

## **ABSTRACT**

Tim Locklair, ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF PREPARING ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS FOR THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN MOORE COUNTY (Under the direction of Dr. Kermit Buckner). Department of Educational Leadership, March 2019.

This problem of practice study attempted to address the challenge of preparing assistant principals for the principalship in Moore County. Across the nation and state, it is a challenge to fill vacant principalships with quality candidates. This problem is magnified in rural school districts. Moore County has had an over 34% principal turnover rate over the last two years. While this turnover on its own was not necessarily negative, it did indicate the strategic need for Moore County to build a pipeline of principal ready candidates. Utilizing a Plan, Do, Study, Act improvement science process, a school leadership academy that involved a small cohort of 9 assistant principals was designed and implemented to address this problem. The design included year-long face-to-face meetings; internal and external professional learning opportunities; standards-based leadership assessments; exposure to leadership experts; and a principal screening interview. The data and observations from this study indicate that this improvement strategy had a positive impact on the problem. Additional recommendations and implications are shared that are applicable to principal preparation programs and school district leadership development initiatives.



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGE OF PREPARING ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS  
FOR THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN MOORE COUNTY

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership

East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

by

Tim Locklair

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FOR THE PRINCIPALSHIP IN MOORE COUNTY

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## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this problem of practice dissertation to my family, including my wife Debbie and children Hailee and Coy. There were many times during the process that as a result of work and the obligations of writing a dissertation that I did not want to move forward. My family, especially my wife Debbie, consistently believed in me and encouraged me to keep moving forward. She would not accept my doubts and only supported me with positive encouragement and a strong belief that I would complete this process, and therefore, a lifelong educational goal. Thank you Family, without you, I would not have achieved this goal.

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## **CHAPTER 1: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The impact of strong school leadership on the achievement of students within a school and district has long been supported by the research and authorities in education (Brown, 2016). In recent years, the complexity of the principalship has increased. Principals are now faced with a myriad of political, managerial, human resource and academic challenges. The stress and demands of the position are significant (Brown, 2016). Principals are expected to build positive collaborative cultures, while at the same time sustaining continuous academic improvement. Myung, Loeb and Horng (2011) noted that although the need for highly effective principals has increased, many districts throughout the nation have been faced with shortages of highly qualified principal candidates. Pijanowski, Hewitt, and Brady (2009) noted that rural school systems are more challenged to find highly qualified candidates and experience higher principal shortages.

Many efforts have been made nationally and in North Carolina to address this problem through principal pipeline work. A principal pipeline is generally defined as having highly qualified individuals that are ready to serve as principals when a vacancy occurs within a school district (Bartoletti, Anthony, & McMillian, 2016).

National organizations like the Wallace Foundation have invested millions of dollars in grants to local school districts to enable them to create programs to develop effective and impactful school leaders who will eventually serve as principals (Bartoletti et al., 2016). Federal Race to the Top grants have supported work in North Carolina to address the significant need to have skilled school leaders to lead our most at risk schools. In North Carolina, Regional Alternative Licensure (RLA) centers were funded through these grants. The Northeast Leadership Academy, Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy and the Sandhills Leadership

Academy were all established as RLAs to train and certify talented individuals to become school administrators to serve as assistant principals and eventually principals (Brown, 2016).

### **Local Context of the Problem**

Moore County Schools is located in the south-central region of the North Carolina known as the Sandhills region. It is approximately three hours from the coast and the mountains of the state (County of Moore Website, 2018). The district has approximately 12,600 students, 2 K-2 primary schools, 2 3-5 elementary schools, 8 K-5 elementary schools, 2 K-8 schools, 5 6-8 middle schools, 3 high schools and 1 alternative school that serves students in grades 7-12. The district employs over 1,000 employees including over 700 teachers and 27 assistant principals.

The Moore County community is unique. The County of Moore Website (2018) notes Moore County is a large geographical county that is over 700 square miles. It is divided into a northern region that is much more rural and a southern region that is more suburban with larger urban centers. Moore County's population is over 70,000 and is a growing area with an influx of military connected families (County of Moore Website, 2018).

In the last 24 months, Moore County Schools, has replaced 8 out of 23 school principals and moved an early career principal back into an assistant principalship. The number is higher if you go back 36 months. This accounts for over 34% of our school principals. As noted by The North Carolina School Report Cards (2017) website descriptors:

It is natural for schools and school districts to see a certain amount of turnover in their employees in the same manner that a business or another organization might. However, it is still important to look at principal turnover as a measure of staff and school stability.

Frequent principal turnover-the loss of schools' leaders-can have a tremendous impact on school instructional programs and operating procedures.

In addition, the senior leadership of Moore County Schools is anticipating vacancies at the director level for several departments due to retirements and personal situations. These director level positions are synonymous to assistant superintendent positions in other districts. Many times, current principals are the best qualified to move up into the central office to serve in director level or other senior level administrative positions. This natural leadership transition, further emphasizes the local importance of preparing assistant principals to successfully transition into the principalship.

In analyzing the principal turnover rate each year in comparison to the state, Moore County schools has been near or significantly above the North Carolina State Average for 5 of the last 5 years as noted in the Table 1 (North Carolina School Reports Cards, 2017).

Moore County Schools is in direct competition with geographically neighboring districts to recruit and retain skilled building level administrators. In analyzing the principal turnover rate in comparison to the three geographical neighboring school districts of Hoke County, Harnett County and Richmond County, Moore County has the highest turnover rate in 4 of the last 5 years since 2013 (North Carolina State Report Cards, 2017). Table 2 demonstrates this comparison.

