view is supported by the recent research on school improvement that reports on the magnitude of the principal's day-to-day responsibilities and the resultant inability of this person to manage the building alone. Leadership needs to be shared; authority, to be divided and dispersed; and responsibility, to be broadened. Without these conditions, the assistant principal is likely to remain less effective and less satisfied than he or she

might be, and the school itself, less efficiently managed. School improvement and change, as noted, are not likely to occur if responsibility lies in the hands of one individual, the building principal. What follows here are a series of recommendations for the enhancement of the assistant principal's role in school leadership.

University Faculty and Program Planners

University faculty and program planners must design their course work and practicum experiences to help potential assistant principals grow in their conception of school leadership. The preparation for the assistant principalship must be as broadly-based and as extensive as that for the principalship. Assistant principals need a strong foundation in all facets of school leadership. This includes course work in budget preparation, in teacher supervision and evaluation, in instructional effectiveness, in curriculum development, in program planning, in organizational analysis, in change strategies and in current trends in education. Assistant principals must also develop skills in human relations, in problem solving and in communication. In general, the ideal assistant principal has an equally strong background in, and commitment to, both instructional leadership and building management.

Central Office Administrators and Staff Developers

Central Office administrators and staff developers must broaden their conception of the assistant principal's role and increase their communication with this individual. Direct communication with the assistant principal increases the visibility of this individual in the eyes of Central Office and communicates to the assistant principal that the position is valued, is significant and is worthy of response from the Central Office. The potential, for the assistant principal, is a continual reshaping and redefinition of role toward greater and greater job effectiveness and satisfaction.

Central Office also has a role to play in the hiring of new assistant principals. Individuals should be selected, not for their proven ability to manage students only, but for the broadness of their background and experience in educational practice and their commitment to school improvement and change. Although the most common route of entry into the assistant principalship is directly from the classroom, only in rare instances does such preparation provide the necessary broadness in scope and experience for effective leadership in the position.

The Building Principal

As noted, university faculty can provide the theoretical background and the means toward an enhanced

practicum experience. Additionally, central office administrators can help redefine the role, enhance the prestige of the position, and provide direction in the hiring of promising candidates. By far the most significant role, however, is filled by the building principal who interacts with the assistant principal on a daily basis and who has the power, above all others, to promote or deny the opportunity for the enhancement of the position. The following recommendations are for consideration by building principals:

1. Ongoing and frequent communication between principal and assistant principal is essential. Such communication should involve more than informal "checking-in" with one another. There should be a regular, formalized pattern of administrative team meetings, the purpose of which is to review relevant and substantive issues, to trade perspectives in addressing them and to plan for school improvement and change.
2. The assistant principal must be given responsibility for aspects of school leadership other than student discipline. Such responsibility should include areas for which the assistant principal has a special talent and/or affinity and might include primary responsibility for areas of staff development, budget preparation, program planning and grant writing, curriculum development or supervision of a particular department within the school.
3. The principal should encourage the assistant principal to pursue academic study and opportunities for professional growth. These include participation in graduate coursework and professional conferences as well as self-initiated writing and/or school-based research projects.

4. The principal should communicate faith in the assistant principal and a commitment to team leadership by directing faculty to the assistant principal when issues arise relative to the assistant principal's areas of responsibility.
5. The assistant principal should be given opportunity to "fill" the principal's shoes when situations arise. These include responsibility for the school when the principal is not available and filling in for the principal at committee meetings, Central Office meetings and professional meetings.
6. The principal and assistant principal should work together to minimize, as far as possible, the latter's involvement in student discipline and conflict situations. Where problems and issues could be handled at another level, they should. Additionally, if problems can be traced to some few individuals' difficulty in managing students, classrooms or stress, those individuals should be identified and assisted so as to minimize future conflicts.
7. The principal should conceive of the role of principal and assistant principal as a team approach to running the school. This philosophy should be evidenced by the roles the two play in school leadership and should be communicated to staff through example.
8. Above all, the principal should be committed to providing opportunity for his or her assistant to grow in all aspects of school leadership with the understanding that this individual will, undoubtedly seek to move on one day. There is great value to encouraging this growth, for while the assistant principal is preparing for greater professional responsibility, the school is reaping the benefits of a commitment to professional development.

The Assistant Principal

In conclusion, there is much that the assistant principal can do to promote effectiveness and satisfaction

in his or her position. Of essence is a personal commitment to professional growth and development that includes research, study and experience that will increase opportunities for greater and broader involvement in school leadership. The assistant principal who knows little of curriculum development processes cannot expect to be given a leadership role in this capacity. Similarly, one who is inexperienced in teacher supervision and instructional effectiveness is unlikely to be received with much enthusiasm from those under evaluation. Power and responsibility cannot be successfully dispersed to those without the capacity and commitment to handle it. Central Office personnel and the building principal have their roles to play in encouraging this growth, but the personal and professional commitment of the assistant principal is equally vital to success.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PILOT SURVEY COVER LETTER

July 22, 1985

(Address)

Dear (Name),

Thank you for agreeing to look at this survey. As we discussed on the phone, my interest now lies in the design of the survey itself. Thus, I would like you not only to complete the survey but also, if you see any problems with it, to comment.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate calling---(617) 372-4970. Once again, I truly appreciate your willingness to assist me.

Sincerely,

Mary J. McCarthy
9 Kingsbury Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01830

PILOT SURVEY
FOLLOW-UP LETTER

August 22, 1985

(Address)

Dear (Name),

This is just a reminder that I have not yet received the survey which you agreed to field test. I know this is undoubtedly a busy time for you, but I would appreciate hearing from you before school opens.

