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The Manifestation of Principal Training: Preparing Assistant Principals for Assuming the Role of Building Leader

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THE MANIFESTATION OF PRINCIPAL TRAINING: PREPARING ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS FOR ASSUMING THE ROLE OF BUILDING LEADER

by

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(Under the Direction of Teri Denlea Melton)

ABSTRACT

Today's school principals are required to lead in a new environment marked by unprecedented responsibilities, challenges, and managerial opportunities requiring them to be trained to face these challenges. Although a great deal of literature exists on the specific issues that should be addressed or considered when trying to redesign or restructure a leadership program, there was little that explicitly addressed the assistant principal or how that position specifically could be used to help better prepare aspiring leaders for the role of principal. Therefore, the purpose of this quantitative, correlational study was to provide a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of the factors that could influence an assistant principal's ability to move into the principalship. A survey was conducted investigating what tasks assistant principals are assigned, what tasks assistant principals should be assigned, and the perceptions of assistant principals and principals regarding these tasks. The major findings of this study indicated that there was a significant statistical relationship between should engage tasks compared to regularly engage tasks in every measured domain. The findings from this study provide more insight into the tasks required to support these aspiring school leaders as they transition into the principalship.

INDEX WORDS: Principals, Assistant principals, Principal preparation

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THE MANIFESTATION OF PRINCIPAL TRAINING: PREPARING ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS FOR ASSUMING THE ROLE OF BUILDING LEADER

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DEDICATION

I have always had the desire to pursue education. My ultimate goal was to achieve my doctoral degree. However, I never dreamed my life would change so much from the time I started this journey until now. Throughout it all, I have had the support of my family and friends, constantly encouraging me to keep at it and never give up. Therefore, I dedicate this dissertation to my children without whose support, patience, and understanding I could never have done this; to my Mama and Daddy, who never stopped believing in me and who assisted in every aspect of my life, from chauffeuring children around to making sure we had dinner; to Wade, my husband, who is my ever-present cheerleader and my calm no matter what; and to all of my other family, friends, coworkers, and fellow cohort members who were there to hear me wax on about my research and push me to keep going. You all are my why.

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Lastly, to the participants in my study, I thank you for your willingness to participate in my study. I hope your insight will assist in making things better for school leaders everywhere.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Being the leader of a school is a very difficult job with a great deal of responsibility. Today's school principals are required to lead in a new environment marked by unprecedented responsibilities, challenges, and managerial opportunities (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). Additionally, principals are being asked to focus their schools on student learning when students are coming to school with less preparation to participate in learning activities (Wallace Foundation, 2011). Each year principals face unique challenges as their roles have changed greatly throughout the years as education continues to evolve. Transitioning from instructing in the classroom to leading from the principal's office is becoming more difficult as accountability measures increase and become more demanding (Murphy, 2013). Therefore, determining the necessary steps to prepare principals for the tasks they must undertake is of utmost importance.

The role of principal is paramount to a school's success (Schmidt-Davis & Bottoms, 2011). Certain skills are necessary for leaders to transition from the classroom into the principalship effectively. The role of principal has changed greatly over the last several decades (Hallinger, 2011). What was once a position of management has now become a leadership position where transformational leadership skills are needed in order to for the leader to be successful (Orphanos & Orr, 2014). In light of this information, the role of the assistant principal has become one of strategic importance. Assistant principals assume the responsibility of the principal should the principal be unavailable. Unfortunately, in many instances, assistant principals are assigned tasks by the principal and district office that are narrow in scope and often keep them focused on one or two areas of school management

(Oleszewski, Shoho, & Barnett, 2012). In addition many principal preparation programs have fallen short in their mission to prepare assistant principals to assume the position of school building leader. Instead of producing confident leaders who feel ready to tackle the obstacles that new principals face, assistant principals are entering these positions underprepared and less than confident leading to undue stress, overwhelming situations, and, ultimately, leading to burnout (Shoho & Barnett, 2010). Those who aspire to hold the role of principal need opportunities to polish their skills prior to taking on the role.

Research by Melton, Mallory, Mays, and Chance (2012) found that many assistant principals do not believe they are prepared in all areas of leadership and/or management, particularly in the areas of instructional leadership. The researchers contended that further research should be conducted to investigate what steps need to be taken in order to assist leaders who are transitioning from the assistant principal's office to the principalship. There was little research in this area, and there was not a great deal of literature to support what type of programs would be beneficial to those who are making this transition. Additionally, researchers should consider the perceptions assistant principals have about their preparation and the professional learning still required to give them the skills necessary to set them up for their best chance of success. If preparation programs have fallen short despite continuous reform efforts, perhaps there is a transitional program or a job-embedded induction program that may assist these leaders in gaining the essential skills needed to be successful as they take on the role of principal. This is a focus researchers must consider. If appropriate provisions are not made to ensure that assistant principals are properly prepared to assume the principalship, school leaders may continue to struggle and burn out when assuming positions as building leader.

Statement of the Problem

Although a great deal of literature existed on the specific issues that should be addressed or considered when trying to redesign or restructure a leadership program, there was little that explicitly addressed the assistant principal or how that position specifically could be used to help better prepare aspiring leaders for the role of principal. The assistant principal position offers a trial period for both the candidate and the organization or school. Assistant principals spend little time engaged in activities that offer preparation for assuming the duties required of a principal. Instead, assistant principals have traditionally been relegated to management roles, dealing with the daily operation of the school. Scheduling, crisis drills, bus and lunchroom supervision, and student discipline are common tasks for assistant principals. The opportunities an assistant principal obtains on the job builds skills essential to perform the role of principal. Because the duties of a principal require much more than simple managerial skills, candidates who have had the opportunity to hone their skills as assistant principals prior to taking on the added responsibilities of the principalship need to be recruited.

Unfortunately there was a lack of research on assistant principals and the assigned roles and tasks necessary to help prepare them to assume the role of principal. This research addressed the problem of the lack of research that exists on assistant principals by contributing additional perspectives into the effective route needed to assist those assistant principals in being prepared to become the principal and inform decision makers who affect change in this area. Therefore, this research investigated the actual tasks performed by the assistant principal as compared to the ideal tasks assistant principals need to be assigned to promote readiness for the principalship.

Research Questions

Historically, the role of the principal was one of manager and building facilitator. As education has evolved over the past few decades, so have the role and responsibilities of the principal. Much research has been conducted examining how principals are prepared and what specific skills they need in order to fulfill the many demands placed upon them. However, there was a lack of literature specifically addressing how assistant principals are prepared, and how their lack of preparation could lead to burnout or leaving the profession completely when promoted to the level of principal. Those who aspire to hold the role of principal, specifically assistant principals, need opportunities to polish their skills prior to taking on the role. This inquiry was designed to add to the body of literature and to provide further awareness that may offer suggestions or solutions for improving the preparation of assistant principals. The questions were designed to focus on the experiences of principals and assistant principals as they reflected on their perceptions of their own preparation as an assistant principal. The administrators surveyed were those in the First District RESA service area in hopes to provide a more comprehensive approach to inducting assistant principals as they transition to the principalship in this geographic area. The administrators in this study were asked to complete a survey comparing the real and ideal tasks of assistant principals in several task areas as outlined by the GaPSC: instructional leadership, school climate, planning and assessment, organizational management, human resources management, teacher/staff evaluation, professionalism, and communication and community relations. The research questions were:

1. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks do assistant principals engage?

2. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks should assistant principals engage to assist in preparing them to be principals?
3. What differences exist between what assistant principals and principals perceive to be ideal assigned tasks for the preparation of the school principal versus what they are actually assigned to do?

It was predicted that principals and assistant principals alike would indicate that assistant principals are not assigned tasks and duties that prepare them for becoming the building leader. This study sought to determine if there is a significant difference between perceived ideal tasks that should be performed by assistant principals and the tasks that are actually being assigned and performed by assistant principals.

Significance of the Study

Assistant principals have become an integral and indispensable part of school leadership (Niewenhuizen & Brooks, 2013). The need for prepared assistant principals has grown. Finding appropriate ways to train assistant principals is essential to paving a pathway of success and career longevity. In order to help prepare the next generation of principals, it was imperative to determine exactly what areas of competencies reflect the real work performed by assistant principals to help establish viable candidates for the upcoming principal vacancies. Whether it be job-imbedded training or a mentoring-type environment, assistant principals should be exposed to tasks and experiences that provide them with a comprehensive idea of what it is like to run a school. By providing these opportunities to assistant principals, districts will allow for them to grow and develop within their role in order to be more effective in the future.

The merits of this study lay in its ability to provide a greater depth of knowledge and understanding of the factors that could influence an assistant principal's ability to move into the principalship. Little research has been conducted on assistant principals and their preparation for the principalship. Because assistant principal development is key to school and district success, this study focused on whether tasks assigned and performed on the job by assistant principals prepare one for becoming the building leader. Whether the tasks assigned become a standard of principal preparation programs or required mentoring that assistant principals experience, there is a necessity for practical experience engineered to support assistant principals as they learn the responsibilities of the principalship. The information from this investigation will be beneficial to both newly appointed principals and those who are supervising assistant principals. For principals, it will provide them with the knowledge needed to integrate their leadership skills, professional knowledge, and experience. For principals who work directly with assistant principals, the type of support, encouragement, and mentoring that those assistant principals need will be identified and described. The results of this research will allow leaders to understand the deficits that exist in the current preparation practices being employed by clarifying the expectations of the role of the assistant principal. The tasks investigated in this study correlated with the new GaPSC Educational Leadership Program Guidelines, including creating a vision and mission for the school while managing the environment (management of school); setting high expectations and standards for instructional capacity (leadership in staff personnel); actively creating communities of engagement for families (community relations); demanding curriculum, assessment, and instruction that ensure student achievement (instructional leadership); cultivating a professional culture for teachers and staff (student

activities); and, using multiple sources of data as diagnostic tools for continuous school improvement (pupil personnel).

Finally, the data gleaned from this study may inform programs and organizations that work to prepare principals. They may consider this information as they look at reforms and changes that need to occur in order to provide a comprehensive approach that effectively prepares individuals to assume the building leader role. These individuals need to be exposed to diverse experiences which cultivate their ability to appreciate diverse perspectives, understand the whole school picture, use multiple pieces of data to inform planning and school improvement, motivate and empower others, and become major problem-solvers capable of leading groups of people through a change initiative (Wagner et al., 2006).

Procedures

This was a quantitative study using a convenience sample. A psychometric instrument in the form of a questionnaire was sent out to assistant principals and principals in a regional educational service area in Southeast Georgia. The study included building administrators from the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Participants were contacted via email after permission was obtained from the superintendent of each school district in the regional educational service area. The email included a description of the study and the survey instrument requesting participation (see Appendix B). There were 18 districts that are members of the regional educational service area, which included a total of 193 schools. This included up to 193 principals and as many as four assistant principals per school, which possibly totaled between 300-800 participants depending on the structure of the schools that participated. The goal was to receive as high of a response rate as possible.

Once data were collected, a numerical comparison was conducted comparing what tasks assistant principals are assigned versus what tasks they should be assigned in order to assist in their preparation for principal. The research focused on what is, compared to what should be, from the perspective of those who have been there and experienced it. Mean scores were tabulated in both perceived and actual areas and were compared to each other using an independent t-test. The t-test was be applied across the eight competencies and used to determine the statistical significance as it related to the null hypothesis that there is no difference in mean scores between the ideal tasks assigned when compared to the actual tasks assigned. Final data were presented in the form of tables with a confidence level of 99%, and a narrative was included for explanation. Comparisons were made between assistant principal versus principal perception as well as level of experience and size of schools.

The survey administered was patterned on one developed by Kriekard (1985). However, the body of the survey was based upon the standards set forth in the Georgia Professional Standards Commission's Educational Leadership Program Guidelines (GaPSC, 2015). In addition, data related to demographic information and information related to job tasks were collected. A pilot study of the instrument was performed with a small group of content experts who were not part of the sample. Each expert was asked to complete the survey to help the researcher establish the ease and amount of time needed to complete the survey and provided input as to how best to administer the survey. Participants were asked to identify any adjustments or modifications that may be needed in order to improve the instrument or more specifically collect the data that is desired. Once

the input was collected, the data were used to determine if any items should be revised or excluded to better meet the needs of the study.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions apply to this study.

Assistant Principal: The assistant principal is usually considered the second-in-command in a building level setting (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Communication and Community Relations: For the purpose of this study, communication and community relations are represented by a score from the survey. This phrase refers to the public relations aspect of the principals' job. It encompasses skills that allow the principal the ability to effectively communicate with all stakeholders (GaPSC, 2015).

Georgia Professional Standards Commission: The Georgia Professional Standards Commission is the governing body that oversees certification and ethical practices of all Georgia educators. This organization sets standards and guidelines for educators of all levels for professional learning, degree advancement, and qualifications for different educational fields (GaPSC, 2015).

Human Resources Management: For the purpose of this study, human resources management is represented by a score from the survey. Human resources management encompasses the recruiting, interviewing, hiring, induction, retention, and evaluation of faculty and staff (GaPSC, 2015).

Instructional Leadership: For the purposes of this study, instructional leadership is represented by a score from the survey. Instructional leadership is identified as

those skills necessary for building leaders to effective lead a school and improve student achievement (GaPSC, 2015).

Organizational Management: For the purposes of this study, organizational management is represented by a score from the survey. This term refers to the knowledge and implementation of federal, state, and local policies, as well as the ability to lead, delegate, and complete tasks (GaPSC, 2015).

Principal: The principal is the building-level leader at a school. Usually, the principal is responsible for the instructional program and the physical plant of the school (Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011).