Further, Moore County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Robert P. Grimesey notes that principal turnover on its own is not necessarily a negative circumstance for a school district (R. Grimesey, personal communication, May 18, 2018). Dr. Grimesey emphasized that principal turnover due to healthy succession to district level vacancies demonstrates appropriate transition (personal communication, May 18, 2018). However, turnover due to bad fit or bad performance is not a positive for a school district (R. Grimesey, personal communication, May 18, 2018). He

Table 1

*Moore County Schools Principal Turnover Rate as Compared to the North Carolina Principals*

*Turnover Rate*

Year	Moore County Schools Principal Turnover Rate	North Carolina Principal Turnover Rate
2013	9%	10%
2014	13%	9%
2015	9%	10%
2016	17%	9%
2017	9%	9%

*Note.* North Carolina School Report Cards. (2017). Principal Turnover Rates [Data File]. Retrieved from [https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer\\_guest.jsp?reportPath=/ReportCard/NC\\_SRC&reportName=NC+Report+Cards](https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=/ReportCard/NC_SRC&reportName=NC+Report+Cards)

Table 2

*Moore County Schools Principal Turnover Rate as Compared to Three Geographical*

*Neighboring School Districts*

School District	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Moore County Schools	9%	13%	9%	17%	9%
Harnett County Schools	7%	11%	7%	14%	4%
Hoke County Schools	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Richmond County Schools	6%	12%	0%	6%	13%

*Note.* North Carolina School Report Cards. (2017). Principal Turnover Rates [Data File]. Retrieved from [https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer\\_guest.jsp?reportPath=/ReportCard/NC\\_SRC&reportName=NC+Report+Cards](https://ncreportcards.ondemand.sas.com/SASVisualAnalyticsViewer/VisualAnalyticsViewer_guest.jsp?reportPath=/ReportCard/NC_SRC&reportName=NC+Report+Cards)



noted that the Moore County Schools' principal turnover rate on its own may not be negative but at its core, it does demonstrate the strong need for Moore County Schools (2018) to target the strategic preparation of assistant principals to be ready to transition successfully into the principalship. Or in other words, create a leadership development framework to strategically grow a principal pipeline of prepared assistant principals.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Moore County Schools has too few assistant principals that are ready to take on the principalship. Moore County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Robert P. Grimesey, notes that of the 27 assistant principals currently serving in the district, only 4 to 5 of them are viable candidates to interview for any vacant principalship (personal communication, April 27, 2018). Securing high quality principals is critical to the success of schools and their ability to grow student success and achievement. Our superintendent and senior staff understand the critical need that the district has to grow and prepare its own assistant principals to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools currently employ 27 assistant principals. Some efforts have been made to begin to move towards creating a framework for developing the leadership capacity of the district's assistant principals. This has included an annual summer leadership conference and three assistant principal leadership meetings. However, our district does not have a systemic process for addressing the problem and the continued need to strategically develop and prepare our assistant principals.

The Moore County Board of Education also emphasized the importance of strong leadership as it has developed its 2018-2021 Moore County Schools District Strategic Plan. Each of the domains of the strategic plan require strong school leadership including student academic achievement; student safety, health and welfare; and employee culture and capacity (Moore

County Schools, 2018). Specifically, the domain of Employee Culture and Capacity notes that the district “provide support for leadership development and improvement” (Moore County Schools, 2018, p. 3).

Currently two senior level staff, the Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services and the Executive Officer for Academics and Student Support Services, are responsible for giving direct support and supervision to principals and for providing for strategic assistant principal development. One of the primary responsibilities of these two senior staff is to provide impactful professional development that continuously improves the leadership capacity of school administrators. North Carolina principals and assistant principals’ leadership capacity is evaluated through the use of the North Carolina School Executive Standards (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction [NCDPI], 2016). These executive standards are strategic leadership; instructional leadership; cultural leadership; human resource leadership; managerial leadership; external develop leadership, and micro-political leadership (NCDPI, 2016). The NCDPI (2016) also identifies 21 competencies that are “inherent in the successful performance of all of the [school executive] practices”. The support and development of these executive leadership standards and competencies from the Chief Officer and Executive Officer has been limited to monthly principal meetings and three assistant principal meetings each year.

The challenge that confronts Moore County Schools with a 34% turnover rate over the last 24 months, is preparing assistant principals to successfully transition into the principalship. Principal turnover rate is not a negative situation when examined in isolation. However, when analyzed over time, in comparison to other school districts and when analyzed in the broader context of leadership sustainability or principal pipeline work, it is clear that Moore County Schools has a distinct challenge. This challenge will be the focus of my problem of practice

dissertation. This work will include a review of appropriate literature. It will include research on the importance and impact of effective school leadership; a deep dive into the North Carolina School Executive Standards and Leadership Competencies; and information on other programs and research around assistant principal development work.

### **Definitions**

The following terms have been defined for clarification in understanding this study:

*Administrator (building level)*-For the purpose of this study, the educator who has executive authority for a school.

*Administrator (district level)*-For the purpose of this study, the educator who supervises building level administrators/ school executives/principals.

*Executive Standards (evaluation standards)*-For the purpose of this study, the standards that are used by the state of North Carolina to evaluate principals and assistant principals.

*Grow Your Own Program*-For the purpose of this study, this is the practice of school districts engaging with their building level administrators to continuously improve their leadership capabilities and prepare those administrators to take the next step in their careers.

*Principal Pipeline*-For the purposes of this study, a principal pipeline is generally defined as having highly qualified individuals that are ready to serve as principals when a vacancy occurs within a school district (Bartoletti et al., 2016).