I consider your input vital to the final design of my survey instrument. Please call---(617) 372-4970---if you have any questions, and, once again, thank you for your willingness to assist me.

Sincerely,

Mary J. McCarthy
9 Kingsbury Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01830

- To be creative and original
- To make a good salary
- To achieve social status and prestige
- To have an opportunity for further promotion
- To assume greater responsibility
- To influence the total school program
- To have greater professional challenge
- Other (please specify) _____

9. How would you characterize your relationship with the school principal?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Good
- Very good
- I do not know.

II. This section asks you to complete questions concerning your work as a school administrator.

10. Please choose the response that indicates how much each responsibility is emphasized as part of your job as assistant principal (using the 1 to 5 scale given).

- 1 = To a very little extent
- 2 = To a little extent
- 3 = Somewhat
- 4 = To a great extent
- 5 = To a very great extent

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher Evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Community relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program planning and grant writing | <input type="checkbox"/> School improvement and change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Central office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____ |

11. Please choose the response that indicates how much each responsibility should be emphasized as part of your job as assistant principal (using the 1 to 5 scale given above).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Community relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program planning and grant writing | <input type="checkbox"/> School improvement and change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Central office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify |
-

12. Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about being an assistant principal?

- I am very satisfied with my job.
- I am more satisfied than not with my job.
- I am equally satisfied and dissatisfied.
- I am more dissatisfied than satisfied with my job.
- I am very dissatisfied with my job.

13. What gives you greatest satisfaction in your job?

14. As you look ahead, recognizing that factors beyond your control may intervene, please indicate what job you expect to have five years from now?

- Retired
- Classroom teacher
- Assistant principal (same school)
- Asst. principal (some other school)
- Principal
- Central office position
- Superintendent
- College teacher
- Other (please state) _____

Place a number "1" after the job that you would like to have five years from now.

III. This last section asks you to respond to four open-ended questions about situations that administrators often face. Your answers do not have to be lengthy.

15. Assistant principals often tell me they have had a really good day.

What is a good day like for you?

16. It is extremely busy in your office, and you have many students around you. A teacher enters, demands to see you immediately, and then angrily states in front of the students that there are trespassers in the hallway who do not belong there "if anyone in administration cares to do anything about it." The teacher then leaves before you can reply. Later in the day, the same teacher refuses your request to come to your office to discuss the situation saying "there is nothing to talk about." This is not the first time you and other members of the building administration have had difficulty with this teacher.

Briefly describe what you would do next in this situation.

17. In your trips around the building, you have noticed that the special education teacher has shown Walt Disney films in her fourth period class for two weeks in a row. You are upset by her apparent neglect of teaching responsibilities. You intend to take some action on the next school day.

What are you going to do?

18. You have suspended a non-White student for a week for coming to school under the influence of alcohol; the school discipline policy calls for suspension as a minimum response. Shortly after, it comes to your attention that another assistant principal has allowed three White students caught drinking in the bathroom to remain in school. This is confirmed by a conversation with the teacher who reported the incident.

How would you respond to this action of your colleague?

19. Would you be willing to participate in an interview concerning your work as an assistant principal?

___ Yes ___ No

If your response is "yes," please provide your name, address and phone number:

APPENDIX B

THE SURVEY:
STUDYING THE WORK LIVES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS

This survey is divided into three sections: (1) Demographics; (2) Work Realities; (3) Leadership Styles and Decision-Making. I have limited the number of questions with the intention of separately researching the school systems of the respondents with respect to student enrollment, grades served in the high school, number of administrators, job descriptions, and community demography. In addition, to elicit further data, I anticipate follow-up interviews with many of the respondents.

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHICS

The first section of the survey asks the participant to complete demographic questions concerning his/her position as an assistant principal. In addition to asking questions relating to sex, age and racial/ethnic background, I ask for data regarding the individual's educational background and employment history in education.

The sex of the assistant principal is an important characteristic in drawing a portrait in that so few women occupy positions in school administration. The extensive

study on the assistant principalship sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Administrators (1970) reports that "only 14 percent of the responding principals said their administrative teams included women" (p. 29). Although there has been no similar study since the issuance of this report, there is little indication that the picture has changed much in the last 15 years. As a matter of fact, the directory of the Massachusetts Secondary Schools Administrators' Association lists only 53 women out of a total of 506 in the position of assistant principal of a comprehensive secondary school.

There is an additional consideration in seeking this information. More than one researcher has noted the need for teacher nurturance on the part of school administrators. In her "portraits" of school leadership, Lightfoot (1983) attributes this capacity as evolving from what she characterizes as a "feminine" style of leadership. Lightfoot speaks of "style," and there seems little doubt that the qualities she associates with a feminine perspective and orientation can be expressed by men or women administrators. Further, I would like to emphasize that assessing the sex of school administrators and how that relates to leadership style is a worthwhile commentary on the argument for more women in a male-dominated administrative position.

Similarly, the age of the incumbent (Question #2) and the number of years in the position (Question #5) not only add to the profile of those in the position but may also relate to one's responses in subsequent questions. Perhaps one's conception of the role of the assistant principal is, in part, determined by one's age and length of service. Beyond this, the NASSP study reports that the median age of assistant principals studied was 35-39 and that the average number of years in the position was one to three. These characteristics are a factor in assessing whether one perceives the role as a terminal professional position and the effect this has on one's perspective and orientation to the job.

Question #3 asks the respondent to identify his/her race and is another important characteristic in completing the profile. The racial/ethnic orientation of those in administrative positions is especially significant in school systems whose populations include large numbers of minority students. Interacting with students whose culture and background are diverse from one's own creates its own particular issues and problems.