Principal Preparation: This term refers to those programs designed to provide a teacher or an assistant principal with the training necessary to take on the role of principal (Louis et al., 2010).

Principalship: Principalship is a term used to describe the role of principal in a school setting. It is another term used to describe the building leader's position (Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011).

Professionalism: This terms refers to the ethical, moral, and social skills and values that leaders must model and enforce within their school building (GaPSC, 2015).

School Climate: For the purposes of this study, school climate is represented as a score from the survey. This is a phrase that refers to the general atmosphere within a school building including morale, discipline, management, and safety (GaPSC, 2015).

Teacher/Staff Evaluation: For the purpose of this study, teacher/staff evaluation is represented as a score from the survey. Teacher and staff evaluation encompasses

the skills principals need in order to foster a relationship with faculty and staff, which allows them to evaluate, coach, and remediate staff members as needed (GaPSC, 2015).

Chapter Summary

The world of the principal has become increasingly more dynamic as the field of education has become riddled with accountability and rising standards. Assistant principals who aspire to eventually become principals find themselves ill-prepared to assume the role as principal because they often are not given the appropriate opportunities to develop the skills necessary to do so. This research served to supplement the study of this phenomenon and determine if tasks or experiences assistant principals are assigned actually assist in preparing them for this position.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF SELECTED LITERATURE AND RESEARCH

The traditional role of principal is one of manager. Stereotypically, principals have been viewed as building managers, whose highest concerns involve wielding power and bringing about compliance by whatever means necessary (Alvoid & Black, 2014). For many years, as the role of principal has developed and evolved, principals mainly worked as inspectors. Their primary responsibility was to determine which teachers were not doing what they were supposed to be doing. As a matter of fact, these principals were often not educators. They were men who had a social commitment to improving local public schools (Sledge, 2013). As the role developed, those promoted to the role of principal were merely teachers with no specific leadership training (Duncan, Range, & Scherz, 2011). Duncan et al. (2011) went on to state that as the United States became more urbanized, the role of school leader evolved and included skills such as being a diplomat and a school law specialist ensuring equality and equity for all. Interestingly, as early as 1932 the National Education Association (NEA) Yearbook called for the principal to develop his/her role as the instructional leader of the school as cited in Melton et al. (2012).

As a result of legislation and policy reform, today's schools must exhibit student progress toward learning and achievement as well as hold teachers accountable for what goes on in the classroom (Oleszewski et al., 2012). The focus on the skills and abilities of school principals and the quality of programs that prepare them has never been more intense, and for good reason. Among the many school-related factors that influence student learning, the importance of principal leadership is second only to that of teachers (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2012). Olesaweski, Shoho, and Barnett (2012) insisted there is, "an

increased demand to prepare students to be twenty-first century learners who are college and/or workforce ready, having the ability to perform in a highly competitive, technological, and globalized society" (p. 264). Principals directly impact the school's academic capacity and indirectly influence student growth and ability to perform in this globalized society (Heck & Hallinger, 2009). With principal accountability in the area of student achievement ever increasing, Wood, Finch, and Mirecki (2013) claimed that it is crucial that principals lead schools toward positive impact on student achievement. A new generation of leader is required where principals can transform schools and provide instructional leadership unlike previous generations (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

As the challenges that face today's principals have changed throughout the years, so have the roles these principals assume. A definite shift has occurred in a principal's role from one of manager to one of instructional leader of the school community. Today's principals must be leaders who can inform curricular change, lead faculty in data-driven decision making, keep abreast of innovative and diversified instructional strategies, and stay knowledgeable in the use of accountability measures for both staff and students (Wallace Foundation, 2011). The school principal is considered the chief learning officer and makes student and adult learning a priority by creating a culture of success, learning, and high expectations. Not only is the principal required to lead the way to success in student achievement, but also the school leader must be the driving force and motivation for adult learning and staff development (Duncan et al., 2011). Principals have a significant impact on a school and its effectiveness (Oleszweski, et al., 2012). Whitaker (2013) stated it this way, "When the principal sneezes, the whole school gets a cold. Our impact is significant. Our focus becomes the school's focus" (p. 36). Because of the complexity of

the principal's role and the impact the principal can have on a school and its stakeholders, a sense of urgency, then, is created to examine how aspiring principals are being prepared to assume this role.

Additionally, principal turnover and burnout are issues that have a negative impact on school culture and, ultimately, student achievement, and must be considered when discussing the preparation of would-be principals (Versland, 2013). Wood, et al. (2013) asserted that filling vacant principalships has become problematic because the pool of candidates is growing smaller. As the retirement rates of current principals increase, in addition to the growing rates of principal burnout, this problem will be compounded (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Foundational researcher, Maslach (2003) defined burnout as a psychological syndrome that involves a prolonged response to stressors in the workplace that result from long-term occupational stress, especially among workers who deal with other people in some capacity. Frequent sources of burnout are issues such as complying with organizational rules and policies, excessively high self-imposed expectations, the feeling of having a too heavy workload, increased demands and decreasing autonomy with role ambiguity, role overload, and role conflict being the most common (Frederici & Skaalvik, 2012). According to a study conducted by Karakose, Kocabas, Yirci, Esen, and Celik (2016), school principals are at risk for experiencing burnout in the workplace due to the expansion of their roles and responsibilities in terms of their expected duties. As a result, principals may experience role conflict as teachers, students, and community members place a number of role expectations on them, which ultimately may lead to a decrease in life satisfaction levels for these principals and lead them to leaving the profession (Karakose, Kocabas, Yirci, Esen, & Celik, 2016).

Many regions in the United States are facing difficulty in attracting and retaining adequately prepared school leaders. In fact, nationwide, approximately a quarter of principals leave their schools each year and as many as 50% quit during their third year in the role, leaving millions of students adversely affected (School Leaders Network, 2014). In a recent report published by School Leaders Network (2014), researchers reported that currently schools are losing a multitude of principals each year, requiring that less effective, novice principals assume roles for which they are not prepared. The report stated that the job is far too complex and isolating, and that school leaders are not provided the ongoing support and development needed to foster and sustain effectiveness and commitment (School Leaders Network, 2014). Therefore, it is not only an issue of selecting effective principals; instead, it is also the retention of effective principals who can articulate a vision that will engage teachers, parents, the district, and the larger community in the long term that must be a focus. Student achievement can be better ensured through the retention of effective leadership and school success (Wood, et al., 2013). Again, a sense of urgency is created to address the manner through which educational leaders are trained.

Trends in principal preparation programs have swayed from being influenced by the business management ideology to focusing on the content from social sciences (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). Typically, the programs that produce our nation's principals are governed by the states. According to Braun, Gable, and Kite (2011), leaders are not currently being trained to take on the overwhelming role of leading in an ever-changing educational system. Furthermore, leaders are ill-prepared to help students overcome the disparity often seen in achievement. Effective measures must be employed to aid leaders in developing the

skills necessary to lead schools and teachers to positive changes impacting student achievement and school success.

As states begin to address the issues concerning leadership preparation, decision makers are faced with the challenge of rethinking and revising the approach to educating school leaders in order to produce those with the capacity to increase student achievement. Aspiring school leaders are not consistently offered opportunities that will assist them in meeting the challenges of leading today's schools (Anast-May, Buckner, & Geer, 2011). In answer to this challenge of training future leaders, institutions outside of the traditional schools of education are creating new and innovative approaches to principal preparation (New Leaders, 2000-2010; North Carolina Principal Fellows Program, 2011). In addition, universities have begun to enhance their principal preparation programs by preparing them to meet the challenges of today's educational arena (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010). The need for re-evaluation and restructuring is immense. As the demands of education continue to change, so does the role of the principal.

In response to the need for employing instructional leaders who are able to meet the demands placed on today's principals, Georgia policies and standards have changed to embrace these challenges. In a recent memo from Hill (2015), Division Director of the Educator Preparation and Certification at the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), certification and preparation requirements have been revised in an effort to more successfully prepare those desiring to enter the field of educational leadership. The memo describes the latest changes and revisions made to Georgia's educational leadership certification process outlining a two-tiered performance-based program designed to align with standards described in the new GaPSC Educational Leadership Program Guidelines

(2015). According to these guidelines, Georgia Educational Leadership standards have been developed to conform to the most recent national standards developed, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards (2015). The ISLLC Standards (2015) along with Georgia's Leaders Keys Effectiveness System (LKES) Standards drive the changes that target the deficits of past educational leadership programs. The point of the new curriculum guidelines is to ensure that performance-based experiences result in those that will help the program candidates to be successful leaders (GaPSC, 2015). Additionally, the guidelines outline research-based leadership practices designed to not only improve educational leadership, but they also target improvement of instructional practices and student learning (GaPSC, 2015). However, this reform effort is not a new trend in the state of Georgia. The GaPSC has for years been the driving force behind reform in educational leadership and has attempted many times to address the deficits in leadership preparation programs. When the standards were addressed prior in 2008, the GaPSC was determined their new reform would solve the problems existing with leadership preparation programs, but have now called for reform again. Although recent policy changes appear to be addressing those who are currently considering entering the field of educational leadership, attention still must be given to those who already hold positions as principals to determine how to retain these lead educators and provide them with the support necessary to sustain them. By examining the many skills needed in the sophisticated role of principal as well as looking at deficits that those in this role may have, decision makers can make informed policy changes that will encourage those already placed in the position of building leader.

Principal Leadership

New principals are asked to take on unprecedented challenges as leaders of quickly changing and highly monitored K-12 public schools (Gentilucci et al., 2013). As such, it is important to understand the multi-faceted role each principal has and what skills are needed in order to lead effectively. In a study by Kriekard and Norton (1980), competencies actually performed by public school assistant principals were compared to those that should be performed to make them most effective. These competencies were broken into six broad categories: management of school, leadership in staff personnel, director of community relations, instructional leadership, student activities coordinator, and pupil personnel manager. The study determined that assistant principals spent too much time working in the competencies of student activities and pupil personnel while they spent much less time than they should in planning and decision-making, personnel, community relations, and instructional leadership. Additionally, the GaPSC Educational Leadership Program Guidelines (2015) describe the need for proficiency in similar areas. Each of these competencies is important to the dynamics of principal leadership and warrants discussion here.

Instructional Leadership

In their book, Blase and Blase (1998) outlined their study including more than 800 public school teachers in which participants answered an open-ended questionnaire in an effort to determine what characteristics of school principals and principal-teacher interactions influence teachers' classroom instruction. Blase and Blase (1998) found that schools are designed to be learning environments for educators and students alike. They

also argued that the learning and growth of all students should be the single most important responsibility of an educational leader.

Research conducted by Orr and Orphanos (2011) was designed to assess how characteristics of program graduates differed among the sampled programs in addition to what degree these programs differ on their core program attributes. Additionally, this research sought to determine to what degree preparation programs differ on their graduate's outcomes of leadership learning, career intentions, commitment and beliefs, and career advancement as well as the relationship that exists between program attributes, learning, and leadership outcomes. Orr and Orphanos (2011) used a cross-sectional, quantitative study to survey 471 principal preparation program graduates. The study indicated that programs that are coherently organized around instructional leadership and provide challenging and work-rich field experience lead to greater perspectives of learning. This study also specified that the quality of one's internship experience was positively related with graduate intentions to become a principal sooner rather than later.

Principals shape the environment for teaching and learning by creating vibrant learning communities where collaboration among adults helps every student fulfill his or her potential (Wood et al., 2013). Duncan et al. (2011) explained that principals must lead the way for student achievement by informing curricular change, lead data-driven decision making and being the chief learning officer within the school. The role of principal is vital with respect to overall performance of the school because the position is essential to address challenges and changes of varying nature (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Therefore, the school principal plays a central role in education.

School Climate

MacNeil, Prater, and Busch (2009) investigated the effects of school climate on student achievement. In their study, they considered whether school climate ratings indicated how students would perform academically on standardized tests. The researchers examined a sample comprised of 29 schools located in a large suburban school district in southeast Texas. Using the ratings as assigned by the Texas Education Agency for each school, Macneil, Prater, and Busch (2009) made comparisons for each school in relation to the student scores from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills. The findings of this study suggested that students achieve higher scores on standardized tests in schools with a healthy learning environment. Additionally, the researchers indicated that the relationships responsible for shaping the culture and climate of a school are strongly influenced by the school principal.

Typically, school climate is viewed as the quality and character of school life. It encompasses the feelings and attitudes elicited by the school environment. Most researchers agree that school climate is the heart and soul of the school and the main factor in drawing in stakeholders who want to be a part of it (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009). Principals need more training in establishing and maintaining relationships, providing support for learning to help student achievement, and the typical training in academics and data. Scallion (2010) found that principals have an influence on their campus cultures. Those who have been trained to understand how relationships and values interact within a school can improve their school environments. Those who do not understand such concepts have an accidental influence, but it is not always an effective one.

Organizational Management

Traditionally, school principals have been seen as managers of the school (Alvoid & Black, 2014). Although the role of the principal has changed, moving away from a strictly managerial role, there is still a need within an organization for structure and frameworks (Bolman & Deal, 2008). When the structure does not line up within an organization, problems arise that may lead to reorganization. Principals must develop procedures and organizational goals, and be able to manage schedules, facilities, and maintenance in order for a school to run properly (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Not only is a principal required to manage the school and facilities in addition to being an instructional leader, but a principal is also required to manage and coordinate students and their activities. Oftentimes this encompasses discipline and after-school activities, which can require a great deal of time and effort. Although the main function of the principal is to be the instructional leader, there are many times when managing students and their activities take over the day-to-day routines of the principal (Goodman & Berry, 2011).