*Leadership Development Framework*-For the purpose of this study, this is the overall plan for how leadership will be grown and continuously improved in Moore County Schools.

*Principal Turnover Rate*-For the purpose of this study, this is the percentage of total principals in a school district who leave their positions as measured on an annual or bi-annual basis.

*Leadership Competencies*-For the purpose of this study, these are leadership competencies and/or skills that drive and connect to The North Carolina School Executive Standards (NCDPI, 2016). These are further defined by NCDPI (2016) as a combination of skills and knowledge that one needs to effectively implement the standards and practices.

### **Organization of Problem of Practice**

This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter 1 presents a general introduction to the study; the compelling why behind the critical need to have effective school administrators; the local context; statement of the problem; and definition of terms appropriate to the study. Chapter 2 begins with further research to investigate the importance of school leadership. The chapter also includes a deep dive into the North Carolina Executive Standards and Competencies, and a review of the literature focusing on growing your own school administrator or principal pipeline programs. Chapter 3 presents an overview of the problem of practice, and the design of the assistant principal leadership development program in Moore County Schools. Chapter 4 describes the program developed with specific details based on the data collected as well as a description of the implementation of the program, including formative assessment results to refine the program throughout its implementation. Chapter 5 provides an overall summary of the study including addressing the development of a comprehensive leadership development framework to continuously improve and prepare school leaders for effective leadership in Moore County. The chapter also offers an analysis of the implementation of the improvement project along with conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Effective school leadership is critical to the success of a school and a school district. The job of the school administrator has become increasingly complex. Myung, Loeb and Horng (2011) note that school leadership positions today require leaders who possess a high level of skill to navigate a complex environment of accountability and expectations. It is critical that school districts have administrators who possess skills to lead even during these very complex and demanding times. Without effective leadership, student achievement suffers. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) performed a meta-analysis of 69 research studies that looked at specific behaviors of principal leadership and their measured impact on student achievement. These research studies reviewed in this meta-analysis involved over 2,800 schools, over 14,000 teachers and over 1,000,000 students (Marzano et al., 2005). Marzano et al. (2005) noted that the overall positive impact on student achievement of principal leadership as demonstrated from these studies was a .25 correlation. Marzano et al. (2005) further noted in Table 3 that the percentage of schools passing the summative assessment or test was significantly increased if the principal was rated in the top half of all principals.

When Marzano et al. (2005) dug even deeper to look at 21 specific behaviors or “responsibilities of the school leader” (p. 41) they found a positive correlational impact up to .33. Marzano et al. (2005, p. 41-64) identified these 21 responsibilities as:

- *Affirmation*-Recognizes and celebrates accomplishments and acknowledges failures.
- *Change Agent*-Is willing to challenge and actively challenges the status quo.
- *Contingent Rewards*-Recognizes and rewards individual accomplishments.

Table 3

*Interpretation of Correlation*

Principal Rating	Percentage of Schools Passing the Test	Percentage of Schools Failing the Test
Schools with Principals Rated in the Top Half of All Principals Based on Leadership Effectiveness	62.5%	37.5%
Schools with Principals Rated in the Bottom Half of All Principals Based on Leadership Effectiveness	37.5%	62.5%

*Note.* Interpretation of Correlation of .25 in Terms of Expected Passing Rates for Schools, Depending on Leadership Effectiveness. Principals rated in the top half of all principals significantly impact the achievement outcomes at their respective schools. From *School leadership that works: From research to results*, Marzano et al. (2005). Copyright 2005 by Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning.

- *Communication*-Establishes strong lines of communication with and among teachers and students.
- *Culture*-Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation.
- *Discipline*-Protects teachers from issues and influences that would detract from their teaching time or focus.
- *Flexibility*-Adapts his or her leadership behavior to the needs of the current situation and is comfortable with dissent.
- *Focus*-Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention.
- *Ideals/Beliefs*-Communicates and operates from strong ideals and beliefs about schooling.
- *Input*-Involves teachers in the design and implementation of important decisions and policies.
- *Intellectual Stimulation*-Ensures faculty and staff are aware of the most current theories and practices and makes the discussion of these a regular aspect of the school's culture.
- *Involvement in Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*-Is directly involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.
- *Knowledge of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*-Is knowledgeable about current curriculum, instruction and assessment practices.
- *Monitoring/Evaluating*-Monitors the effectiveness of school practices and their impact on student learning.
- *Optimizer*-Inspires and leads new and challenging innovations.

- *Order*-Establishes a set of standard operation procedures and routines.
- *Outreach*-Is an advocate and spokesperson for the school to all stakeholders.
- *Relationships*-Demonstrates an awareness of the personal aspects of teachers and staff.
- *Resources*-Provides teachers with materials and professional development necessary for the successful execution of their jobs.
- *Situational Awareness*-Is aware of the details and undercurrents in the running of the school and uses this information to address current and potential problems.
- *Visibility*-Has quality contact and interactions with teachers and students.

Of these 21 behaviors, 10 had a .25 or higher correlational impact on student academic performance. These were change agent; culture; discipline; flexibility; input; knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment; monitoring/evaluating; order; outreach; and resources (Marzano et al., 2005, p. 41).

In addition, Hallinger and Heck (1998) noted in their review of research on the impact of principal leadership on student achievement from 1980-1995, that although small, effective principal leadership has a statistically significant impact on student achievement. Hallinger and Heck (1998) note that it is evident that principals impact school effectiveness and a school's continuous improvement.