I have asked the participant in question #4 to identify the title of his/her position. I have done so to clarify administrative roles and functions. Beyond the fact that the assistant principal may be known as

"submaster," "assistant headmaster" or "vice-principal," there are also those school systems (as my pilot survey has revealed) who further define the role of the assistant principal by assigning one of the traditionally major roles of this individual, student discipline, to another person, whose title may be "Dean of Students," "Housemaster," etc. My intention is to limit my investigation to those who hold the title of assistant principal (vice-principal, assistant headmaster, etc.) while noting that disciplinary functions may, in some cases, be handled by those in other positions.

As important as "who" assistant principals are is the fact of where they come from. Thus, question #6 asks the participant to identify degrees held and major fields of preparation. Likewise, question #7 asks the positions held prior to employment as an assistant principal. Whether one has continued one's professional education beyond the master's level and what the concentration of study has been would seem to have some effect on the nature and extent of one's involvement in school improvement agendas. This is equally true for the professional experiences one has had in education.

Question #8 asks the participant to identify the most important factors in his/her decision to become an assistant principal:

8. Looking back today, what do you think were the most important factors in your decision to become an assistant principal? Please rank the reasons in order of their importance (1 - most important; 2 - second most important; 3 - third most important).

- To use my special abilities and aptitudes
- To exercise leadership
- To be creative and original
- To make a good salary
- To achieve social status and prestige
- To have an opportunity for further promotion
- To influence the total school program
- To have greater professional challenge
- Other (Please specify) _____

The responses to this question reveal one's perceptions of and initial expectations for the job. They also reflect one's satisfaction with the position if hopes are not fulfilled. For this reason, I intend to follow-up this question in the second section of the survey by asking whether these factors became a reality.

As a final question in this section, I ask the participant to characterize his/her relationship with the school principal as:

- Very poor
- Poor
- Good
- Very Good
- I do not know.

My assumption is that the nature and extent of one's involvement in school improvement agendas may be tied to one's relationship with the principal. The responsibility that is expected of and even allowed the assistant

principal may relate to the principal's perception of this individual and the position itself. This view is substantiated by the NASSP study (1970): "Critical to the understanding of any assistant principalship at any time is the peculiar relationship between the principal and the assistant principal [italics omitted]. The prime determiner of this relationship is the principal. It is his concept of the role of the assistant principal which will be most influential" (p.77).

In summation, this first section of the survey is designed to provide a definitive profile of those in the role of assistant principal. The unique characteristics of the men or women in the assistant principal's office---who they are, where they come from, and what their job expectations are---shape their orientation to the job and may well define their roles, their effectiveness, and their eventual satisfaction in the position.

SECTION II: WORK REALITIES

The second section of the survey asks participants to complete questions concerning the realities of their work lives. As a result of Section I, we have a better understanding of who is in the position. The intent of this section is to define what the job involves and the subsequent satisfaction of the incumbents with that

definition. As such, there is a progression in the ordering of questions: (1) the reality of job responsibilities; (2) the ideal of job responsibilities; (3) satisfaction with the job; (4) the source of one's greatest satisfaction; and (5) career goals.

Question #10 asks the participant to identify the areas of involvement and the emphases in job responsibilities. What are the realities of the day-to-day work lives of assistant principals? Do they participate in activities other than that of student discipline? If so, which ones? And what is the extent of that involvement?

This question seeks to address these issues:

10. Please choose the response that indicates how much each responsibility is emphasized as part of your job as an assistant principal (using the 1 to 5 scale given).

- 1 = To a very little extent
- 2 = To a little extent
- 3 = Somewhat
- 4 = To a great extent
- 5 = To a very great extent

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Community relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program planning and grant writing | <input type="checkbox"/> School improvement and change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Central office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____ |

As a natural extension of this question, question #11 asks the participant to rank the same responsibilities according to the extent to which he/she feels they should be emphasized:

11. Please choose the response that indicates how much each responsibility should be emphasized as part of your job as assistant principal (using the 1 to 5 scale given above).

The design of this question allows the researcher to draw a number of interesting comparisons between what one does and what one wishes to do (or feels one should be doing). The responsibilities the incumbent notes should be emphasized are an indication of his/her philosophy of educational leadership and may be further interpreted as an indicator of this individual's orientation to school change and improvement. Beyond this, a great disparity between the actuality and the ideal of job responsibility may well account for one's level of satisfaction in the position.

For this reason, I have asked the participant (in question #12) to indicate his/her level of satisfaction in the position:

12. Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about being an assistant principal?

- I am very satisfied with my job.
- I am more satisfied than not with my job.
- I am equally satisfied and dissatisfied.
- I am more dissatisfied than satisfied with my job.
- I am very dissatisfied with my job.

This question of satisfaction is a critical one. As Austin and Brown (1970) note in the NASSP study, "The satisfactions to be found in the assistant principalship are few and unimpressive to most who occupy this office" (p. 78). The brief tenure of many in this position and the desire for "promotional escape" (Austin and Brown, p. 78) are causally related to level of satisfaction, and one's effectiveness and involvement in the job may be similarly related.

I have also asked the participant to identify (Question #13) the source of his/her greatest satisfaction in the position:

13. What gives you the greatest satisfaction in your job?

I have purposefully designed this as an open-ended question as the variety of responses are, conceivably, unlimited and, consequently, difficult to categorize on my part. The design of the question also affords the participant the opportunity to assess his/her position and to respond in an original manner.