In a 2003 study, Devlin-Scherer and Devlin-Scherer worked to identify activities completed as a part of a principal internship that were considered effective in participants' structured learning experiences in addition to determining to what extent the activities completed during internship experiences required prospective principals to focus on instructional and managerial tasks. The researchers investigated 28 participant portfolios combined with 56 teacher observations in a mixed-methods study and found that interns' roles should be divided among instructional and managerial leadership activities in order for participants to be skilled in both. The study went on to identify that to affect change

leading to student learning, intern learning experiences should focus more on instructional leadership.

Human Resources Management

The school principal is responsible for human resources management as well as creating and sustaining positive working relationships with staff, students, and parents (Gentilucci et al., 2013). People are viewed as the heart of the organization, and leaders attempt to be responsive to the needs and goals of those people to gain commitment and loyalty (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Relationship building is essential for improving school culture. It is important for leaders to focus on and understand how each individual is related to and works within the organization. By attending to people in this way, the principal can provide an environment in which the job gets done by persons who feel good about themselves, their work, and their organization (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

Research conducted in Finland by Shantal, Halttunen, and Pekka (2014) used a qualitative research approach to identify the main sources of school principals' leadership practices and to determine the areas in which additional training or support may be needed for these school leaders. Twelve principals were deliberately considered for this study and accepted to participate in the study. The study found that personal experiences, knowledge from coursework, fieldwork, and leadership and networking lead to principals acquiring effective practices. However, the study also found methods of course delivery, management of human and financial resources, as well as creating and supporting peer collaboration should be prioritized to improve principals training. The need for the development of these skills is not isolated to Finland and should be considered as generalizable to the United States as well.

Teacher/Staff Evaluation

To determine whether or not teacher evaluation is a good vehicle through which to power school improvement and impact student achievement, Hallinger, Heck, and Murphy (2013) conducted a literature review, finding it problematic to make a general statement that teacher evaluation alone can make such a difference. However, the implications that arose from this review of the literature indicated that school administrators do have an impact on school improvement through their interactions with teachers in providing actionable feedback, developing professional learning communities, providing support for teachers, as well as creating systems in which teachers have appropriate opportunities to routinely develop and refine their skills. Although the study was initiated to rate teacher evaluation and its effect on school improvement, it inadvertently confirmed the fact that principals play and important role in teacher development and possibly teacher retention.

Very few principals are trained to guide teachers around instructional improvement or to adequately evaluate their progress, according to Murphy (2005), who currently serves as the chair for ISLLC and oversaw the creation of the standards in both 2008 and 2015. Moreover, some suggest principals have little inclination for focusing their work on teaching and learning in their schools, and that they intentionally "avoid interfering" in classrooms (Murphy, Hallinger, & Heck, 2013). In 2013, twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia required annual evaluations of all teachers. These numbers represent a substantial shift in teacher policy from previous years; in 2009, only 15 states required annual teacher evaluations (Doherty & Jacobs, 2013). With the widespread adoption of more rigorous teacher evaluation standards, principals have seen an even greater shift in

how they manage and lead in their schools on a day-to-day basis (Grissom, Loeb, & Master, 2013).

Communication and Community Relations

A principal must understand how important each stakeholder and interest group is and how to negotiate between them (Bolman & Deal, 2008). Often, a principal is required to make compromises and balance power to create the best possible environment and outcomes for the organization by navigating through these stakeholders and interest groups. Ethics and honesty are of great value for principals when considering this area of leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2008).

In a 2012 ethnographic research project, Khalifa examined how a principal's community leadership impacts school-community relations and student outcomes. Throughout the two-year study, the researcher conducted participant observations, interviews, and descriptive and interpretive memoing. Findings indicated that high principal visibility in the community as well as advocacy for community causes led to trust and a good rapport between school and community. Furthermore, the study indicated that the trust developed between school leaders and the school community assisted in changing the attitude of parents who were previously hostile toward the school. The implications that arose from this study were notable considering it could influence how principals view their role, presence, and relationship within the community.

The principal role is one that is comprised of many responsibilities and tasks (Wood et al., 2013). In addition to leading and managing the school environment, it is necessary for principals to lead the charge in student achievement and instructional leadership (Oleszewski et al., 2012) by engaging all stakeholders in the process. Therefore, schools

require leaders prepared to transform schools and provide powerful instructional leadership as well as community leadership to impact academic capacity and influence student growth (Oleszewski et al., 2012).

Roles and Responsibilities of Principals

When investigating what principals and assistant principals do on a day-to-day basis, it was necessary to approach the investigation through exploring multiple lenses and frameworks. Several studies were used to gain perspective into the daily tasks a principalship and assistant principalship require.

Grodzki (2011), in his study of role identity as a school leader, claimed that due to the complexities of the principalship, it was difficult to clearly define the responsibilities and actual skills necessary to fulfill the demands of the position. In addition, the expectation was that the administrator would be the instructional leader and that would take precedent over all other activities (Grodzki, 2011). However, these expectations, coupled with the management responsibilities that are required of principals, resulted in an ambiguity of specific job responsibilities and work-related stress.

Another study suggested that there is an abundance of literature defending the stance that there are several overlapping, common characteristics in successful and effective principals, and that these characteristics are identifiable (Marcos, Witmer, Foland, Vouga, & Wise, 2011). Marcos et al. (2011) described those characteristics to be identified as consciously challenging the status quo, being willing to lead change with uncertain outcomes, systematically considering new and better ways to do things, and consistently attempting to push the boundaries of the school's ability. Principals must also know to focus change in a way so that teachers and staff are not damaged by the process and are

provided scaffolds and resources necessary to facilitate the change needed. They must be great communicators, difference makers, risk takers, managers, problem solvers, and care givers. They must also address instructional leadership, school climate, human resources, organizational management, communication and community relations, and above all maintain professional and ethical standards (Sheninger, 2014). The required skills necessary to carry out a principal's job duties are numerous.

There are a number of perspectives by which a principal's job duties can be classified. Lunenburg (2010) categorized them into categories similar to those of Kriekard and Norton (1980). Although many of the skills required are unique and very specific in nature, they all fall within these basic groupings. Leadership tasks are divided into four basic elements: planning, organizing, leading, and monitoring. These subsets of leadership included defining the future plans of the school and how to get there, developing an organizational structure for the school and providing for the human capital and resources to carry it out, leading with confidence to fulfill the planned changes, and monitoring to make sure the planned changes are, in fact, implemented (Lunenburg, 2010). The day-to-day activities of a principal consisted of duties and responsibilities from each of these categories such as: attending meetings, tours of the building, unexpected disruptions due to discipline or parent involvement, personal contacts, overseeing facilities and maintenance, human resources management, and attending to the climate and culture of the school (Lunenburg, 2010). From categorizing these activities and tasks, Lunenburg (2010) determined that in order to perform these roles and functions, principals needed conceptual, human, and technical skills. Principals spend a large portion of their day interacting with others, which makes communication a vital skill. As every principal's goal is to ensure

high quality instruction and student achievement, the effective use of these job-embedded skills is required (Lunenburg, 2010).

These many and diverse schools of thought provided a varied opinion of what principals do every day. Although it was agreed upon that a number of tasks are required and a number of skills are necessary for the position, it was difficult to determine a complete list that could be summarized for a job description. The role of the principal is unique and tasks completed are diverse and change from day-to-day. According to a report by School Leaders Network (2014), principals will continue to be faced with new mandates, pressures, and accountability measures, but in the end they must keep their focus and heart on the best interests of students.

Roles and Responsibilities of Assistant Principals

The role of the assistant principal is vital to a school's success. In reviewing the related literature, however, there is a lack of information regarding the assistant principal. Recognizing the impact of school leaders, Oleszewski et al. (2012) investigated the impact assistant principals have on the schools they serve. In their literature review, the researchers found that the assistant principalship is a unique position because job descriptions for these roles are ambiguous and lack detail. The researchers recognized that the assistant principal position is a role that has been severely understudied. However, it is these positions that often ensure the success of a school. As schools continue to face the growing demands of accountability and student achievement, the role of assistant principal can be critical for school improvement (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Assistant principals are the source for replacing principals and, as such, should be the position that serves as the training ground for the principalship (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

The position of assistant principal (AP) grew out of the need to manage growing populations of students in consolidated schools (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). However, over the years the role of AP has evolved into a position that requires specialized skills and knowledge. Assistant principalships provide opportunities for observing and interacting in order to learn behaviors necessary for professional advancement. APs maintain the norms of the school by managing discipline and other social issues, and they encounter the daily fundamental dilemmas of school systems (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Although the job descriptions of APs may vary, the tasks they are assigned are very similar. In a study by Armstrong (2004), duties of assistant principals were surveyed and documented. These duties included but were not limited to: discipline, safety, bus duty, building maintenance, staff development, community activities, attendance, scheduling, curriculum development and supervision, and staff development. Tasks assigned were generally ones that required assistant principals to work along closely with their principals and often with another assistant principal. Oftentimes the assistant principal was required to substitute for the principal according to the Armstrong (2004) study. Marshall and Hooley (2006) found role ambiguity and role conflict could occur if assigned tasks contradicted each other or overlaped in some way. Therefore, a need exists for assistant principals to be trained beyond the managerial aspects of their job (Marshall & Davidson, 2016). Assistant principals need to be prepared to fill roles and functions of administrators and to face the fundamental quandaries in administration (Oliver, 2005).

In a study by Melton et al. (2012), researchers investigated schools in the US, the UK, and China collecting data from school leaders, teachers, university educator preparation faculty, and state/national policy makers to identify international school

renewal/reform best practices and their applicability. Specific to preparation, researchers determined that "participants indicated that they came to the assistant principalship/deputy headship unprepared for the reality of the situation, and were often left to their own devices to figure out how to best meet demands and responsibilities" (Melton, Mallory, Mays, & Chance, 2012, p. 21). Additionally, participants indicated that the more varied the tasks assigned to them as assistant principals and the more active mentoring/coaching they received from their principals, the more confident they felt in their ability to assume the future role of principal (Melton et al., 2012).

In exploring the roles and responsibilities of principals and assistant principals, it is necessary to consider the relationship that exists between these positions. Goodman and Berry (2013) asserted that, "the principal-assistant principal relationship is perhaps the single most important factor contributing to the quality of the assistant principal leadership development process" (p. xv). They continued by stating that the best principals view themselves as mentors giving rise to the need to consider mentoring as a valuable process through which assistant principals refine their skills and gain new ones (Goodman & Berry, 2013). Mentoring, as described in a literature review by Leavitt (2011), "is an important component in a larger, strategic initiative to build a cohesive and collaborative workforce, develop agile and savvy global leaders, and create a continuous learning culture that can effectively adapt to organizational and global change" (p. 2). With a focus on finding principals who are instructional leaders with the ability to create an atmosphere focused on teaching and learning to improve student achievement, there is a need to provide opportunities for assistant principals to engage in authentic leadership experiences with their principal as mentor (Wood, et al., 2013).

Mentoring is an important part of professional development for APs. In some cases, albeit a few, assistant principals have identified the principal as a possible facilitator of professional growth (Oleszewski et al., 2012). Not only could a principal-mentor facilitate the development and growth of an assistant principal, but a positive relationship with the principal has also been found to positively influence the level of preparation for the principalship. In fact, assistant principals who have a positive relationship with their principals are better prepared for the principalship (Retelle, 2010). Understanding that mentoring can make such an impact on the development of an assistant principal's professional development, many preparation programs have included this as part of their curriculum (Oleszewski, et al., 2012). According to Melton et al. (2012), school-based experience is valuable, and they recommended that formal training initiatives and university-based training curricula be used to reconfigure preparation programs including more school-based field experiences or job-imbedded training geared toward providing relevant exposure to instructional leadership skills. Mentoring can provide such opportunities and aid assistant principals in building competency and self-efficacy. Federici and Skaalvik (2012) argued, "given the responsibility of school principals for student's education and well-being at school, it is therefore important that school principals develop high levels of competency as well as self-efficacy" (p. 312). As leader self-efficacy development is dependent on personal accomplishment, learning from others and socialization experiences, self-efficacy can either increase or decline based on the processes under which new principals are selected into leadership, the social conditions present in the schools they are assigned to lead, and the degree of mentoring and assistance they receive during their initial training and placement (Versland, 2013).

Current State of Principal Preparation Programs

For many years, developing instructional leaders and enhancing the instructional leadership skills of practicing administrators has been a long standing theme that pervades the literature associated with improving schools by focusing on student learning (Marshall & Davidson, 2016). Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, and Anderson (2010) stated that it is imperative that educational leadership preparation programs prepare candidates to enter the field of administration with appropriate knowledge, skills, and habits of the mind to be successful instructional leaders. The job of principal has become increasingly more complex, more difficult, and with intense and unreasonable pressures to solve a plethora of problems including educational, social, and personal (Shoho & Barnett, 2010). Oleszewski et al. (2012) insisted "given the impact of school leadership on academic performance and the natural progressions from assistant principals to principals, the activities and job responsibilities of an AP do not prepare leaders for the principalship" (p. 265). In fact, this information should be used to make contributions to theory and practice to improve the training for future principals.

In a study conducted by Duncan et al. (2011), principals were surveyed regarding their perceptions of the strengths and deficits of their preparation programs along with the professional development needed as beginning principals. The study concluded that although some strengths existed, there were perceived program deficits that focused strongly in the area of interpersonal communication and conflict resolution including student discipline, staff, and parental issues. Authors also found that while preparation programs provided a good foundation in school law and leadership theory, holes remained in the program regarding coursework in supervision/evaluation and budget/finance

(Duncan et al., 2011). Davis and Leon (2011) suggested essential steps geared toward ceasing certain perpetual ineffective practices and calling program leaders to consider reforms. They stated it is essential that these programs refocus their efforts at producing school leaders who possess a range of leadership, instructional, and management abilities necessary to foster the development of great schools (Davis & Leon, 2011).