The overall importance of leadership on the success of any organization is prevalent in research overall. Northouse's (2016) *Leadership: Theory and Practice* is well regarded as an overall review of the theories behind leadership and the many styles of leadership. Northouse (2016) notes that "leadership is a highly sought-after and highly valued commodity" (p. 1).



Northouse (2016) also notes that leadership is extremely complex and is a mixture of both leadership traits and managerial qualities.

Huguet (2017) notes that school districts across the nation are struggling with identifying factors that can address poor school performance. School districts are finding that effective and focused leadership is critical in a school implementing a successful mission and vision (Huguet, 2017). Huguet (2017) further notes that districts that find school leaders that build a sense of trust and confidence collaboratively as a school staff, those leaders then empower that staff to dig into standards and assessment results to continuously improve the school.

Superintendents across the nation prioritize the importance of hiring effective and impactful building level administrators. Pijanowski et al. (2009) surveyed 197 superintendents about their perceptions of the factors related to the perceived national principal shortage. Pijanowski et al. (2009) found that superintendents hold a high value on the importance of hiring highly qualified and skilled principals. Pijanowski et al. (2009) found that superintendents directly linked having effective building level administrators with their own career success. Moore County Schools' Superintendent Dr. Robert P. Grimesey, also notes the importance of having effective principals who are reflective and can lead positive collaborative cultures focused on continuous improvement (personal communication, May 16, 2018). Further, Mendels (2012) notes that the Wallace Foundation and many school districts have found that utilizing rigorous principal standards is an effective strategy for the continuous development and professional growth of building level administrators. Additionally, Mendels (2012) notes that principal standards "create clear, rigorous job requirements detailing what principals and assistant principals must know and do" (p. 49).

## North Carolina School Executive Standards

In 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction created the North Carolina Standards of School Administrators or School Executives (NCDPI, 2016). In the description of the standards, the NCDPI (2016) developed the standards:

as a guide for principals and assistant principals as they continually reflect upon and improve their effectiveness as leaders throughout all of the stages of their careers.

Although there are many influences on a school executive's development, these standards will serve as an important tool for principals and assistant principals as they consider their growth and development as executives leading schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. (p. 2)

The NCDPI (2016) also noted that these standards not only serve as evaluation tools but will serve to inform higher education programs; help focus school district's support of their school administrators; provide guidance in the development of professional learning opportunities for school administrators; and provide guidance for the mentoring and coaching of school based administrator.

The NCDPI organized the standards by standard and supporting elements. Seven standards were developed. The NCDPI's (2011, p. 1-3) seven school executive standards and supporting elements are:

1. Standard One: Strategic Leadership. The principal leads the school staff in constant reflection of their vision, mission, and goals. The administrator guides the school through constant inquiry on how it prepares students for the future.

Elements:

- a. School Vision, Mission, and Strategic Goals

- b. Leading Change
  - c. School Improvement Plan
  - d. Distributive Leadership
2. Standard Two: Instructional Leadership. The principal creates an environment in which the staff is accountable for the performance of their students. The administrator leads the staff in the use of the best instructional practices and spurs collaboration between teachers.

Elements:

- a. Focus on Learning and Teaching, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
  - b. Focus on Instructional time
3. Standard Three: Cultural Leadership. The principal fosters a positive school culture focused on student achievement. He or she understands school traditions and values and uses them to create a sense of pride. When necessary, the principal leads the school community to shape its culture into a more positive one.

Elements:

- a. Focus on Collaborative Work Environment
  - b. School Culture and Identity
  - c. Acknowledges Failures; Celebrates Accomplishment and Rewards
  - d. Efficacy and Empowerment
4. Standard Four: Human Resource Leadership. The principal creates a professional learning community through recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development, and retention of high-performing staff.

Elements:

- a. Professional Development/Learning Communities
  - b. Recruiting, Hiring, Placing and Mentoring of Staff
  - c. Teacher and Staff Evaluation
5. Standard Five: Managerial Leadership. The principal organizes the school and its systems in a manner that ensures efficiency and effectiveness in practices.

Elements:

- a. School Resources and Budget
  - b. Conflict Management and Resolution
  - c. Systematic Communication
  - d. School Expectations for Students and Staff
6. Standard Six: External Development Leadership. The principal engages the community in the support and ownership of its schools.
- Elements:
- a. Parent and Community Involvement and Outreach
  - b. Federal, State, District Mandates
7. Standard Seven: Micro-political Leadership. The principal uses diversity and constructive differences between staff members to push the school toward its goals. The administrator uses his or her awareness of staff needs, issues, and interests to build cohesion.

In summing up these seven standards, the NCDPI (2016) expressed that the standards are interconnected and that “[a school] executive’s abilities in each standard will impact their ability to perform effectively in other standard areas” (p. 3).

## **North Carolina School Leadership Competencies**

In developing the seven school executive standards and supporting elements, the NCDPI (2016) noted that there are many leadership competencies that each administrator either must be able to execute themselves or put members of a team around them that can “efficiently and effectively execute them” (p. 18). The NCDPI (2016, p. 18-19) listed 21 leadership competencies that are essential:

- Communication – Effectively listens to others; clearly and effectively presents and understands information orally and in writing; acquires, organizes, analyzes, interprets, maintains information needed to achieve school or team 21st century objectives.
- Change Management – Effectively engages staff and community in the change process in a manner that ensures their support of the change and its successful implementation.
- Conflict Management – Anticipates or seeks to resolve confrontations, disagreements, or complaints in a constructive manner.
- Creative Thinking – Engages in and fosters an environment for others to engage in innovative thinking.
- Customer Focus – Understands the students as customers of the work of schooling and the servant nature of leadership and acts accordingly.
- Delegation – Effectively assigns work tasks to others in ways that provide learning experiences for them and in ways that ensure the efficient operation of the school.