Job satisfaction, of course, affects one's career goals so a natural culminating question to this section is one that asks the participant to identify those goals, both in terms of expectation and desire:

14. As you look ahead, recognizing that factors beyond your control may intervene, what job do you expect to have five years from now?

- Retired
- Classroom teacher
- Assistant principal (same school)
- Assistant principal (some other school)
- Principal
- Central office position
- Superintendent
- College teacher
- Other (please state) _____

SECTION III: LEADERSHIP STYLES AND DECISION-MAKING

The final section of the survey asks for responses to four open-ended questions about situations that administrators often face. In question #15, I have asked the participant to identify a good day on the job:

15. Assistant principals often tell me they have had a really good day.

What is a good day like for you?

The response to this question is another way of assessing what gives the assistant principal his/her greatest satisfaction: involvement in staff development activities; a quiet day with few interruptions; a busy day with much accomplished; the resolution to a conflict; positive interactions with teachers, students or other administrators, or any one of a number of other situations. The response may also be interpreted as an indicator of what would characterize a bad day for the

assistant principal. In its positive approach, however, it gives the respondent the opportunity to visualize the ideal of his/her job. As one of the participants in the pilot survey observed, "I particularly enjoyed the question about what constitutes 'a good day.' It was pleasant to think about and that set a positive frame of mind for the 'problem' questions."

The final three questions reflect situations that are sources of potential conflict for the assistant principal. None of these situations are simplistic in their solution; nor are the responses predictable. Consequently, the manner in which one handles these conflicts is a reflection of the assistant principal's leadership style. Does he/she avoid the problem? Minimize it? Defer it to another individual (and whom?)? Postpone the resolution? And, if this individual elects to resolve the conflict, in what way? Is there confrontation? Are there prior assumptions? The answers to these questions reveal the decision-making approaches and the leadership style of the assistant principal.

In designing the three questions, I have intentionally sought to present situations of interaction between the assistant principal and the diverse groups within the school building. The NASSP study notes that "the great preponderance of the assistant principal's work involves

dealing with people" (p. 19). And most of these dealings are with, as the authors note, "people in some degree of distress or disaster" (p. 76). They add, "His [the assistant principal] success or failure is clearly related to his skill in human relations. . . ." (p.76). To this I would add that one's satisfaction on the job is also a function of one's success in handling troublesome interactions. Beyond this, the failure to resolve conflicts successfully results in alienation of the assistant principal and an isolation that may influence the nature of future commitments to problem resolution.

Question #16 depicts a confrontation between a teacher and an assistant principal:

16. It is extremely busy in your office, and you have many students around you. A teacher enters, demands to see you immediately, and then angrily states in front of students that there are trespassers in the hallway who do not belong there "if anyone in administration cares to do anything about it." The teacher then leaves before you can reply. Later in the day, the same teacher refuses your request to come to your office to discuss the situation saying "there is nothing to talk about." This is not the first time you and other members of the building administration have had difficulty with this teacher.

Briefly describe what you would do next in this situation.

The teacher has angrily confronted the administrator in the presence of students and has later refused the assistant principal's request to discuss the situation.

Where does this individual go from here? Should he/she "tell" the teacher (in person or in writing) to come to the office? Should the administrator request a meeting with the teacher on more neutral territory? Should the teacher be cited in writing? Should the matter be deferred to the principal or to the department chairperson? Should it be ignored? Whatever the response, it is a real indication of the assistant principal's leadership style and decision-making ability.

Similarly, question #17 relates to interaction between the assistant principal and a teacher. In this situation, the initiation for interaction is on the assistant principal's part:

17. In your trips around the building, you have noticed that the special education teacher has shown Walt Disney films in her fourth period class for two weeks in a row. You are upset by her apparent neglect of teaching responsibilities. You intend to take some action on the next school day.

What are you going to do?

Does the assistant principal, even informally, assume responsibility for classroom supervision or teacher evaluation? The response to this question--whether one would ignore the situation, defer it to another individual, or approach the teacher himself/herself---reflects this. Furthermore, if one does assume responsibility for personally addressing the issue, how is this accomplished?

An unannounced visit to the classroom? A reprimand in person and/or in writing? A discussion with the teacher regarding instructional objectives? More so than in the previous scenario, where the assistant principal was in a defensive position (having been verbally confronted by the teacher), in this situation we have the possibility of understanding the assistant principal's involvement in school improvement agendas in the analysis of whether one avoids responsibility, defers responsibility, or assumes responsibility for educational leadership.

The final question addresses the issue of interaction with one's peer, another assistant principal:

18. You have suspended a non-White student for a week for coming to school under the influence of alcohol; the school discipline policy calls for suspension as a minimum response. Shortly after, it comes to your attention that another assistant principal has allowed three White students caught drinking in the bathroom to remain in school. This is confirmed by a conversation with the teacher who reported the incident.

How would you respond to this action of your colleague? Is the focus of the resolution one of desire for suspension of the three White students, or is it desire for consistency in administrative decisions? Also, would the individual avoid, defer or handle the situation? And, in what manner? The response, again, is not simplistic and is a revelation of the leadership style of the respondent.

I have ended the survey by asking the participant to indicate his/her willingness to participate further in my research on the assistant principal:

19. Would you be willing to participate in a more comprehensive survey and/or interview concerning your work as an assistant principal?

___ Yes ___ No

If your response is "yes," please provide your name, address and phone number:

As far as possible, I intend to interview all those who are willing to be further involved. Through interviews, I will be able to derive a better assessment of who is in the job, what that job involves, how satisfied the individual is, and what his or her commitment is to educational leadership. A better sense of "what is going on" and "why it is going on" should enable me to draw conclusions and to make recommendations concerning the future prospects and possibilities for the assistant principalship.