Levine's 2005 report, *Educating School Leaders*, painted a very dreary picture of the state of principal preparation. This report was the first in a series of reports based on a four-year study of American schools. Prior to this report, some states had already begun efforts to make improvements in their own leadership preparation programs. However, the release of Levine's report brought conversations about school leadership programs to the forefront. Since 2005, many scholars and practitioners have expressed their desire to see reform in principal preparation programs as school leadership directly impacts student achievement and the success of schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005).

Scholars such as Darling-Hammond (2010) and Louis et al. (2010) have discussed the immediate need for reconstruction of the approaches taken to leadership preparation. Suggestions include modeling principal preparation programs after other countries, supplying federal funding to states, and redefining the role of the principal and credentialing process. In the state of Georgia, reform efforts have resulted in a mandated a two-tier system of leadership preparation requiring a significantly higher amount of fieldwork. Although current principals will undoubtedly be expected to be instructional leaders, the question remains of how deeply preparation programs influence the principal's capacity to affect student achievement. University educational leadership programs in

Georgia are in flux with standards that are delegated by the GaPSC. As new leaders in Georgia matriculate through the reformed preparation programs, results as to their effectiveness will take time to determine.

In research conducted by Braun et al. (2011), a mixed-method approach was used to examine the relationship between leadership preparation programs and leader, school, and student outcomes. Participants included 88 principals consisting of mostly elementary school principals and one middle school principal. The study focused on core practices of school leaders and preparation programs at two levels: leader-oriented, ones that involve a high degree of personal exploration; and, community-oriented, ones that involve a high degree of social collaboration in order to explore learning and practice. Findings indicated while principal preparation programs are providing the necessary instruction in certain aspects of theoretical preparation, these programs may not be engaging aspiring leaders in experiences needed to facilitate the practices involved in transforming school culture and engaging faculty in collaborative inquiry. Additionally, the findings showed the need to provide opportunities for aspiring leaders to participate in high quality internships with qualified mentors. The value of this research project lay in the impact the findings could have on the preparations programs leaders go through or could go through that prepare them to take over schools in the constantly changing world. The background of this research arose from literature discussing the tremendous change schools are experiencing. A call has been made for the preparation of highly effective leaders. Many in the educational field have criticized the quality of current preparation programs, as these programs have not done an adequate job of preparing leaders for the current obstacles that they are facing. In addition to inadequate preparation, school leaders' roles have shifted

from those of a manager toward those that facilitate collaboration to improve instructional quality and student performance. Many new leaders struggled to find themselves in the new role thus the need for strong, effective preparation programs (Braun et al., 2011).

Additionally, Shoho, Barnett, and Martinez (2012) sought to explore the impact and experiences that the internship and mentoring process have on participants and what links possibly exist between principal preparation program participants and participant learning. This study used a case-study approach on 19 program graduates from two separate cohorts and included insight from their mentors and host principals. Researchers obtained mixed results dependent upon the level of engagement of each program participant. The small sample size made it difficult to evaluate program effectiveness properly. However, there were three elements identified as effective in managing the coaching process including expectation setting, troubleshooting during the coaching process, and problem solving intended to evaluate the effectiveness of the coaching process (Shoho, Barnett, & Martinez, 2012).

Research conducted by Huang et al. (2012) evaluated the need for full-time job-embedded internship programs and proposed what a successful program might look like. The researchers considered what characteristics program graduates should have, how well the preparation program reflects the core quality of the program features, how well graduates do as a result of participation in the program in terms of satisfaction, participant learning, and sense of preparedness at the exit of the program, and what design features are most conducive to developing the capacity of urban school leaders as measured by participants' self-perception of learning in key leadership domains and the ratings from the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Assessment Center. In the

descriptive, qualitative, case-study, researchers worked with 19 program participants and indicated that graduates felt well prepared for virtually every aspect of effective principal practice including readiness to lead with vision and ethics, readiness to lead instruction and organizational learning to engaging parents and community, and managing school operations. Conversely, graduates performance in the NASSP's Assessment Center did not validate their self-perception. Except for oral communication, participants were in need of great improvement in almost all the other areas.

Gray and Lewis (2011), in another study, explored the effect of new instructional leadership-focused programs and how they related to principal success rates in addition to exploring the participant perceptions and the present data obtained from four distinct assessments. This quantitative study surveyed 49 applicants who were admitted to the redesigned program. The researchers made several suggestions based on their observations including a need to ensure adequate formative feedback from mentor principals to participants and a need for mentors to meet with their participants early in the residency period to identify meaningful school activities on which to focus. Researchers found mentor principals should also be made to attend mandatory orientations and residents should be assigned to schools where best principals practice, avoiding those inappropriate sites that do not create value for participants. Evidence gathered from the study demonstrated that the most effective way to train aspiring school leaders is through extended assignments in schools where they experience the intensity of the principal's day and the complexities of leadership that come with working with students, teachers, and parents to improve student learning (Gray & Lewis, 2011).

In order to more effectively impact student achievement, programs must become aware of the realities and challenges that practicing principals face each day. Browne-Ferrigno and Barber (2010) suggested that the best approach to principal preparation lies in the community existing between P-12 school districts and institutions of higher education. These partnerships exist to associate university principal preparation programs and the daily responsibilities of the school principal providing scaffolding from district employees as well as university professors (Browne-Ferrigno & Barber, 2010) Browne-Ferrigno and Barber (2010) continued by saying that collaborations are essential to "assure that new principals have requisite knowledge, skills, and proficiencies for leading contemporary schools" (p. 1). These partnerships, according to Browne-Ferrigno and Barber (2010), lead to a strengthening of theory-practice integration of school leadership as well as program relevance, support for leadership collaboration and collaboration between professors and practitioners.

The literature suggested there is an identified need to redesign the programs that are sending principals out into schools unprepared. A study by Anast-May et al. (2011) found that aspiring principals are not consistently given opportunities that will assist them in meeting the challenges of leading today's schools. If principals are to share in the responsibility of meeting the educational needs of students and their communities, they must be provided with the types of experiences and activities that facilitate instructional leadership, school improvement, and student achievement (Anast-May et al., 2011).

Principals' Attitudes Toward Preparation

Many existing principal preparation programs are in need of reform. While there are many great programs in existence, many current assistant principals have expressed that

they did not feel prepared for their role (Busch, MacNeil, & Baraniuk, 2010). Anast-May et al. (2011) found in their study that principals believed that their preparation was lacking in the area of planning for change. They went on to indicate that all of the principals interviewed agreed that aspiring principals need experiences in how to support and nurture a learning culture and creating a school with a culture characterized by personal caring assisted in supporting students in meeting high standards. These principals suggested a number of activities that would allow them to model effective instruction, lead a school-community group, lead a parent group and conduct a climate audit (Anast-May et al., 2011). In addition, each principal who was interviewed indicated that aspiring principals needed to have exposure to experiences with a mentor who modeled continuous improvement efforts based upon data and planning.

Duncan et al. (2011) stated in their study that participants indicated as beginning principals there were many areas in which they needed support. The areas that were determined as having the most need were working with difficult staff issues, working with difficult parent issues, instructional leadership, using data to inform decisions, and school budget and finance (Duncan et al., 2011). Principals believed they needed job-embedded and formal professional development for growth in the leadership role (Derrington & Sharratt, 2009).

Shoho and Barnett (2010) presented research on the challenges that new principals face, how their newly appointed position aligns with their expectations, and what long-term goals they have. The researchers presented historical information about principal preparation programs and the need that was indicated that these programs be revised to better prepare newly appointed principals. Findings from this research indicated that the

challenges experienced related to instructional leadership, managerial issues, and community issues. Many principals were not prepared to handle these issues, which led to discussion on programs or strategies that could be used to address these challenges for aspiring principals. The researchers called for induction programs for assistant principals and principals to provide them support and mentoring designed to aid in transitioning them to their new role.

Frick and Riley (2010) used a self-study project that allowed 22 participants to reflexively examine their own teaching practices as they relate to preparing educational leaders for the task of taking on a role as school leader. Professors were able to anonymously reflect on their own classes and the design of each class to determine if they were properly preparing school leaders for future positions. Empirical literature was presented, and researchers indicated the lack of data existing over the last 25 years. At the time of publication, no studies had been conducted that sought to inform the field of educational leadership preparation through an explicit analysis of an individual professor's educational leadership teaching practice using self-study methodology. The authors allowed for reflections to be noted as part of the presentation. Candid statements were included and used to make determinations for the implications that exist for the field of educational leadership. What arose from this study was the need for apprenticeship programs that blended theoretical frameworks and authentic products and performances designed to acclimate students to the expectations they would meet as a newly appointed school leader. This research presented a unique approach to principal preparation program evaluation. It provided insight from the professors' perspectives and showed their journey to realization that there is a need to change program designs.

New principals, those with less than three years' experience, were considerably idealistic in nature (Gentilucci et al., 2013). Gentilucci et al. (2013) reported that principals indicated that they perceived themselves as collaborators, communicators, motivators, and counselors, not because of their job descriptions or title but because they were motivated to make a difference and to serve others. This study went further to indicate that the challenges that are most problematic for new principals focused on skills such as stress management, personal organization, relationship building, communications, networking, and surviving at the center of complex organizational dynamics (Fullan, 2008). However, preparation programs often neglect to address these difficult-to-teach skills and focus on more traditional skills such as budgeting and law because they are easier to articulate and assess (Gentilucci et al., 2013).

Current Principals' Perceptions About Their Transitions

The transition from the classroom or assistant principalship to the principal's office is often very difficult. Frequently, principals are handed the keys to their buildings and then left to their own devices. New principals regularly struggle with feelings of professional isolation and loneliness as they transition into a role that carries ultimate responsibility and decision-making powers. Not only do they have the challenge of determining how they will lead in their new position, they also have difficulty dealing with the style and practice of the previous principal (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Spillane and Lee (2014) indicated that novice principals have difficulty managing multiple tasks including supervising staff, managing a budget, and maintaining a school building. In addition, in a study conducted by Beam, Claxton, and Smith (2014) both novice and veteran principals indicated that balancing family and new administrative duties was difficult and placed them in a very

stressful situation. Not only were they required to balance both home and school, the new principals stated that navigating relations with other stakeholders was a challenge as well. Recurring themes in the Beam et al. (2014) study were that newly appointed principals indicated support was lacking from superiors and believed they were underprepared to deal with politics. Gentilucci et al. (2013) found in their investigation that the most frequently mentioned challenges of novice principals were stress and time management, creating and sustaining positive and productive working relationships, and needing mentoring and support. Shoho and Barnett (2010) reported that several conceptualizations have developed in regard to transitioning into a new role as principal, which include coping with technical skills and cultural and moral issues. Additionally, when a new principal transfers into a position, it is estimated there is an adjustment period of approximately five years before improvement can be seen in instruction and full implementation of new policies and procedures can positively impact student achievement (Louis, Leithwood, Walhstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

There is no doubt that taking on the role of principal is a daunting task. Spillane and Lee (2014) reported that novice principals face a major reality shock due to the ultimate responsibility they inherit. Whether transitioning straight from the classroom to the principalship or rising to the principalship from another administrative position, novice leaders become overwhelmed by the extreme responsibility being principal brings (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Additionally, Spillane and Lee (2014) suggested leadership development programs, both preservice and in-service, could directly impact the stress associated with the job in a positive way, and local education systems might encourage and reward work environments that reduce rather than increase stress (Thomson, 2009). Rather than focusing

exclusively or even mostly on the technical aspects of being a principal, leadership preparation and development programs should consider working on the emotional dimensions of the work, including helping novices manage stress and create healthy work environments in addition to developing time-management, self-efficacy and other related fields. Creating awareness of the ultimate responsibility of their new job and the stress that accompanies this responsibility would be a minute but potentially important first step toward improving principal preparation. Awareness, however, only goes so far; serious attention to stress management in the work life and work place is essential (Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Many factors have contributed to the importance of developing strong, competent school leaders. Although standards have been created and accountability measures have been developed, there is a need to reassess how these school leaders are being prepared. As the role of the principal has changed, student achievement and good instruction have become new issues on which to focus. Educational reformers and researchers agree that the primary role of the principal is now to align all aspects of schooling to support the goal of improving instruction so that all children are successful (Oleszewski, et al., 2012; Versland, 2013; Wood, et al., 2013). The demands of the job sometimes far exceed the capacity that most people have. Therefore, there is an urgent demand to improve the method by which current school leaders are trained focusing on job-embedded, practical experiences that expose aspiring leaders to the situations they may face in assuming a new role as principal (Orr & Orphanos, 2011). How these needs are addressed remains to be determined. However, there is much literature to suggest what types of program changes could occur.

In research conducted by Grodzki (2011), he suggested further research that would be necessary to provide a comprehensive look at succession planning. The research also unearthed specific behaviors and attitudes organizations should consider as leaders are entering into new administrative positions. Grodzki (2011) provided a great graphic for succession planning, policy, and practice.

Melton et al. (2012) indicated that formal leadership training programs should focus on the premise that assistant principals need experience in both management and leadership responsibilities. Additionally, they determined that an internship should be designed to provide job-embedded opportunities in both leadership and management functions with an experienced, effective mentor. By doing so, these assistant principals may experience leadership opportunities in a real-world setting while being mentored and guided each step of the way. Having the chance to collaborate with school leaders, university program directors, and fellow cohort members, aspiring principals will be able to share challenges and successes while working through the daily trials they face throughout their internship experience (Melton et al., 2012).