- Dialogue/Inquiry – Is skilled in creating a risk free environment for engaging people in conversations that explore issues, challenges or bad relationships that are hindering school performance.
- Emotional Intelligence – Is able to manage oneself through self-awareness and self-management and is able to manage relationships through empathy, social awareness and relationship management. This competency is critical to building strong, transparent, trusting relationships throughout the school community.
- Environmental Awareness – Becomes aware and remains informed of external and internal trends, interests and issues with potential impacts on school policies, practices, procedures and positions.
- Global Perspective – Understands the competitive nature of the new global economy and is clear about the knowledge and skills students will need to be successful in this economy.
- Judgment – Effectively reaching logical conclusions and making high quality decisions based on available information. Giving priority and caution to significant issues. Analyzing and interpreting complex information.
- Organizational Ability – Effectively plans and schedules one’s own and the work of others so that resources are used appropriately, such as scheduling the flow of activities and establishing procedures to monitor projects.
- Personal Ethics and Values – Consistently exhibits high standards in the areas of honesty, integrity, fairness, stewardship, trust, respect, and confidentiality.
- Personal Responsibility for Performance – Proactively and continuously improves performance by focusing on needed areas of improvement and enhancement of

strengths; actively seeks and effectively applies feedback from others; takes full responsibility for one's own achievements.

- Responsiveness – Does not leave issues, inquiries or requirements for information go unattended. Creates a clearly delineated structure for responding to requests/situations in an expedient manner.
- Results Orientation – Effectively assumes responsibility. Recognizes when a decision is required. Takes prompt action as issues emerge. Resolves short-term issues while balancing them against long-term goals.
- Sensitivity – Effectively perceives the needs and concerns of others; deals tactfully with others in emotionally stressful situations or in conflict. Knowing what information to communicate and to whom. Relating to people of varying ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.
- Systems Thinking – Understands the interrelationships and impacts of school and district influences, systems and external stakeholders, and applies that understanding to advancing the achievement of the school or team.
- Technology – Effectively utilizes the latest technologies to continuously improve the management of the school and enhance student instruction.
- Time Management – Effectively uses available time to complete work tasks and activities that lead to the achievement of desired work or school results. Runs effective meetings.
- Visionary – Encourages Imagineering by creating an environment and structure to capture stakeholder dreams of what the school could become for all the students.

The NCDPI (2016) further notes that these 21 leadership competencies “are obviously inherent in the successful performance of all of the practices listed under each of the seven critical functions [standards] of leadership” (p. 18).

### **Principal Pipeline Work**

Over the last several years, grow your own administrator or principal pipeline work has been a focus of school districts across the nation. Myung, Loeb and Horng (2011) noted that although the need for highly effective principals has increased, many districts throughout the nation have been faced with shortages of highly qualified principal candidates. Pijanowski et al. (2009) noted that rural school systems are more challenged to find highly qualified candidates and experience higher principal shortages. These challenges have pushed districts to look at strategies to grow their own administrators or create a leadership development framework that would result in an effective pipeline of candidates ready to take on the principalship.

National organizations like the Wallace Foundation have invested millions of dollars in grants to local school districts to enable them to create programs to develop effective and impactful school leaders who will eventually serve as principals (Bartoletti et al., 2016). The Wallace Foundation’s work and money has focused on supporting school districts attempting to answer the question “how can districts [we] develop a pipeline of great school principals” (Mendels, 2017, p. 6). The Wallace Foundation supported the work of six urban districts to build effective principal pipelines (Mendels, 2017). The districts were Charlotte-Mecklenburg, NC; Denver, CO ; Gwinnett County, GA; Hillsborough County, FL; New York City, NY; and Prince George’s County, MD (Mendels, 2017). Each of these districts developed a pipeline that was based around key components. These were leader standards that define role of the principalship; high quality preservice professional learning; effective and high quality hiring processes; and



effective and impactful principal evaluation processes (Mendels, 2017). These districts saw overall success from their focus on building high quality candidates to move into their vacant principalships (Mendels, 2017). While challenges still exist, the review of their programs noted that these districts plan to sustain their leadership development frameworks into the future (Mendels, 2017).

Principal pipeline work has also taken place at the state level. Federal Race to the Top grants have supported work in North Carolina to address the significant need to have skilled school leaders to lead our most at risk schools. In North Carolina, Regional Alternative Licensure (RLA) centers were funded through these grants. The Northeast Leadership Academy, Piedmont Triad Leadership Academy and the Sandhills Leadership Academy were all established as RLAs to train and certify talented individuals to become school administrators to serve as assistant principals and eventually principals (Brown, 2016). This work centered around preparing to turn around principals or administrators that could lead transformational change (Brown, 2016). Each regional leadership academy, organized into three cohorts of aspiring administrators. These aspiring administrators completed coursework to receive their masters of school administration and served year-long internships in high needs schools (Brown, 2016). Approximately 70% of these aspiring administrators found positions, most in the assistant principalship but some in the principalship (Brown, 2016). Overall, most regional leadership academy superintendents were very supportive of the leadership academies and highly satisfied with the quality of candidates that the academies had produced (Brown, 2016).