THE PILOT SURVEY: POPULATION

In July of 1985 I contacted ten individuals in the position of assistant principal of a secondary school and asked them to assist in my research by piloting the survey instrument described above. All ten agreed to do so. In the end, however, I received only seven responses despite personal phone calls and a follow-up letter of request. The survey and the written communication to these individuals are included as Appendix A.

The sample population was not chosen randomly. I selected individuals whom I knew and others who had been recommended to me. In addition, I was limited in my selection by the fact that most assistant principals do not work during the summer months and were, consequently, unavailable. The ten whom I did select represent urban, suburban and rural school districts across the state of Massachusetts.

Because the selection of the pilot population was not a random one, I have not attempted, in analyzing the results, to draw conclusions regarding a portrait of who is in the position. Moreover, this was not my aim. My intention was to note any ambiguities and inconsistencies in the design of the survey instrument and to determine whether the questions would generate the themes relevant to my research. The results follow.

THE PILOT SURVEY: RESULTS

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHICS

Of the seven individuals who completed the survey, three are female and four, male. Two of these individuals are between 30-39 years of age; two are 40-49, and three are 50-59. With the exception of one Hispanic, all classified themselves as "White, Non-Hispanic." Five carry the title of "assistant principal" while one is a "vice-principal" and one, a "building master." Five of the respondents have been in their positions 6-10 years; one has been an assistant principal for 11-15 years and another, 0-5 years. All seven have master's degrees, three having completed Certificates of Advanced Graduate Study in administration. Three of the master's degrees are in education, and the remaining earned degrees in administration, guidance or French. Their undergraduate degrees are scattered among seven different areas of study.

In question #7 I asked the individuals to list the positions held prior to employment as an assistant principal. Because I did not ask that these positions be listed in any order, I am not able to determine the route of entry into the position of assistant principal. This is a point to consider in the final draft of the survey. It

is interesting to note that six of the seven respondents had held positions in educational administration prior to their assuming the post of assistant principal.

The response to question #8, ". . . what do you think were the most important factors in your decision to become an assistant principal?" revealed an ambiguity in the design of the question. Only three of the respondents provided the response I sought---the three most important factors in order of importance. The others labeled all nine choices as "1", "2" or "3" and in some cases labeled the choices "1" to "9".

The final question in this section yielded the result that six assistant principals characterize their relationship with the principal as "very good." One individual responded "good."

SECTION II: WORK REALITIES

The responses to what is emphasized in the job (question #10) and what should be emphasized (question #11) yielded interesting results. On the whole, the respondents indicate "great" or "very great" responsibility for (1) student discipline; (2) corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision; and (3) parent involvement. Conversely, there seems to be "little" or "very little" involvement on the part of these individuals in (1) curriculum and

instruction; (2) program planning and grant writing; (3) class scheduling; (4) the preparation of budgets; and (5) staff development.

There was a greater variety in response to what should be emphasized in the position. For the most part, participants feel that (1) student discipline; (2) corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision; and (3) parent involvement should be emphasized to a large extent. The extent of the involvement desired, however, is not as great as the reality of that involvement as indicated by responses to the previous question. Beyond this, the participants indicate a desire for much greater involvement in teacher selection, in curriculum and instruction, in classroom supervision, in staff development, in teacher evaluation, and in school improvement and change. The results of these two questions are tallied in Appendix C.

The question of job satisfaction indicated three participants "more satisfied than not" with their position and four "equally satisfied and dissatisfied." I did not attempt in the pilot population to analyze individual differences between what one does and what one feels one should be doing in the job. This, however, will be a significant point of analysis in my subsequent research, particularly as it relates to one's level of satisfaction in the position.

Interestingly enough, six of the respondents indicate that success in working with a difficult student accounts for their greatest satisfaction in the job. Only one respondent indicated that the greatest satisfaction comes from "teaching, facilitating and motivating staff."

The career goals of these assistant principals are varied. Three individuals (all between 50-59 years of age) see themselves in five years as maintaining their present position. Two (both in their 30s) envision themselves as building principals while the remaining two (in their 40s) see themselves as central office administrators. The parallels between these career goals and the respective ages of the respondents are noteworthy. The responses to this question yielded ambiguity in the design. Most did not note that I had asked both the position they expected to have and the one they would like to have in five years.

SECTION III: LEADERSHIP STYLES AND DECISION-MAKING

For the majority of the respondents (4 out of 7), a "good day" is a day without major interruption, a day when goals can be accomplished. Two indicated that a good day was one that involved positive interactions with students and teachers while for another, a good day was characterized as one in which there were no "major confrontations."

As noted earlier in this paper, the intent of the final three questions of the survey is to elicit responses from participants reflecting their leadership styles and decision-making approaches in situations of potential conflict with diverse groups within the school population. In most cases, the survey respondents indicate a willingness to address the problem situation albeit in different ways.

In the first situation, where the teacher had refused the assistant principal's request to come to the office, there was the greatest variety of responses. Five of the responses indicate a willingness to resolve the problem through approaching the teacher directly. Of these five individuals, three would, additionally, involve the principal and put the situation in writing. The use of language was interesting. Whereas one would "quietly approach" the teacher, another would "ask" for a meeting, and a third would "demand" one. Conversely, one individual would turn the matter over to the department chairperson, and another quite frankly said he would not handle it. In his words, "I don't like to initiate a confrontation with a teacher that I'm not reasonably sure of winning."