Shoho and Barnett (2010) suggested findings that indicated that the challenges experienced by novice principals relate to instructional leadership, managerial issues, and community issues. Many principals were not prepared to handle these issues, which led to discussion on programs or strategies that could be used to address these challenges for aspiring principals. Researchers called for induction programs for assistant principals and principals to provide them support and mentoring designed to aid in transitioning them to their new role.

Batagiannis (2011) offered insights as to how using action research can not only prepare leaders, but it could also educate them about best practices and new ideas of educational leadership. Using this study to inform an action plan or principal preparation program for assistant principals would be an innovative approach to present to district leaders and program developers.

Davis and Leon (2011) presented an unconventional approach to the topic of preparing principals. Instead of focusing on what should be done to prepare aspiring principals, researchers focused on what not to do, citing that in order to advance the quality and effectiveness of programs, one must look at both effective and ineffective examples. In doing so, a parable of sorts was used to give readers an idea of a "DoNoHarm School of Medicine" that had a 98% completion rate for those who were admitted into the program. Since school officials wished only to prepare students minimally, it was the hiring agents job to choose the right applicant. Davis and Leon compared this to current principal preparation programs saying that most programs are doing the same as the school in the parable. They went on to say that most programs emphasize knowing about things more than being able to do things. To combat these practices, Davis and Leon (2011) suggested that aspiring leaders must unlearn certain behaviors in order to be able to replace those behaviors with effective ones. They went on to present eight essential steps toward program reforms in order to help programs redouble and refocus their efforts at producing school leaders who possess a range of leadership, instructional, and management abilities necessary to foster the development of great schools. To culminate the discussion, researchers presented a theory *andragogy*, which refers to how adult learners acquire learning and new skills, that they believe provides a useful theoretical framework to guide

preparation of school principals. In addition, an exemplar model was discussed giving readers an idea of how an effective programs looks. Curriculum components of this program were presented as discussed as well. Davis and Leon (2011) discussed eight different recommendations for what principal preparations programs should stop doing to produce competent school leaders who would be prepared to lead effectively. Including in these recommendations were stopping the presentation of a theory only approach, stopping the direct instruction of university faculty members where they present themselves as the "sage on the stage", and stopping all presentation of project-based learning that separates the theoretical learning and the students this learning is intended to affect. By presenting a contrary discussion of principal preparation, researchers were able to provide a unique look at what it takes to prepare aspiring leaders successfully.

Chapter Summary

It is generally recognizable that the assistant principal position is a foundation, or springboard of sorts, for the principalship. Too frequently, individuals entering the principalship are licensed but not necessarily ready to lead a school. The roles and responsibilities of assistant principals, in addition to their preparation, is an area that simply is not adequately addressed in the literature. The literature presented in this study identified that many principal preparations programs are currently training aspiring school leaders in theories and knowledge of general, managerial skills. In many cases, these school leaders are offered minimal, practical experiences giving them limited exposure to what school leaders really do.

What is lacking in the literature, however, is what type of preparation is the most beneficial in helping aspiring leaders become effective in the roles they hope to assume. In

addition, the literature lacks information about what types of assigned activities are optimal in aiding in this preparation while school leaders are employed in the role of assistant principal. Additionally, there is a deficit regarding the literature with explanations as to whether or not job-embedded training would be a valuable model to consider when preparing assistant principals aspiring to become the building leader. This study seeks to contribute to the body of literature in these areas.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In the exploration of whether or not assistant principals in Southeast Georgia are properly trained to assume the role of principal, the researcher has determined the need to provide awareness that may offer suggestions or solutions for improving the preparation of assistant principals. Because there was a lack of research on assistant principals and their assigned roles and tasks necessary to help develop the skills needed to become building leaders, this research will focus on the actual tasks performed by assistant principals compared to the ideal tasks assistant principals need to be assigned to promote readiness for the principalship.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of assistant principals' and principals' in a regional educational service agency in Southeast Georgia about their preparation as viewed through the tasks each are or were assigned during their tenures as assistant principals. Because the assistant principalship is widely viewed as the training ground for the principalship, it was imperative that those who are responsible for preparing these school leaders do so with information necessary to provide them the best training possible. Therefore the following research questions guided the investigation:

1. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks do assistant principals engage?
2. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks should assistant principals engage to assist in preparing them to be principals?

3. What differences exist between what assistant principals and principals perceive to be ideal assigned tasks for the preparation of the school principal versus what they are actually assigned to do?

Design of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of assistant principals and principals in a regional educational service agency in Southeast Georgia about their preparation as viewed through the tasks each are or were assigned during their tenures as assistant principals. In addition, this quantitative study sought to determine the relationships that exist between the tasks in which assistant principals should engage versus the ones in which they actually do engage; a quantitative study should provide the numerical data necessary to make generalizations to a greater population of school leaders. An instrument in the form of a questionnaire (see Appendix A) was sent out to principals in a regional educational service area in Southeast Georgia. The survey provided the numerical data needed in order to make statistical comparisons and generalizations specific to the research questions being presented.

This was a correlational study designed to compare the relationships that exist between the tasks to which assistant principals are assigned and how effectively those tasks prepare them for assuming a principal position versus those tasks in which assistant principals feel they should engage in order to ideally prepare them for the role of building leader. Because the research dealt with human subjects and experimentation would have been difficult and, perhaps, unethical, a correlational approach was the best design for this study. Stanovich (2007) stated correlational studies could be used to make comparisons as well as predictions. The stronger the relationship that exists between variables, the more

reliable the predictions will be. As there was no desire to control for variables in this research, a correlational approach was better suited.

Participants

The study included principals and assistant principals from the elementary, middle, and high school levels from the regional educational service area, which consisted of primarily public schools. There were 18 districts that are members of the target regional educational service area, which included a total of 193 schools. There was one principal at each school with varying numbers of assistant principals at each school. All assistant principals and principals, no matter their level of experience, were included in the study, for a population of approximately 350. The goal will be to receive responses from at least 70% of those surveyed, for a response of 245.

Instrument

The anonymous survey administered was based on the standards set forth by the GaPSC Educational Leadership Program guidelines (2015). A survey item was developed from each of the exemplars listed for each standard in the publication and framed in such a way that a comparison could be made between what tasks are assigned and developed versus those that should be. The survey was modeled after a survey used in a previous study by Kriekard (1985). Dr. Kriekard was contacted by email to request permission to use and adjust his instrument as necessary. Email consent was given (see Appendix C).

A pilot study of the instrument was performed with a small sample size of principals and assistant principals who are no longer serving in that capacity and who were not included in the target population. Each leader was asked to complete the survey to help the researcher establish the ease and amount of time needed to complete the survey and to

provide input as to how best to administer the survey. Participants were asked to identify any adjustments or modifications that may be needed in order to improve the instrument; however, only editorial comments were made. In addition, data related to demographic information and information related to job tasks were collected.

Data Collection

Once written permission was received from each district superintendent involved in the study and Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board approval was obtained, the Georgia Department of Education's website was used to obtain the email addresses of principals and assistant principals in the regional educational service area since this information is public and generally accessible. Principals and assistant principals were contacted via email after permission was obtained from the superintendent of each school district in regional educational service area (see Appendix B). The email included a description of the study and the survey instrument requesting participation, which was entered into Qualtrics, a survey platform. A link to the survey was provided in the email, which served as the cover letter for the survey (see Appendix E). Passive consent was embedded into the survey design so that participants gave consent if they proceeded with the survey.

The survey was sent out and participants were given a week to respond with their answers. Since 70% of the surveys were not returned within the allotted time period, a follow up reminder was sent to remind participants of the importance of their responses. Once final data were collected and analyzed, it was presented in the form of tables with a confidence level of 99%, and a narrative was included for explanation (n=99).

Limitations, Delimitations, and Assumptions

As with all research, this study had limitations, delimitations, and assumptions. Because the population for this study was coming from the regional educational service agency, the sample size may not be large enough to make it generalizable to the total population. A sampling error may occur due to a smaller sample size (De Vaus, 2014). Again, this research was primarily geared toward improving principal preparation in Southeast Georgia. It was not necessarily intended to impact the total population. Surveys were completed on a voluntary basis and there was a variation in the level of experience of each participant. As such, respondents may have chosen not to participate or their answers may not have provided the researcher with the needed information and, as such, may have restricted or altered some of the findings. While the level of experience of participants may have varied, the perceptions of all those surveyed gave insight into the differing levels of principal preparation and perceptions related to that preparation. All responses contributed to this body of research and its effect on making relevant changes.

The population for this study was delimited to a regional educational service agency in Southeast Georgia because of the familiarity of the area to the researcher and the access to local information. However, the objective of this research was to impact principal preparation in the regional educational service agency and the surrounding geographic area.

It was assumed that participants' sex would not significantly affect their perceptions and, therefore, would not affect the outcomes of the study. Additionally, it was assumed that participants would answer all survey questions honestly and to the best of their abilities.

Chapter Summary

In this correlational study, the researcher sought to examine the perceptions of principals and assistant principals to determine whether tasks assigned to assistant principals do, in fact, assist in preparing them for the role of principal. Assistant principals and principals were surveyed to obtain these perceptions and to determine if the relationship exists between what assistant principals are currently doing and whether they are receiving the appropriate training needed to be successful in the position of principal. By contributing to the lack of research that currently exists in this area, the researcher hoped to inform leaders and decision-makers in order to improve the current practices in principal preparation programs, as well as identifying skills training assistant principals need in order to have an effective, long career. There is a sense of urgency that existed for this research, as there are large numbers of principals expected to retire in the next few years.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents a summary of the findings and the results obtained from this study. The chapter begins with a review of the research questions and research design as well as an explanation of the methods of data analysis. The hypotheses associated with the research questions are evaluated and summarized within this chapter. Finally, an overview of the findings will be presented.

The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of assistant principals' and principals' in a regional educational service agency in Southeast Georgia about their preparation as viewed through the tasks each are or were assigned during their tenures as assistant principals. Because the assistant principalship is widely viewed as the training ground for the principalship, it was imperative that those who are responsible for preparing these school leaders do so with information necessary to provide them the best training possible. Whether it be job-imbedded training or a mentoring-type environment, assistant principals should be exposed to tasks and experiences that provide them with a comprehensive idea of what it is like to run a school. By providing these opportunities to assistant principals, districts will allow for them to grow and develop within their role in order to be more effective in the future.

Research Questions

In the exploration of whether or not assistant principals in Southeast Georgia are properly trained to assume the role of principal, the researcher has determined the need to provide awareness that may offer suggestions or solutions for improving the preparation of assistant principals. Because there was a lack of research on assistant principals and their

assigned roles and tasks necessary to help develop the skills needed to become building leaders, this research will focus on the actual tasks performed by assistant principals compared to the ideal tasks assistant principals need to be assigned to promote readiness for the principalship.

The administrators in this study were asked to complete a survey comparing the real and ideal tasks of assistant principals in several task areas as outlined by the GaPSC: instructional leadership, school climate, planning and assessment, organizational management, human resources management, teacher/staff evaluation, professionalism, and communication and community relations. The research questions were:

1. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks do assistant principals engage?
2. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks should assistant principals engage to assist in preparing them to be principals?
3. What differences exist between what assistant principals and principals perceive to be ideal assigned tasks for the preparation of the school principal versus what they are actually assigned to do?

Description of Participants

The study included principals and assistant principals from the elementary, middle, and high school levels from the regional educational service area, which consisted of primarily public schools. There were 18 districts that are members of regional educational service area. However, only 14 of the 18 districts' superintendents gave the researcher permission to investigate. There were 342 emails sent to principals and assistant principals in those 14 districts. All assistant principals and principals, no matter their level of

experience, were included in the study. One hundred thirty-four responses were received, but due to missing responses, only 99 participants' responses could be used for analysis for a response rate of 29%. Any survey response with more than 10 missing survey items was omitted. Although a response rate of 29% appears to be lower, Morton, Bandara, Robinson, and Atatoa Carr (2012) stated that, "it would appear that a response rate alone may no longer be sufficient evidence to judge study quality and/or validity, and perhaps should never have been accepted as a suitable single proxy measure for all measures of study validity. There is no simple answer to what is an appropriate rate, and no rate is automatically indicative of greater or lesser accuracy and utility" (p. 108). Additionally Denscombe (2010) indicated that, "There is no benchmark figure in judging what is an acceptable response rate and what is not. There is simply no hard and fast rule on the matter" (p. 26).

Participants included 33 principals and 66 assistant principals from various school levels (Elementary-43.4%; Middle-30.3%; High-23.2%; Other 1.0%). There was variation in participants' school sizes as well. The majority of participants worked in schools with 601-800 students (37.4%) with other schools ranking respectively 401-600 (21.2%), 1201 or larger and 801-1000 (14.1%), 1001-1200 (10.1%), and 201-400 (3.0%). Participants' years of experience as assistant principals varied as well, with 64.7% of participants having 5 years or less and 34.3% of participants having 6 or more years as an assistant principal. Years of experience as a principal, of course, could only be answered by those who are currently serving as an assistant principal, which eliminated some participants from being able to answer. Of those participants who answered, 22.2% of participants had five or less years of experience as a principal and 18.1% had six or more years of experience leaving

59.1% having missing answers for this questionnaire item. Participants also indicated how many assistant principals are currently serving in their schools. Participants specified the following information: schools with one assistant principal: 36.4%; schools with two assistant principals: 30.3%; schools with three assistant principals:17.2%; schools with four assistant principals: 6.1%; schools with six or mores assistant principals: 3.0%; and participants with missing items: 3.0%. Finally of those assistant principals participating, 56.6% desired to become a principal, 16.2% indicated they do not, and 25.3% specified they may want to become a principal.