Other districts across North Carolina have worked to create leadership development frameworks that would create effective pipelines to the principalship. Recently, the Wake County Public School System has also realized that just depending on administrators to learn on their

own is not sufficient to produce high quality administrators prepared for the principalship (WakeEd Partnership, 2018). Wake County Public Schools' Senior Leadership has created a framework that includes support for current principals, assistant principals and aspiring administrators (WakeEd Partnership, 2018). Additionally, the Wake County Public School System has partnered with NC State University to redesign the university's school leadership development program. An emphasis will be put on the internship experience that most NC State school administration students perform in the Wake County Public School System (WakeEd Partnership, 2018). Wake is one of many districts that are looking at innovative strategies to create leadership development frameworks that create effective principal pipelines.

## **CHAPTER 3: PROBLEM OF PRACTICE DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY**

Moore County Schools has too few assistant principals that are ready to take on the principalship. As noted in Tables 1 and 2, Moore County Schools principal turnover rate is at or above the North Carolina principal turnover rate and above the principal turnover rate of our geographical neighboring school districts 4 of the last 5 years. This turnover rate coupled with the natural progression of principals into senior level positions in the district central office, magnifies the need for strong assistant principals who are prepared to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Robert P. Grimesey, notes that of the 27 assistant principals currently serving in the district, only 4 to 5 of them are viable candidates to interview for any vacant principalship (personal communication, April 27, 2018). Securing high quality principals is critical to the success of schools and their ability to grow student success and achievement. Research has shown that effective school leadership has a statistically significant impact on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). Our superintendent and senior staff understand the critical need that the district has to grow and prepare its own assistant principals to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools currently employ 27 assistant principals. Some efforts have been made to begin to move towards creating a framework for developing the leadership capacity of the district's assistant principals. This has included an annual summer leadership conference and three assistant principal leadership meetings. However, our district does not have a systemic process for addressing the problem and the continued need to strategically develop and prepare our assistant principals.

In researching and seeking to positively impact this problem, I would use the Plan Do Study Act (PDSA) methodology (Langley, Moen, Nolan, Nolan, Norman, & Provost, 2009).

Langley et al. (2009) emphasizes the use of three fundamental questions that drive the PDSA methodology. These are:

1. What are we trying to accomplish?
2. How will we know that a change is an improvement?
3. What changes can we make that will result in improvement?

These questions correlate with the five fundamental principles of improvement that are: knowing why you need to improve; ensuring you have a feedback mechanism to tell you if the improvement is happening; developing an effective strategy to improve the problem; testing that strategy; and using the information and data that you gather from that process to modify the strategy or permanently implement the change (Langley et al., 2009). As Langley et al. (2009) explains the PDSA “cycle begins with a plan and ends with action according to the learning gained from the Plan, Do and Study phases of the cycle.”

Langford (2014) further explains the importance of the PDSA cycle in school or district improvement. Langford (2014) notes that “planning is a learning and improvement process. It is how we learn about our organization and improve it” (p. 4). Effective planning is essential to determine what an organization is attempting to achieve and being clear on the future the organization is attempting to create (Langford, 2014). According to Langford (2014) “in its simplest form, planning can be described as the formulation of a theory or hypothesis—a prediction for how best to proceed. Thus, theory shapes the activity of the organization” (Langford, 2014, p. 4). This theory includes specific action steps that the organization will implement to attack the problem the organization is attempting to improve. The creation of the theory of improvement and the action steps of the theory become the Plan and Do part of the Plan Do Study Act improvement cycle (Langford, 2014).

The Do part of the improvement cycle allows the organization to test its theory of improvement or hypothesis (Langford, 2014). An organization is able to use the experience and observations of the cycle to gather data to make objective decisions about the success of the improvement strategy based on the data that is collected during the Do part of the improvement cycle. An organization then reflects on this data during the Study part of the improvement cycle (Langford, 2014). Langford (2014) explains that “measures are critical to the process of reflection. They provide the means to assess the degree to which improvement has been achieved” (Langford, 2014, p. 5). This reflection then drives the Act part of the improvement cycle. Through reflection, the strategy or theory of action is analyzed and refined as needed and put back into action to continue to improve the problem. Langford (2014) notes that

Applying this approach to organizational planning does not guarantee that everything will go smoothly. However, when things don’t go as expected, this is also a source of learning. Future plans can be better informed, and therefore more likely to succeed (p. 5).

Utilizing the PDSA improvement cycle, with the support and approval of the Moore County Schools Superintendent, the Moore County Schools’ Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services (Chief Officer) will design a leadership development framework to target the growth of a small cohort of assistant principals. The design of this improvement strategy will be guided by the PDSA improvement cycle. First, the improvement strategy or theory of improvement to attack the problem, will be designed as a school leadership academy for a small cohort of 8-10 assistant principals. This will serve as the Plan and Do part of the improvement cycle. Moore County Schools employs 27 assistant principals and only a small number of these assistant principals are viable candidates for vacant principalships (R. Grimesey, personal communication, April 27, 2018). The school leadership academy would serve as the

beginnings of a leadership development framework that would build the leadership capacity of assistant principals to be prepared to transition into the principalship or in athletic terminology, create a strong bench of assistant principals who are ready to step in the game and take on the leadership challenges of a principalship. As documented in Appendix C, the Chief Officer along with the Executive Officer for Academics and Students Support Services (Executive Officer) will offer the opportunity for interested assistant principals to apply to be part of the school leadership academy. The application requirements include submitting their interest through an updated resume; the submission of a reference letter from their current principal; and the submission of a writing sample based on three school leadership related reflection questions. These reflection questions will require applicants, with a word limit, to share a brief belief statement about their school leadership philosophy, reflections about their behaviors as an instructional leader and the applicant will be asked to define intentional and purposeful cultural leadership that creates and builds a positive and collaborative culture. Lastly, an interview will be conducted for those considered to be part of the cohort. Applicants will be chosen through these processes to be part of the School Leadership Academy.