In the case of the questionable worth of two weeks of Walt Disney films in the special education classroom, the responses were similar. Four indicate they would request a

meeting with the teacher to review instructional objectives, and two of those four would also make an unannounced visit to the classroom. Two of the assistant principals said they would approach the department chairperson rather than the teacher, and one respondent said she would handle the problem by asking the teacher how her students were doing in the hope that this would somehow lead to a discussion about the films.

There was the greatest consensus in the scenario describing the inconsistency between building administrators in assigning disciplinary action to students. All seven respondents would themselves approach the other assistant principal; two, however, would also involve the principal in the matter. Although the question did not ask the respondent to identify the cause of his/her concern in this situation, five indicated the importance of consistency in implementing disciplinary action while two assistant principals were more concerned with the immediate issue---the suspension of the other students.

I believe the responses indicate that these questions are significant ones. In subtle ways---in the choice of words, in the style of approach, and in the desire for the support of other administrators---these assistant principals reveal their strengths and weaknesses, their relationships with diverse groups, and their leadership

styles. The questions reflect conflicts with teachers and other assistant principals only, however. In subsequent research I intend to expand the scope of data collection by eliminating one of the conflicts relating to a teacher (# 17) and by replacing it with situations of potential conflict with a student and with one's superior (the building principal):

1. As you sit on stage at the close of the year awards ceremony, you are surprised to hear the principal presenting a perfect attendance award to a particular member of the freshman class. Although the home room records indicate that the student has perfect attendance, as assistant principal, you are aware that this student has cut classes on numerous occasions. The student walks off-stage proudly wearing her award---a shirt with "I'm perfect" printed on the front.

How do you propose to handle this situation with the student?

2. One day you chastise a student for leaving school without permission. After much evasiveness, the student reports that a teacher sent him to the local bakery to buy coffee and doughnuts. As school policy does not allow this, you approach the teacher, who denies having sent the student anywhere.

Later on in the day, as you are about to suspend the student for the incident, it becomes clear that the teacher has lied. You discuss the seriousness with the teacher and tell him/her you are considering some form of disciplinary action. Before you can do so, however, the teacher approaches the principal, who dismisses the incident. You are upset with the principal's responses and even more upset by his/her failure to consult you.

How will you handle this situation?

CONCLUSION

With the exception of the problems noted earlier in the design of some of the questions, the survey instrument seems to elicit the data I seek. Furthermore, the themes that I have noted as important to an understanding of the work-lives of assistant principals have evolved from this pilot survey. Beyond the clarification of the ambiguities and a refinement of some of the questions in the survey instrument, my present concern lies in generating as great a response to the survey as possible and in eliciting from these responses the kind of information that will prove valuable in subsequent interviews with assistant principals.

APPENDIX C

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
RESPONSES TO PILOT SURVEY QUESTIONS #10 AND #11

Relative Frequency with Which Various Degrees of Responsibility Are Emphasized and Should Be Emphasized in the position of Assistant Principal as Reported by Assistant Principals.

	Degree of Responsibility*				
	1	2	3	4	5
Teacher Selection	29%**	(14%)	57%	14%	(43%)
Student Discipline			(14)		(14)
Curriculum and Instruction	43	(14)	43	(29)	(57)
Classroom Supervision			57	(14)	(86)
Student Activities	14	(14)	43	(57)	29
Program Planning and Grant Writing	71	(29)		(29)	
Class Scheduling	43	(14)	29	(29)	(14)
Corridor, Cafeteria and Schoolyard Supervision			14	(43)	71
Budgets	57	(14)	29	(29)	(43)
Staff Development	14		14	(29)	(14)
Teacher Evaluation	29	(14)	29	(29)	(57)
Parent Involvement	14	(14)		(71)	(14)
Community Relations	14	(14)	43	(57)	(14)
School Improvement and Change			57	(43)	(43)
Central Office	29	(29)	71	(14)	29
			(14)	(57)	(29)
			(43)	(14)	(14)

* 1: "to a very little extent"; 2: "to a little extent"; 3: "somewhat";
4: "to a great extent"; 5: "to a very great extent"

** These numbers are percentages representing what is emphasized. Numbers in parentheses represent what should be emphasized.

APPENDIX D

A NEW CLASSIFICATION
SCHEME FOR COMMUNITIES
IN MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Department of Education
1985

Description

Like most states in America, Massachusetts is not monolithic. Within its boundaries lies a wide range of communities and residents. However, for many purposes it is simply not feasible to consider 351 communities individually. For this reason, policy-makers, staff of state agencies, researchers and analysts, educators and the general public find it easier to think in terms of categories of communities which have similar characteristics, such as "big cities" or "small towns." To be useful as an analytic tool, however, such designations should be part of a formal classification scheme based on objective data rather than on popular impressions which might be imprecise or too subjective.

For over a decade the Massachusetts Department of Education has used a formal four-category community classification scheme -- (1) big cities; (2) industrial

suburbs; (3) residential suburbs; and (4) other (mostly small towns). Based primarily on data from the 1970 Census this scheme has become outdated. Many Massachusetts communities have changed markedly since that time and new sources of data have become available creating the need to update and expand the classification scheme. In response to this need a new formal classification scheme was developed which reflects the current range of characteristics of Massachusetts communities. The new categories are:

1. URBANIZED CENTERS Manufacturing and commercial centers; densely populated; culturally diverse
2. ECONOMICALLY DEVELOPED SUBURBS Suburbs with high levels of economic activity, social complexity; and relatively high income levels
3. GROWTH COMMUNITIES Rapidly expanding communities in transition
4. RESIDENTIAL SUBURBS Affluent communities with low levels of economic activity
5. RURAL ECONOMIC CENTERS Historic manufacturing and commercial communities; moderate levels of economic activity
6. SMALL RURAL COMMUNITIES Small towns; sparsely populated; economically undeveloped
7. RESORT/RETIREMENT AND ARTISTIC Communities with high property values; relatively low income values, and enclaves of retirees, artists, vacationers and academicians.