Table 1
Description of Principal Responses

Demographic Factor	n	Percentage
Principal Type		
Principal	33	33.0
Assistant Principal	66	67.0
School Level		
Elementary	43	43.4
Middle	30	30.3
High	23	23.0
Other	1	1.0
Missing	2	2.0
Number of Students		
201-400	3	3.0
401-600	21	21.2
601-800	37	37.4
801-1000	14	14.1
1001-1200	10	10.1
1201 or larger	14	14.1

Demographic Factor	n	Percentage
Years of Experience (AP)		
1	15	15.2
2	17	17.2
3	13	13.1
4	9	9.1
5	10	10.1
6	9	9.1
7	8	8.1
8	4	4.0
9	2	2.0
10 or more	11	11.1
Years of Experience (P)		
1	8	8.1
2	6	6.1
3	4	4.0
4	3	3.0
5	1	1.0
6	3	3.0
7	2	2.0
8	1	1.0
9	3	3.0
10 or more	9	9.1
Missing	59	59.6
Number of APs in School		
1	36	36.4
2	30	30.3
3	17	17.2
4	6	6.1
5	4	4.0
6 or more	3	3.0
Missing	3	3.0
Desire to Become Principal		
Yes		
No	56	56.6
Maybe	16	16.2
Missing	25	25.3
		2.0

Findings

The findings in this chapter are presented in multiple sections. The first sections offer insight into each of the three research questions and the subsequent sections included the results of the repeated measures ANOVA in additional to graphical representation of the nature of the mean differences and a description of these results. These findings describe and ultimately address the overarching question of whether or not assistant principals are assigned tasks that prepare them to be principals.

Table 2 presents an analysis of the differences that exist between how principals and assistant principals respond regarding what assistant principals do versus what they should do in preparation for becoming a principal addressing each research question. Table 2 provides F-ratios for Principal Type (PT), which describes interactions between the ratings of assistant principals and principals. It also presents F-ratios for Should Do versus Regularly Do (Do), which describes the ratings between the Should Do versus Regularly Do tasks. Additionally, Table 2 outlines the mean scores for principals and assistant principals for both the Should Do and Regularly Do tasks.

Table 2
Repeated Measures ANOVA Summary for Principal and Assistant Principal Task Engagement Ratings

	F-ratios			MSE		Should Do Means		Regularly Do Means	
	PT	Do	PT x Do	Bet.	Wit.	AP	P	AP	P
Inst. Lead.	0.54	61.14*	6.41	0.33	0.16	2.84	2.75	2.20	2.41
Sch. Climate	1.08	31.51*	5.79	0.13	0.09	2.85	2.80	2.49	2.66
Plan. & Assess.	1.48	66.59*	7.54*	0.30	0.18	2.73	2.66	2.03	2.31
Org. Manage.	0.07	95.45*	7.91*	0.21	0.13	2.84	2.70	2.14	2.32
Hum. Res.	0.26	57.96*	9.90*	0.30	0.16	2.70	2.55	2.05	2.28
Teach. Eval.	0.17	42.59*	0.49	0.25	0.12	2.78	2.72	2.40	2.41
Professional.	0.00	39.62*	0.64	0.18	0.82	2.84	2.81	2.53	2.57
Com. Relations	0.58	50.98*	2.85	0.28	0.14	2.76	2.72	2.26	2.42

Note: PT = Principal Type (Principal or Assistant Principal), Do = Should Do vs. Regularly Do ratings, PT x Do = Interacton between Principal Type and Should D vs. Regularly Do; MSE = Mean Square Error; Bet. = Between, Wit. = Within
*p<.01

Tasks in Which Assistant Principals Engage

The first research question was: According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks do assistant principals engage? To address this research question, descriptive statistics were calculated for tasks categorized into eight domains. Mean scores were calculated for each domain ranging from 1, a task in which assistant principals rarely engage, to 3, a task in which assistant principals routinely engage. Mean scores indicate that the three domains that describe the tasks that assistant principals most regularly engage are: school climate, teacher evaluation, and professionalism. These mean scores were the highest for both assistant principal (*M*=2.49, 2.40, 2.53) and principal (*M*=2.66, 2.51, 2.47) responses. Mean scores indicate that assistant principals spend less time performing tasks in the domains of human resources (P: *M*=2.28; AP: *M*=2.05), organizational management

(P: *M*=2.32; AP: *M*=2.14), and planning and assessment (P: *M*=2.31; AP: *M*=2.03). These mean scores were rated the lowest by both principals and assistant principals.

There is little evidence that mean ratings differ between principals and assistant principals within the regularly engage tasks category. The F ratios in Table 2 for Principal Type are not significant indicating that there is little difference between principals and assistant principals.

Tasks in which Assistant Principals Should Engage

The second research question was: According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks should assistant principals engage to assist in preparing them to be principals? Again, calculated descriptive statistics were used to address this research question. The total mean calculated for should do tasks was 2.75 for both principals and assistant principals. The calculated mean for how principals rate the Should Do tasks is 2.71, and assistant principals scored them at a mean of 2.79. Principal means rate the following domains as high for Should Do tasks: Professionalism (*M*=2.81), School Climate (*M*=2.80), and Instructional Leadership (*M*=2.75). The domains with the highest mean scores for tasks in the Should Do category for assistant principals are School Climate (*M*=2.85), Instructional Leadership (*M*=2.84), Human Resources (*M*=2.84), and Professionalism (*M*=2.84). The lowest reported mean scores for Should Do tasks rated by principals are in the domains of Human Resources (*M*=2.55), Planning and Assessment (*M*=2.66), and Organizational Management (*M*=2.70).The lowest mean scores for the Should Do tasks rated by assistant principals fall in the domains of Teacher Evaluation (*M*=2.70), Planning and Assessment (*M*=2.73), and Community Relations (*M*=2.76).

There is little evidence that mean ratings differ between principals and assistant principals within the Should Do tasks category. The F ratios in Table 2 for Principal Type are not significant indicating that there is little difference between principals and assistant principals.

What Tasks Assistant Principals Should Engage In Versus What They Do Engage In

The third research question was: What differences exist between what assistant principals and principals perceive to be ideal assigned tasks for the preparation of the school principal versus what they are actually assigned to do? To answer this research question a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine two main effects: principal type (PT) and the Should Do versus Regularly Do (Do) variable. PT x Do is the interaction, which tests whether the mean difference between assistant principal and principal changes between the Should Do situation and the Regularly Do situation.

Results indicate that in each domain there is a statistically significant difference in ratings between Should Do versus Regularly Do. In every domain sampled assistant principals rated higher what they should do relative to what they regularly do. Principals demonstrated a similar pattern; however, the differences in mean ratings between Should Do and Regularly Do were smaller for some domains rated by principals, and this is confirmed by the significant statistical interaction between principal type (assistant principal versus principal) and engage type (should versus regularly) for three domains (see Table 2): Human Resources, Organizational Management, and Planning and Assessment.

To help illustrate the nature of the mean ratings obtained, two mean plots are depicted in Figures 1 and 2. These two were selected because they represent the extremes of results according to Table 1 interactions. Figure 1 shows that mean differences are

largest for assistant principals and smallest for principals, and Figure 2 shows the mean differences are again largest for assistant principals and smallest for principals but with much less difference in mean ratings between what assistant principals regularly do and what they should do.

Figure 1: Mean Scores for the Domain of Human Resources

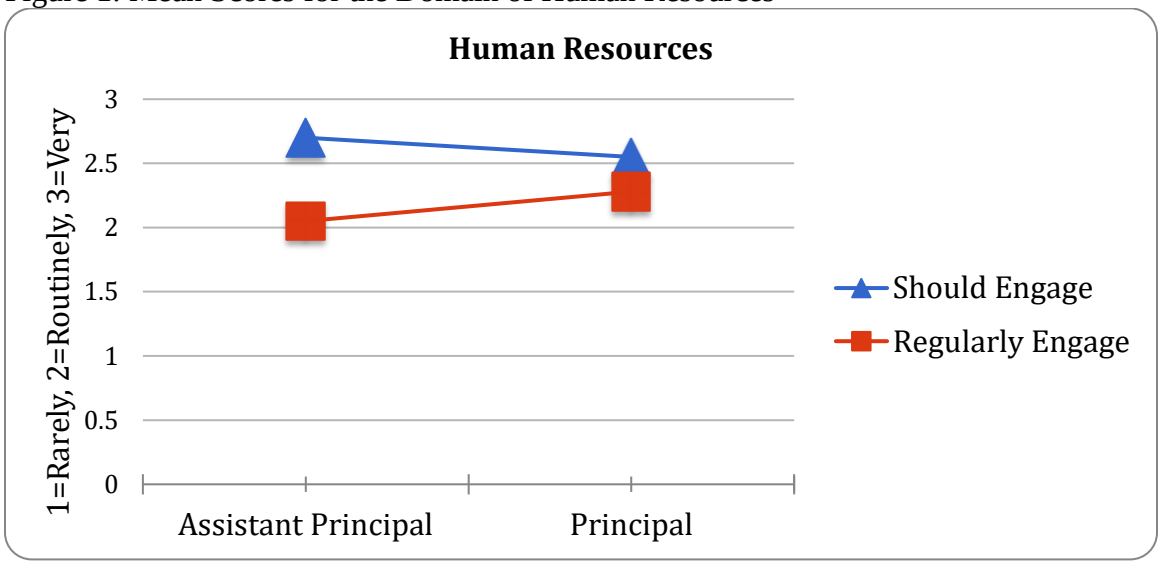

Figure 1 illustrates the nature of the mean ratings obtained for the domain of Human Resources. This figure indicates the extreme variance of the domains and the difference in the calculated means. Figure 1 shows that mean differences are largest for assistant principals and smallest for principals.

Figure 2: Mean Scores for the Domain of Teacher Evaluation

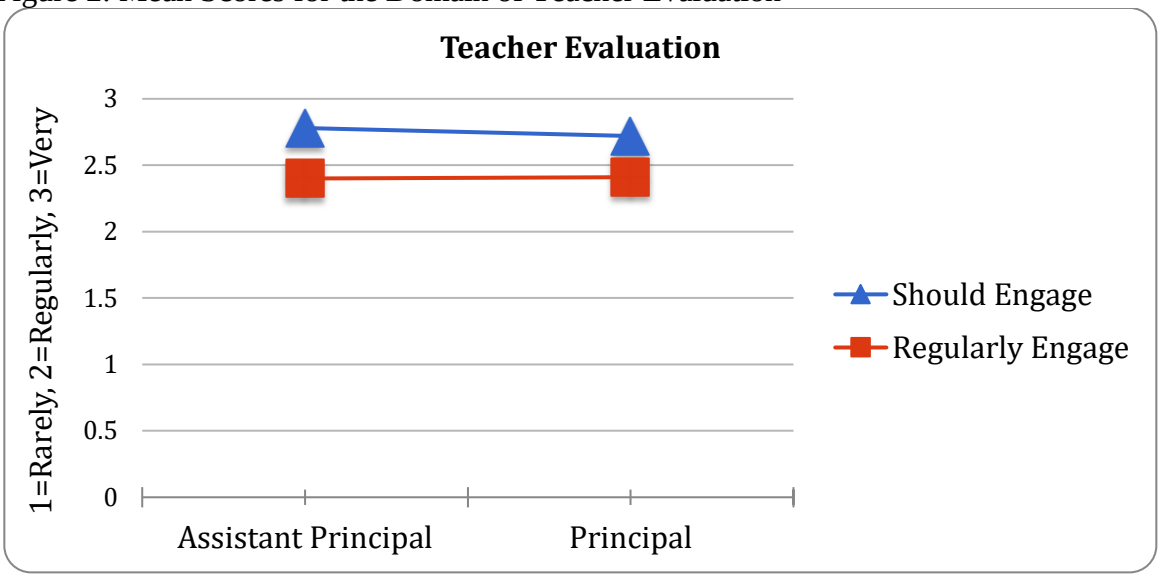

Figure 2 illustrates the nature of the mean ratings obtained for Teacher Evaluation, which indicated the lowest of variances of all the domains surveyed. Figure 2 shows the mean differences are the largest for assistant principals and smallest for principals but with much less variance.

Summary of Findings

A survey was conducted in a regional service agency in Southeast Georgia investigating perceptions of assistant principals' and principals' about their preparation as viewed through the tasks each are or were assigned during their tenures as assistant principals. Ninety-nine participants, both principals and assistant principals, responded to the survey providing their perceptions about what assistant principals do compared to what they should do in order to prepare to be a principal. After analyzing their responses by conducting a repeated measures ANOVA, several themes emerge.

1. Assistant principals and principals both indicate that the domains encompassing tasks in which assistant principals most regularly engage are School Climate, Teacher Evaluation, and Professionalism.
2. Assistant principals and principals both indicate that the domains encompassing tasks in which assistant principals should engage are: Professionalism, Instructional Leadership, and School Climate.
3. In every domain sampled, assistant principals and principals rated higher what they should do relative to what assistant principals regularly do.
4. There is a significant statistical interaction between principal type (assistant principal versus principal) and engage type (should versus regularly) for three domains: Human Resources, Organizational Management, and Planning and Assessment.