The school leadership academy will offer learning opportunities designed at growing each assistant principal's leadership capabilities and strive to prepare them for the principalship in Moore County Schools. Each cohort member will participate in the Flippen Group's Leadership Blueprint training (Flippen, 2016) at the district's Summer Leadership Conference August 1-2, 2018. Flippen (2016) describes the approach to the Leadership Blueprint training as "an immersive, participatory experience, not a theoretical or motivational lecture. Leaders learn and practice skills they will use and model on a daily basis. The Flippen (2016) Profile provides the basis for an action plan for continued and professional development" (p. 1). This Flippen

Profile will be utilized by each cohort participant to develop their own professional growth goals. These growth goals will be shared and followed up on through the school leadership academy.

School leadership academy cohort members will attend the North Carolina Principal and Assistant Principal Association's (NCPAPA) seminar titled School Finance for School Leaders: Maximizing Every Dollar (NCPAPA, 2018). NCPAPA (2018) describes the desired outcomes of this seminar are to help school administrator's growth in the areas of:

Understand that they must learn how to do more with less; creative use of budgetary resources is a must for principals who are charged with the responsibility of meeting the highest student performance standards; this seminar will focus on what all school leaders should know about public school finance in North Carolina; and school leaders will learn how to creatively, but legally, manage and maximize their school budgets and resources in ways that lead to greater staff and student support (p. 1).

School leadership academy cohort members will also attend the North Carolina Association of School Administrators' (NCASA) 2019 Conference on Educational Leadership. The NCASA (2018) Conference on Educational Leadership is statewide conference that focuses on the "capacity, initiative, foresight [and] influence" (p. 1) of educational leadership. It is designed as a comprehensive learning conference with general and breakout learning sessions on the various strands of educational leadership (NCASA, 2018). The conference will be held in Raleigh, NC in March, 2018. This overnight conference will also give the Chief and Executive Officers an opportunity to network with the cohort and assess the cohort at a comprehensive learning conference.

Monthly school leadership academy cohort meetings will be held beginning with the Moore County Schools' Summer Leadership Conference in August, 2018. Meetings will be

focused on building the leadership capacity of each assistant principal. The learning topics will be driven by the NCDPI School Executive Standards that include strategic leadership; instructional leadership; cultural leadership; human resource leadership; managerial leadership; external development leadership; and micro-political leadership (NCDPI, 2011). The meeting learning topics will also be driven by the NCDPI's 21 school leadership competencies. These include communication; change management; conflict management; creative thinking; customer focus; delegation; dialogue/inquiry; emotional intelligence; environmental awareness; global perspective; judgement; organizational ability; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; responsiveness; results orientation; sensitivity; systems thinking; technology; time management; and visionary. Learning topics driven by these North Carolina standards and competencies will be coupled with district priorities driven by the Moore County Schools Strategic Plan that include effective and impactful school improvement, effective facilitation of professional learning communities and instructional leadership. Lastly, these monthly meetings will give each participant to collaborate around their professional learning goals driven by their Flippen Profile.

School leadership academy cohort participants will have the opportunity to observe school leadership at a different school site for up to a week. The Chief and Executive Officers will work with school principals to offer switch out opportunities for cohort participants to visit other schools and work closely with successful principals in a different setting. The desired outcome of this learning activity is to provide them a different experience to observe the leadership strengths and potential weakness of a successful principal. In addition, the cohort participant may potentially experience a different grade level and or a different school demographic.



As a culminating activity in the school leadership academy, cohort members will participate in a principal screening interview to provide feedback for continuous improvement. Each cohort member will participate in a screening interview that will mirror the district's principal selection process. Cohort members will be interviewed by a panel that will include the Chief and Executive Officer, principals and other senior staff. Questions will be designed and driven by both the North Carolina Department of Instruction School Executive Standards and School Leader Competencies and based on the needs of the Moore County School District. Cohort members will receive detailed feedback from their respective interviews by the Chief and Executive Officers. This feedback will include noted strengths and areas of focus for continued growth.

Langford (2014) notes "measures are critical to the process of reflection" (p. 5). Further, data collection allows for the appropriate reflection to take place to measure the success of the improvement strategy intended to attack and improve the problem. Therefore, it will be critical that the Chief Officer measure if the school leadership academy improves the problem it was intended to solve, the lack of quality assistant principal candidates for vacant principalships. In order to measure the effectiveness of the academy, five data sources will be used:

1. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina Executive Standards survey from all school leadership academy participants
2. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina Executive Standards survey from school leadership academy participant supervisors
3. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina School Leadership Competencies survey from all school leadership academy participants

4. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina School Leadership Competencies survey from school leadership academy participant supervisors
5. Results of the principal screening interviews of the school leadership academy participants

The data from these sources will allow the Chief Officer to study the impact of the school leadership academy in solving the problem of practice and if an improvement had been made in the number of assistant principals who are better prepared to take on a principalship in Moore County Schools. As Langley et al. (2009) explains that “the use of the word *study* in the third phase of the [PDSA] cycle emphasizes that the purpose of this phase is to build new knowledge” (p. 25). Therefore, the Chief Officer will utilize the data or new knowledge gathered to measure if the school leadership academy made a positive impact on the problem of practice. In addition, the Chief Officer will analyze what modifications and refinements should be made to the academy and how it can be used as we continue to build a leadership development framework in Moore County Schools to improve the problem and build an effective principal pipeline.