APPENDIX E

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL SURVEY COVER LETTER

(Date)

Dear Colleague:

I am requesting your assistance in completing the enclosed survey on the role of the assistant principal in Massachusetts secondary schools. The survey is being sent to 50 schools throughout the state as part of my doctoral dissertation work at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Having spent close to four years as an assistant principal at Lawrence High School, I am well aware of the demands and pressures each of you faces every day in your work. I also know that completing a three page survey can not always be a top priority.

Nevertheless, I am hoping you will make time for this survey. The assistant principal's role has become one of the most important and least understood positions in high schools today. The complexities of the job can be enormous; yet, recognition of this fact is often lacking among educators and laypeople alike. In my research, I plan to analyze the assistant principalship as assistant principals have experienced it. With your help, I believe I can accurately describe the current realities of the position.

I would like to emphasize that all of your answers in response to this survey will remain anonymous. My objective is to focus on the position--not on any individual who occupies the position. If you would be interested in the results of my research--and I will be happy to share them with you--please indicate so on the survey.

Thank you for your assistance. A stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience in returning the survey. Any additional comments or recommendations will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mary J. McCarthy
9 Kingsbury Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01830

COVER LETTER TO PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS BEING SURVEYED

(Date)

Dear Principal:

As a doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, I am working with Professors Harvey Scribner, John Heffley, Robert Maloy and Frank Rife in researching the role of the assistant principal in Massachusetts secondary schools. Using the membership list of the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators' Association, I have sent the enclosed survey to assistant principals (including your own) in 50 schools throughout the state. Since this is a significant part of my research on the assistant principal, I would appreciate your encouraging your assistant(s) to complete the survey and return it to me.

The assistant principal's role has become one of the most important and least understood positions in high schools today. The complexities of the job can be enormous; yet, recognition of this fact is often lacking among educators and laypeople alike. In my research, I plan to analyze the assistant principalship as assistant principals have experienced it. With the help of your assistant(s), I believe I can accurately describe the current realities of the position.

I would like to emphasize that all of the answers in response to this survey will remain anonymous. My objective is to focus on the position--not on any individual who occupies the position. If you would be interested in the results of my research--and I will be happy to share them with you--please let me know.

Thank you for your assistance. Any comments or suggestions you might have regarding my research will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Mary J. McCarthy
9 Kingsbury Avenue
Haverhill, MA 01830

THE ROLE OF THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

I. This section asks you to complete demographic questions concerning yourself and your position as an assistant principal (vice-principal, assistant headmaster, etc.). Place an "X" where appropriate in one of the spaces provided for each question:

1. Sex: Female Male
2. Age:

<input type="checkbox"/>	20-29
<input type="checkbox"/>	30-39
<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49
<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59
<input type="checkbox"/>	60+
3. How do you describe yourself?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Black, Non-Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	20-29
<input type="checkbox"/>	Native American/Native Alaskan	<input type="checkbox"/>	30-39
<input type="checkbox"/>	Asian or Pacific Islander	<input type="checkbox"/>	40-49
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	50-59
<input type="checkbox"/>	White, Non-Hispanic	<input type="checkbox"/>	60+
4. Title of your present position: _____
5. Years in your position:

<input type="checkbox"/>	0- 5
<input type="checkbox"/>	6-10
<input type="checkbox"/>	11-15
<input type="checkbox"/>	16-20
<input type="checkbox"/>	21 or more
6. Degrees held and major areas of study:

<input type="checkbox"/>	B.A./B.S.	_____	Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	M.A./M.S.	_____	Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	C.A.G.S.	_____	Area
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ed.D./Ph.D.	_____	Area
7. Positions held prior to your present position
(Please indicate position held immediately prior to becoming an assistant principal):

_____	_____
_____	_____
8. Looking back today, what do you think were the most important factors in your decision to become an assistant principal? Please rank the three most important reasons in order of their importance (1 - most important; 2 - second most important; 3 - third most important).

<input type="checkbox"/>	To use my special abilities and aptitudes
<input type="checkbox"/>	To exercise leadership

- To be creative and original
- To make a good salary
- To achieve social status and prestige
- To have an opportunity for future promotion
- To assume greater responsibility
- To influence the total school program
- To have greater professional challenge
- Other (please specify) _____

9. How would you characterize your relationship with the school principal?

- Very poor
- Poor
- I do not know.
- Good
- Very good

II. This section asks you to complete questions concerning your work as a school administrator.

10. Please choose the response that indicates how much each responsibility is emphasized as part of your job as assistant principal (using the 1 to 3 scale given).

1 = To a lesser extent 2 = Not at all

3 = To a greater extent

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Community relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program planning and grant writing | <input type="checkbox"/> School improvement and change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Central office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____ |

11. Please choose the response that indicates how much each responsibility should be emphasized as part of your job as assistant principal (using 1 to 3 scale given above).

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher selection | <input type="checkbox"/> Budgets |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student discipline | <input type="checkbox"/> Staff Development |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curriculum and instruction | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher evaluation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Community relations |

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program planning and grant writing | <input type="checkbox"/> School improvement and change |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Class scheduling | <input type="checkbox"/> Central office |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corridor, cafeteria and schoolyard supervision | <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify _____ |

12. Which of these statements comes closest to describing your feelings about being an assistant principal?

- I am very dissatisfied with my job.
 I am more dissatisfied than satisfied with my job.
 I am equally satisfied and dissatisfied.
 I am more satisfied than not with my job.
 I am very satisfied with my job.