The overview of the study, its implications, and the researcher's recommendations for further research will be articulated in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this correlational study was to examine the perceptions of assistant principals and principals in a regional educational service agency in Southeast Georgia about their preparation as viewed through the tasks each are or were assigned during their tenures as assistant principals. Because the assistant principalship is widely viewed as the training ground for the principalship, it is imperative that those who are responsible for preparing these school leaders do so with information necessary to provide them the best training possible. Therefore the following research questions guided the investigation:

1. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks do assistant principals engage?
2. According to assistant principals and principals, in what tasks should assistant principals engage to assist in preparing them to be principals?
3. What differences exist between what assistant principals and principals perceive to be ideal assigned tasks for the preparation of the school principal versus what they are actually assigned to do?

This chapter is comprised of five sections. The first section includes a discussion of the major findings of this study and an alignment between this study's findings and an existing body of literature regarding principal preparation. The second section presents the implications and recommendations for educational leadership practice. The third section discusses the limitations involved in this study. The fourth section provides recommendations for future research studies. The fifth and final section includes personal reflections and concluding thoughts of this researcher.

Analysis and Discussion of Research Findings

According to the data presented in Chapter 4, the major findings of this study indicate that current assistant principals and principals perceive that there are tasks in which assistant principals should be engaged; however, assistant principals are not always assigned these tasks especially in certain domains.

As presented in Chapter 2, a new generation of leader is required where principals can transform schools and provide instructional leadership unlike previous generations (Oleszewski et al., 2012). According to Braun, Gable, and Kite (2011), leaders are not currently being trained to take on the overwhelming role of leading in an ever-changing educational system. Many regions in the United States are facing difficulty in attracting and retaining adequately prepared school leaders. In fact, nationwide, approximately a quarter of principals leave their schools each year and as many as 50% quit during their third year in the role, leaving millions of students adversely affected (School Leaders Network, 2014). In response to the need for employing instructional leaders who are able to meet the demands placed on today's principals, Georgia policies and standards are changing to embrace these challenges.

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC) has gone through a number of reforms to correct and improve on their preparation of school leaders (GaPSC, 2015). However, according to the findings of this study, there is disparity in the perceptions of Georgia school leaders about their preparation. Assistant principals indicated they are still not receiving the job-imbedded training necessary to feel prepared in many of the surveyed areas, especially in the domains of Human Resources, Organizational Management, and Planning and Assessment. In every measured domain, there were

statistically significant mean differences between what assistant principals should do versus what they regularly do, indicating that both assistant principals and principals perceive that there are tasks in which assistant principals should engage that they currently do not engage. Tasks such as: school improvement, monitoring progress for student growth, school finance, budgeting, overseeing a smoothly operating workplace, creating and supervising a master schedule, recruiting, mentoring, and retaining a high performing faculty are all included in these surveyed domains and are skills which are imperative for those who aspire to lead schools. Although Georgia has worked toward reform for a number of years, this study's findings reinforce the issue that preparation programs and internship requirements have not been providing a foundation for successful transition into a building leader role based on responses from both principals and assistant principals. Further examining those domains in which assistant principals spend less time performing tasks: human resources, organizational management, and planning and assessment, may provide more specifics into the shortcomings of principal preparation.

Human Resources

In the research conducted in Finland by Shantal, Halttunen, and Pekka (2014) presented in Chapter 2, findings indicated management of human and financial resources, as well as creating and supporting peer collaboration should be prioritized to improve principals training. Although these results were rooted in a study from Finland, the findings in this research surveying Georgia principals reflect much of the same concerns. Many tasks categorized within the Human Resources domain continue to be those that both principals and assistant principals indicate are tasks in which assistant principals should engage more regularly. Relationship building is essential for improving school culture. It is

important for leaders to focus on and understand how each individual is related to and works within the organization. In order for current leaders to cultivate these skills, assistant principals need the opportunity to experience situations first hand that allow these skills to develop.

Organizational Management

Principals must develop procedures and organizational goals, and be able to manage schedules, facilities, and maintenance in order for a school to run properly (Bolman & Deal, 2008). In the study presented by Devlin-Scherer and Devlin-Scherer (2003), researchers worked to identify activities completed as a part of a principal internship that were considered effective in participants' structured learning experiences in addition to determining to what extent the activities completed during internship experiences required prospective principals to focus on instructional and managerial tasks. Researchers found that interns' roles should be divided among instructional and managerial leadership activities in order for participants to be skilled in both. The study also indicated that to affect change leading to student learning, intern learning experiences should focus more on instructional leadership. Again, the results from this study reinforced these findings showing that both principals and assistant principals indicated that assistant principals should perform tasks such as managing school budgets and finance, identifying problems within and supervising a smoothly operating workplace, as well as providing a safe, secure working school in more regularly to obtain the skills necessary to become a diverse and well-rounded school leader capable of being both manager and instructional leader.

Planning and Assessment

Principals shape the environment for teaching and learning by creating vibrant learning communities where collaboration among adults helps every student fulfill his or her potential (Wood et al., 2013). Duncan et al. (2011) explained that principals must lead the way for student achievement by informing curricular change, leading data-driven decision making, and being the chief learning officer within the school. The role of principal is vital with respect to overall performance of the school because the position is essential to address challenges and changes of varying nature (Federici & Skaalvik, 2012). Therefore, the school principal plays a central role in education. Orr and Orphanos (2011) used their study to find that principal preparation programs that are coherently organized around instructional leadership and school improvement, and provide challenging and work-rich field experience lead to greater perspectives of learning. Likewise, this research's findings indicated that both principals and assistant principals consider that assistant principals should be engaged in tasks that involve planning for educational improvement and monitoring progress for student growth as well as for continuous school improvement.

While Human Resources, Organizational Management, and Planning and Assessment were domains rated by assistant principals and principals as those in which assistant principals spend less time performing tasks, other surveyed domains, such as School Climate and Professionalism, indicate the same statistically significant findings. Every surveyed domain, in fact, indicates statistically significant mean differences. Scallion (2010) indicated that principals have an influence on their campus cultures. Those who have been trained to understand how relationships and values interact within a school can

improve their school environments. Assistant principals must receive multi-faceted training and guidance in order to be prepared to tackle the tasks encompassed by each of the domains surveyed. This research's findings indicated that both assistant principals and principals should be engaged in more tasks in each of the eight measured domains to be better equipped to assume the role of building leader.

Conclusions

Over the past several decades, the role of principal has changed. Today's principals must be leaders who can inform curricular change, lead faculty in data-driven decision making, keep abreast of innovative and diversified instructional strategies, and stay knowledgeable in the use of accountability measures for both staff and students (Wallace Foundation, 2011). There is no doubt that taking on the role of principal is a daunting task, and novice leaders become overwhelmed by the extreme responsibility that being principal brings (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Many preparation program leaders and decision makers, including Georgia and the GaPSC, which is the governing body over teacher and leader certification, have worked to reform preparation programs to assist in preparing aspiring leaders for this task. In order to investigate whether or not assistant principals in Georgia perceive their training is adequate, this research sought to investigate perceptions of assistant principals' and principals' about their preparation as viewed through the tasks each are or were assigned during their tenures as assistant principals.

Although the response rate for this survey was 29%, which was acceptable for the researcher due to the multiple reminders to potential participants and in the interest of time, the representation of the sampled population was uniformly distributed across school size, years of experience as assistant principal, and various other demographics. The survey

responses did provide the insight that current school leaders in Southeast Georgia indicated that assistant principals should be assigned more tasks that would assist in preparing them to become building leaders than those in which they presently engage on a regular basis. Results indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in every surveyed domain of what assistant principals should be doing compared to what they are doing. The statistically significant findings for the principal types for the domains of Human Resources, Organizational Management, and Planning as Assessment indicates that there is little difference between the ways assistant principals and principals rate the domains except in these three areas. This leads the researcher to believe that being a principal may provide a different perception after having done the job for some time.

For the most part, this study determined there are several areas of school leadership for which assistant principals believe themselves to be inadequately prepared to oversee. Although program reforms have occurred, there may be more significant changes in leadership preparation programs that may be needed to include a more job-imbedded approach to give assistant principals a hands-on experience throughout their preparation that would lead to more success once those leaders assume the role as principal.

Implications and Recommendations for Educational Leadership Practice

Melton, Mallory, Mays, and Chance (2012) found that many assistant principals do not believe they are prepared in all areas of leadership and/or management, particularly in the areas of instructional leadership. The findings of this study aligned with this conclusion and indicated there are still shortcomings that exist regarding principals and the training they receive as assistant principals. Although not all areas showed a statistical significance when analyzing the comparisons between principal types and should do versus regularly

do, there was enough evidence in this study to indicate that both assistant principals and principals perceived that they are still not being prepared adequately for assuming the role as building leader. Assistant principals believed they should be assigned more tasks in each measured domain than they are currently being assigned. Principals, with a more insightful view of what training would be beneficial, also indicated that assistant principals should be assigned more tasks in each measured domain than they are currently being assigned although at a mean score that was not quite as high.

This current data paints a clear picture that principal preparation is still lacking. While the state of Georgia has worked for a number of years to target the deficits that exist in principal preparation programs, aspiring school leaders still enter the role of principal feeling inadequately prepared for the challenges they may face, especially in areas of organizational management, human resources, and planning and assessment. Without key skills, encompassed by domains such as these, school leaders are entering the principalship ill-equipped to perform the duties necessary to move schools forward. This research study's findings supported the idea that principal preparation programs are still lacking.

Because principal preparation programs have fallen short despite continuous reform efforts, program developers should insist on a transitional program or a job-embedded induction program that may assist these leaders in gaining the essential skills needed to be successful as they take on the role of principal. Additionally, those principals who have risen to the role of building leader should mentor and mold the assistant principals for whom they assume responsibility to train and guide them toward a more prepared future. Programs for aspiring leaders as well as thoughtful tiered mentoring programs would benefit those who wish to pursue positions as principals.

Goodman and Berry (2013) asserted that, “the principal-assistant principal relationship is perhaps the single most important factor contributing to the quality of the assistant principal leadership development process” (p. xv). They continued by stating that the best principals view themselves as mentors giving rise to the need to consider mentoring as a valuable process through which assistant principals refine their skills and gain new ones (Goodman & Berry, 2013). Mentoring, as described in a literature review by Leavitt (2011), “is an important component in a larger, strategic initiative to build a cohesive and collaborative workforce, develop agile and savvy global leaders, and create a continuous learning culture that can effectively adapt to organizational and global change” (p. 2). With a focus on finding principals who are instructional leaders with the ability to create an atmosphere focused on teaching and learning to improve student achievement, there is a need to provide opportunities for assistant principals to engage in authentic leadership experiences with their principal as mentor (Wood, et al., 2013). This is the direction Georgia’s program leaders should consider when developing opportunities to shape and create the next generation of principal leadership.

Recommendations for Future Research

Existing research supports the idea that oftentimes principals are not prepared for their role as building leader when they assume it (Anast-May, Buckner, & Geer, 2011; Beam, Claxton & Smith, 2014; Braun, Gable, & Kite, 2011; Melton et al., 2012; Soho & Barnett, 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Furthermore, many scholars and practitioners have expressed their desire to see reform in principal preparation programs as school leadership directly impacts student achievement and the success of schools (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Marzano, Waters, & McNulty, 2005). However, there is still little

research that exists addressing how educational leaders and program developers can capitalize on the role of assistant principal to provide a more well-rounded, job-imbedded internship to better prepare these aspiring leaders to assume the role of principal, especially in the state of Georgia. Due to this study's constraints and methodology, this researcher makes the following suggestions for research expansion:

1. This research focused on a regional service agency in Southeast Georgia. The study could be replicated and expanded to include a better representation of participants from not only Georgia, but also regions all over the Southeast or even larger regions of the United States greatly increasing the number of participants.
2. This research focused on the perceptions of only principals and assistant principals. Increasing the participants to include superintendents, university personnel, as well as principals and assistant principals may provide a broader look into how principals are performing once they are assigned to their positions as well as the way they are being prepared at the university level.
3. Survey questions were used to gauge perceptions of current school leaders and data were collected quantitatively. A future study that may be more impactful would be to use a mixed-method approach where participants may offer insight into their responses and give a more in-depth response to their perceptions about their preparation. This further research could be used to draw additional conclusions about the extent to which job-imbedded preparation may have on an assistant principal's development or what other variables may contribute to the lack of preparation current assistant principals are experiencing.

Impact Statement

The problem this research intended to address is that assistant principals often feel inadequately prepared to assume the role of principal. There is currently a lack of research in this area and few studies have been conducted to address the problem this creates. This work adds to the lack of research that currently exists for this topic. It offers current school leaders' insight about their own experiences as assistant principals and whether or not they are assigned tasks in their role that assist in preparing them to become a principal. The impact this research may have regarding this problem lies in the information it could provide for decision makers and those who inform change for current preparation programs and practices. It may directly impact how leaders in this region of Southeast Georgia are currently being prepared and, therefore, provide current and relevant data. While it may not offer a complete solution, this research may add to the current existing body of research and how it can affect change in how assistant principals are being prepared for the role of building leader.

Furthermore, today's principals must delegate responsibilities to assistant principals and involve them in tasks on a regular basis that gives them access to the myriad of duties in which they (principals) participate daily. By providing these opportunities to assistant principals, not only will they be exposed to the various tasks in which principals engage, they will also become familiar with the daily routines of a principal, including tasks from each domain included in this research. Exposure to these tasks will ensure the skills needed to ease the transition that occurs when an assistant principal assumes the role of building leader. The principal is singularly responsible to guarantee an assistant principal's access to

these duties and activities. Until principals assume this responsibility, it is very possible that there will never be consistent preparation for those who aspire to building leadership.

Personal Reflection and Concluding Thoughts

Throughout this study, the researcher has served as a principal in a middle school and an elementary school. This will conclude her sixth year as a building leader after having served as an assistant principal for five years. The interest in this topic grew out of her realization that, after becoming a principal, she had not been adequately prepared to assume the role. Her desire throughout this process was to contribute to making this better for others who desired a similar career path. The researcher's primary objective in accomplishing this study was to determine if there were others out there who felt as she did and to perhaps inform program leaders and decision makers about the issue in order to create a solution or awareness that a change should occur.

The findings of this study did indicate that principals and assistant principals throughout her geographical region did, in fact, experience similar perceptions as she did. They specified that assistant principals are not always assigned tasks that prepare them for all aspects of the principalship. This researcher intends to share this study with decision makers and program leaders in Georgia in the hope of creating awareness that there are changes that need to be made in order to support aspiring educational leaders in their journey to building leadership and to inform change in the programs that are charged with preparing these future principals.

Dissemination

Several groups may be interested in the results of this study. System superintendents as well as principals of participating schools would be interested in the findings of this study as it would provide information about the perceptions their school leaders and their preparation for school leadership. Further, it may offer examples to preparation program leaders and decision makers about what improvements may be needed in order to increase the effectiveness of assistant principal preparation. The study will be placed in the Georgia Southern Library and disseminated through online databases in Galileo. Finally, the researcher plans to share the literature review of this study through professional publications.

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Appendix A

Dissertation Survey

I am a(n)
- ❍ Assistant Principal
- ❍ Principal

I work at a(n)
- ❍ Elementary School
- ❍ Middle School
- ❍ High School
- ❍ Other

Number of years of experience as Assistant Principal? ____years

Number of years of experience as Principal? ____years

Number of students enrolled at your school? _____students

Number of assistant principals in your school? _____APs

Q1 Instructional Leadership

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Articulates a vision and works collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a mission and programs consistent with the district's strategic plan.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Articulates a vision and works collaboratively with stakeholders to develop a mission and programs consistent with the district's strategic plan.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of instructional programs and	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

school improvement strategies to promote the achievement of academic standards.						
Provides the focus for continuous learning of all members of the school community and directs school staff to implement research-based instructional best practices in the classroom.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q2 School Climate

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Cultivates a positive environment focused on student learning.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Models respect and high expectations for all stakeholders and promotes mutual respect, empathy and concern for those stakeholders..	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Facilitates shared-decision making to build a collegial environment and supports staff and other stakeholders in the change process.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Develops and	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

implements a safety plan that addresses the day-to-day as well as crisis situations.						
Involves students, staff, parents, and the community to create a positive and safe learning environment reflective of state, local, and school policies and procedures.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Develops and communicates behavior management expectations that are implemented to provide a safe and effective learning environment.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q3 Planning and Assessment

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Implements collaboration strategies to involve staff and stakeholders in various planning processes for educational improvement.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Works collaboratively to develop and monitor progress toward achieving short and long-range goals and objectives aligned with the district's strategic plan and the school's improvement plan.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitors the use of research-based	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

strategies to plan, implement, support, and assess instructional programs for continuous school improvement.						
Assesses, plans for, responds to, and interacts with the political, social, economic, legal and cultural context to improve school effectiveness.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q4 Organizational Management

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Demonstrates and communicates a working knowledge and understanding of Georgia public education rules, regulations, and laws along with school district policies and procedures.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Establishes and enforces district rules and policies to ensure a safe, secure, and efficiently working school facility.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Monitors and provides supervision efficiently for all related	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

activities through an appropriately prioritized process.						
Identifies potential problems and deals with them in a timely, consistent, and effective manner.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Follows federal, state, and local policies with regard to finances school accountability, and reporting.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Plans and prepares procedures for maintaining a budget and reviewing fiscal records regularly to ensure they support the school's mission and goals.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Shares in management decisions and delegates duties as applicable, resulting in a	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

smoothly operating workplace.						
Responds to requests for information or help from various community groups, agencies, and other stakeholders.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q5 Human Resources Management

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Screens, recommends, and assigns highly qualified staff in a fair and equitable manner based on school needs, assessment data, and local, state, and federal requirements.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provides a mentoring process for all new and relevant instructional personnel and cultivates leadership potential through personal mentoring.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Manages the supervision and evaluation of	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

staff in accordance with local, state and federal requirements.						
Supports professional development and addresses barriers assists new hires in the development of effective instructional strategies increasing the retention of highly-qualified personnel.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Recognizes and supports the achievements of highly effective teachers and staff and provides them an opportunity for increased responsibility.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Serves on district-level curriculum and policy committees.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Prepares and implements the master	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

schedule.						
Makes appropriate personnel decisions in order to maintain a high a high performing faculty.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6 Teacher Evaluation

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Fosters mutual trust between the evaluator and the teacher being evaluated focusing on communication and collaboration.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provides timely support, resources, and remediation, documenting deficiencies and proficiencies in order to improve job performance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Evaluates employee performance using multiple sources consistent with district policies and maintains accurate evaluation records.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Works collaboratively with teachers and	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

staff to design and implement Professional Development Plans.						
Makes recommendations related to promotion and retention consistent with established policies and procedures keeping student achievement as a primary consideration.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q13 Professionalism

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Works with professional and ethical guidelines to improve student achievement and to meet school, district, state, and federal standards.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Models respect, understanding, sensitivity, and appreciation to all stakeholders.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Maintains a professional appearance and demeanor and maintains confidentiality along with a positive and forthright attitude.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Provides leadership in	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

sharing ideas and information with staff and other professionals.						
Works in a collegial and collaborative manner with other leaders, school personnel, and other stakeholders to promote and support the vision, mission, and goals of the district.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Promotes the importance of professional development by providing adequate time and resources for teachers and staff to participate in professional learning.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Evaluates the impact that professional learning has on school improvement and student achievement.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Assumes responsibility	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

for their own professional development by contributing to and supporting the development of the profession through service as an instructor, mentor, coach, presenter, and/or researcher						
Completes tasks and duties in a timely manner.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q8 Community and Community Relations

	Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals should engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.			Choose the answer that indicates tasks in which assistant principals do engage to help prepare them for the role of principal.		
	Not a critical activity	Routine activity, should engage to become principal	Very Important, must engage to become principal	Rarely engage	Routinely engage, expected of assistant principals	Very important, must engage to become principal
Routinely solicits staff, parent, and stakeholder input to promote effective decision-making and communication when appropriate.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Disseminates information to staff, parents, and other stakeholders in a timely manner through multiple channels and sources.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Creates a collaborative environment where all input is solicited and valued.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Maintains visibility, accessibility,	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

and communicates in a professional manner in both verbal and written.						
Collaborates and networks with colleagues and stakeholders to effectively utilize the resources and expertise available in the local community.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

APPENDIX B

Email to Superintendents

Dear (Superintendent's Name),

As a doctoral student at Georgia Southern University in the program of Educational Leadership, I am researching whether or not the duties and job-related tasks assigned to assistant principals prepare them to assume the role of principal. I am writing to ask for your cooperation in conducting my study, and for your permission to include the school principals within your county to participate in my research. I am limiting my research to the principals within First District RESA because the findings will be applicable to me in my educational career as an educational leader.

With your permission, I will email the attached survey to the principals in your county. It contains items related to the duties and responsibilities that are actually assigned to assistant principals as compared to those they feel would best prepare them to assume the role as building leader. It should take approximately twenty-five minutes to complete the questionnaire, and I will encourage participants to complete the survey during non-work hours. Participation is voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty. In order to maintain their anonymity of themselves and their schools, principals will complete the survey via a link that will be emailed to them. If you agree that the principals in your district can participate, please complete the attached letter of cooperation for the Georgia Southern University Institutional Review Board, and return it to me within two weeks, if possible. Please print the letter on your letterhead to verify your approval; I have provided a self-addressed stamped envelope for your convenience.

If you wish to receive a summary of the findings, please contact me via phone, mail, or e-mail and I will be happy to provide one.

Once again, thank you very much for your time, cooperation, and commitment to educational research. I look forward to your decision regarding your principals' participation. If you have any further questions regarding this study, you may contact me or my faculty advisor:

Title of Project: The Manifestation of Principal Training: Preparing Assistant Principals for Assuming the Role of Building Leader
Principal Investigator: April S. Hodges, 286 Boone Road, Guyton, GA 31312, (912)429-4283, ah01150@georgiasouthern.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Teri Ann Melton, 3107 College of Education Building, (912) 478-0510, tamelton@georgiasouthern.edu
Sincerely,

April S. Hodges

Doctoral Student
Georgia Southern University

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF COOPERATION

[Insert School District Letterhead]

October 31, 2016

Human Subjects - Institutional Review Board
Georgia Southern University
P.O. Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30461

To Whom It May Concern:

April S. Hodges has requested permission to collect research data from the principals in the First District RESA county of _____ through a project entitled The Manifestation of Principal Training: Preparing Assistant Principals for Assuming the Role of Building Leader. I have been informed of the purposes of the study and the nature of the research procedures. I have also been given an opportunity to ask questions of the researcher.

As the Superintendent of _____ county, I am authorized to grant permission to have the researcher recruit research participants from our schools. April S. Hodges is also permitted to collect research data through email to the principals through a survey format.

If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Sincerely,

Superintendent of _____ County

APPENDIX D

Permission to Use Survey

From: jkriekard@sfaz.org
Sent: Monday, June 10, 2015 12:09 PM
To: April Hodges
Subject: Permission to use survey

April,
Even though I am retired from Science Foundation Arizona, I still get some emails.
Yes, you have my permission to use my dissertation instrument.
For my curiosity, could tell me where you are located, what is your current position, and your dissertation topic. Thank you.
Good luck.
John A. Kriekard, Ed.D.

APPENDIX E

EMAIL COVER LETTER

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

DEPARTMENT OF LEADERSHIP

My name is April S. Hodges and I am a Doctoral student at Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, Georgia. I am currently enrolled in the Educational Leadership in the College of Education, and am in the process of completing my Doctoral Dissertation entitled "The Manifestation of Principal Preparation: Preparing Assistant Principals for Assuming the Role of Building Leader." The purpose of this research is to compare tasks that assistant principals are assigned versus ideal tasks they need to be assigned to prepare them to assume the role of principal. I would like to request your participation in this study.

Participation in this research will include completion of a 49-question survey that has been designed to collect information on the tasks that assistant principals are assigned in their role compared to tasks they should be assigned in order to help prepare them for the role of principal. There are minimal risks to completing the survey, potentially including discomfort, but no more than that encountered in everyday life. Your participation will generate several benefits to the educational research community, including more precise knowledge of the optimal tasks assistant principals need to be assigned in order to best prepare them for the role of building leader in First District RESA.

The survey should not take more than 25 minutes to complete, and can be easily submitted through the internet. I ask that you not complete this survey during school hours. There are no identifiers collected through this study. In other words, you cannot be identified by name in the data set or any reports using information obtained from this study, and your anonymity as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies, which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

There is no compensation or other incentive to participate in the survey, nor are there any additional costs that may result from your participation. Your participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, or leave blank any questions you don't wish to answer. There is no penalty for not participating in the study, and you may decide at any time that you do not want to participate, without penalty or retribution. You must be 18 years of age or older to consent to participate in this research study. If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please continue to the survey by clicking the link below. By completing the survey, you are indicating your consent to participate.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the GSU Institutional Review Board under

tracking number _____. If you have any questions about this study, please contact my faculty advisor or me; our contact information is located at the end of this informed consent. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant, please contact the Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at (912) 478-0843.

Title of Project: The Manifestation of Principal Preparation: Preparing Assistant Principals to Assume the Role of Building Leader

Principal Investigator: April S. Hodges, 286 Boone Rd. Guyton, GA 31312, (912) 429-4283, ah01150@georgiasouthern.edu
Faculty Advisor: Dr. Teri Ann Melton, 3107 College of Education Building, (912) 478-0510, tamelton@georgiasouthern.edu

Appendix F

IRB Approval Letter

Georgia Southern University
Office of Research Services & Sponsored Programs

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Phone: 912-478-5465
Fax: 912-478-0719
IRB@GeorgiaSouthern.edu
Veazey Hall 3000
PO Box 8005
Statesboro, GA 30460

To: Hodges, April; Melton, Teri

From: Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs
Administrative Support Office for Research Oversight Committees
(IACUC/IBC/IRB)

Approval Date: 10/30/2017

Subject: Status of Application for Approval to Utilize Human Subjects in Research

After a review of your proposed research project numbered **H18093** and titled **"The Manifestation of Principal Training: Preparing Assistant Principals for Assuming the Role of Building Leader"** it appears that your research involves activities that do not require full approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) according to federal guidelines. In this research project research data will be collected anonymously.

Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that the Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research **with the understanding that you will abide by the following conditions:**

- **In the following counties for which you have obtained letters of cooperation:**
  - **Liberty, Toombs, Screven, Jeff Davis, Tattnall, Wayne, Evans, Candler, Glynn, Long, Effingham, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden**

Additional counties may be added to this study by submitting additional letters of cooperation.

According to the Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, your research protocol is determined to be exempt from full review under the following exemption category(s):

B2 Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (I) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (II) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Any alteration in the terms or conditions of your involvement may alter this approval. *Therefore, as authorized in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, I am pleased to notify you that your research, as submitted, is exempt from IRB approval. No further action or IRB oversight is required, as long as the project remains the same. If you alter the project, it is your responsibility to notify the IRB and acquire a new determination of exemption. Because this project was determined to be exempt from further IRB oversight, this project does not require an expiration date.*

Sincerely,

Eleanor Haynes

Eleanor Haynes
Research Integrity Officer