13. What gives you greatest satisfaction in your job?

14. If you had it in your power to reshape the role of the assistant principal, what about the position would you be most likely to change?

15. As you look ahead, recognizing that factors beyond your control may intervene, please indicate what job you expect to have five years from now and what job you would like to have five years from now.

	Expect to Have	Like to Have
Retired	_____	\$ _____
Classroom teacher	_____	\$ _____
Assistant principal (same school)	_____	\$ _____
Asst.principal (some other school)	_____	\$ _____
Principal	_____	\$ _____
Central office position	_____	\$ _____
Superintendent	_____	\$ _____
College teacher	_____	\$ _____
Other (please state)	_____	\$ _____

III. This last section asks you to respond to five open-ended questions about situations that administrators often face. Your answers do not have to be lengthy.

16. Assistant principals often tell me they have a really good day.

What is a good day like for you?

17. It is extremely busy in your office, and you have many students around you. A teacher enters, demands to see you immediately, and then angrily states in front of the students that there are trespassers in the hallway who do not belong there "if anyone in administration cares to do anything about it." The teacher then leaves before you can reply. Later in the day, the same teacher refuses your request to come to your office to discuss the situation saying "there is nothing to talk about." This is not the first time you and other members of the building administration have had difficulty with this teacher.

Briefly describe what you would do next in this situation.

18. As you sit on stage at the close of the year awards ceremony, you are surprised to hear the principal presenting a perfect attendance award to a particular member of the freshman class. Although the home room records indicate that the student has perfect attendance, as assistant principal, you are aware that this student has cut classes on numerous occasions. The student walks off-stage proudly wearing her award--a shirt with "I'm perfect" printed on the front.

How do you propose to handle this situation with the student?

19. You have suspended a non-White student for a week for coming to school under the influence of alcohol; the school discipline policy calls for suspension as a minimum response. Shortly after, it comes to your attention that another assistant principal has allowed three White students caught drinking in the bathroom to remain in school. This is confirmed by a conversation with the teacher who reported the incident.

How would you respond to this action of your colleague?

20. One day you reprimand a student for leaving school without permission. After much evasiveness, the student reports that a teacher sent him to the local bakery to buy coffee and doughnuts. As school policy does not allow this, you approach the teacher, who denies having sent the student anywhere.

Later on in the day, as you are about to suspend the student for the incident, it becomes clear that the teacher has lied. You discuss the seriousness of the incident with the teacher and tell him/her you are considering some form of disciplinary action. Before you can do so, however, the teacher approaches the principal, who dismisses the incident. You are upset with the principal's response and even more upset by his/her failure to consult you.

How will you handle this situation?

21. Would you be willing to participate in an interview concerning your work as an assistant principal?

___ Yes ___ No

If your response is "yes," please provide your name, address and phone number:

APPENDIX F

<u>KIND OF COMMUNITY</u>	<u>TEACHER</u>	<u>COUNSELOR</u>	<u>DIR/SUP</u>	<u>DH</u>	<u>OTHER BLDG LEADERSHIP</u>	<u>CO</u>	<u>PRIN</u>	<u>AP</u>	<u>COLLEGE TEACHER</u>
URBANIZED CENTER	96%	8%	31%	31%	12%	4%	4%		
ECON. DEV. SUBURB	100		9	36	18			9%	
GROWTH COMMUNITY	88		13	13	25				13%
RESIDENTIAL SUBURB	100		9	18	27	9	9	18	
RURAL ECON. CENTER	100		25				25	25	
SMALL RURAL COMMUNITY	100	50	50						
RESORT/RETIREMENT/ ARTISTIC COMMUNITY	100								
TOTAL	97	6	21	24	16	3	6	8	2

DIR/SUP = Director/Supervisor; DH = Department Head; CO = Central Office
 PRIN = Principal; AP = Assistant Principal

TABLE 7: PRIOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES OF ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS
 BY KIND OF COMMUNITY

APPENDIX G

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
RESPONSES TO SURVEY QUESTIONS #10 AND #11

Relative Frequency with Which Various Degrees of Responsibility Are Emphasized and Should Be Emphasized in the Position of Assistant Principal as Reported by Assistant Principals.

Item	Degree of Responsibility*					
	1		2		3	
Teacher Selection	46%**	(32%)	27%	(10%)	22%	(51%)
Student Discipline	11	(21)	3	(2)	83	(70)
Curriculum and Instruction	60	(32)	8	(5)	27	(54)
Classroom Supervision	46	(30)	11	(10)	38	(52)
Student Activities	40	(38)	8	(4)	49	(49)
Program Planning and Grant Writing	46	(49)	32	(22)	17	(21)
Class Scheduling	37	(32)	17	(14)	41	(43)
Corridor, Cafeteria and Schoolyard Supervision	14	(24)	4	(5)	79	(62)
Budgets	41	(41)	37	(29)	17	(22)
Staff Development	57	(38)	11	(8)	27	(46)
Teacher Evaluation	30	(22)	11	(2)	56	(67)
Parent Involvement	41	(35)	2	(3)	54	(56)
Community Relations	51	(33)	5	(8)	40	(49)
School Improvement and Change	37	(16)	2	(2)	57	(73)
Central Office	67	(57)	24	(22)	6	(6)
Other				(2)	11	(6)

* 1: "to a lesser extent"; 2: "not at all";
3: "to a greater extent"

** These numbers are percentages representing what is emphasized. Numbers in parentheses represent what should be emphasized.

TABLE 13

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