Chapter 3 restated problem and described the overall design of the improvement strategy to attack and improve the problem of practice. An overview of the Plan Do Study Act improvement cycle was provided. Data from the school leadership academy participants and their supervising principals will be gained to measure the impact of the improvement strategy on the problem of practice. The knowledge gained from this problem of practice work will impact the design and implementation of a robust future leadership development framework for Moore County Schools.

## **CHAPTER 4: IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY AND PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION**

The impact of strong school leadership on the achievement of students within a school and district has long been supported by the research and authorities in education (Brown, 2016). In recent years, the complexity of the principalship has increased. Principals are now faced with a myriad of political, managerial, human resource and academic challenges. The stress and demands of the position are significant (Brown, 2016). Principals are expected to build positive collaborative cultures, while at the same time sustaining continuous academic improvement. Myung, Loeb and Horng (2011) noted that although the need for highly effective principals has increased, many districts throughout the nation have been faced with shortages of highly qualified principal candidates. Pijanowski et al. (2009) noted that rural school systems are more challenged to find highly qualified candidates and experience higher principal shortages.

Moore County Schools has too few assistant principals that are ready to take on the principalship. As noted in Tables 1 and 2, Moore County Schools principal turnover rate is at or above the North Carolina principal turnover rate and above the principal turnover rate of our geographical neighboring school districts 4 of the last 5 years. This turnover rate coupled with the natural progression of principals into senior level positions in the district central office, magnifies the need for strong assistant principals who are prepared to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Robert P. Grimesey, notes that of the 27 assistant principals currently serving in the district, only 4 to 5 of them are viable candidates to even interview for any vacant principalship (personal communication, April 27, 2018). Securing high quality principals is critical to the success of schools and their ability to grow student success and achievement. Research has shown that effective school leadership has

a statistically significant impact on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). The Moore County Schools superintendent and senior staff understand the critical need that the district has to grow and prepare its own assistant principals to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools currently employ 27 assistant principals. Some efforts have been made to begin to move towards creating a framework for developing the leadership capacity of the district's assistant principals. This has included an annual summer leadership conference and three assistant principal leadership meetings. However, our district does not have a systemic process for addressing the problem and the continued need to strategically develop and prepare our assistant principals.

### **Overall Design**

Utilizing the PDSA improvement cycle, to address this problem the Moore County Schools' Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services (Chief Officer) designed a leadership development framework to target the growth of a small cohort of assistant principals. The design of this improvement strategy was guided by the PDSA improvement cycle. Representing the Plan and Do part of the improvement cycle, a school leadership academy for a small cohort of 8-10 assistant principals was designed as an improvement strategy or theory of improvement to attack the problem. Moore County Schools employs 27 assistant principals and only a small number of these assistant principals are viable candidates for vacant principalships (R. Grimesey, personal communication, April 27, 2018). The school leadership academy was designed to serve as the beginnings of a leadership development framework that would build the leadership capacity of assistant principals to be prepared to transition into the principalship or in athletic terminology, create a strong bench of assistant principals who are ready to step in the game and take on the leadership challenges of a principalship. The original design, as

documented in Appendix E, included face to face meetings; professional learning opportunities; observations of school leadership at another school site; leadership assessments; and participation in a principal screening interview.

Following the PDSA cycle, it was imperative that the school leadership academy design included a measurement tool to monitor the impact of the academy on the problem it was intended to solve, the lack of quality assistant principal candidates for vacant principalships. Due to the time constraints of the improvement project and a delay of the initial assessment until after a delay from Hurricane Florence, it became evident to the Chief Officer that utilizing a North Carolina Executive Standards assessment survey and a North Carolina School Leadership Competencies assessment survey to the school leadership academy participants and their respective supervisors would not be effective. Therefore, the original measurement tools were modified to only include the following data sources to measure the effectiveness of the academy at improving the problem:

1. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina School Leadership Competencies survey from all school leadership academy participants
2. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina School Leadership Competencies survey from school leadership academy participant supervisors
3. Results of the principal screening interviews of the school leadership academy participants

As documented in Appendix C, the Chief Officer along with the Executive Officer for Academics and Students Support Services (Executive Officer) offered the opportunity for interested assistant principals to apply to be part of the school leadership academy. The application requirements included submitting their interest through an updated resume; the

submission of a reference letter from their current principal; and the submission of a writing sample based on three school leadership related reflection questions. These reflection questions required applicants, with a word limit, to share a brief belief statement about their school leadership philosophy, reflections about their behaviors as an instructional leader and the applicant was asked to define intentional and purposeful cultural leadership that creates and builds a positive and collaborative culture. Lastly, an interview was to be conducted for those considered to be part of the cohort.

During July, 2018, nine assistant principals who had applied to be part of the school leadership academy were brought in for interviews. As documented in Appendix F, the Chief Officer along with the Executive Officer interviewed each candidate utilizing six questions focused on the candidate's perceptions of their leadership strengths, weaknesses and their desired outcomes for participating in the program. Each interview took approximately thirty minutes. The results of the interviews along with a review of each candidate's application was used to determine acceptance into the school leadership academy. All nine candidates were accepted into the School Leadership Academy Cohort and notified on July 18, 2018.

### **Leadership Blueprint Training**

As documented by Appendix G, the cohort's first meeting took place during the 2018 Moore County Schools Summer Leadership Conference on July 31, 2018 through August 2, 2018. This was a three-day leadership conference that included all assistant principals, principals and district central office leadership on day one. This day included an overview of the district's instructional focus for the school year and updates on various managerial leadership topics. On day two and three of the conference the nine School Leadership Academy Cohort members along with all principals and district central office leadership participated in the Flippen Group's

Leadership Blueprint training (Flippen, 2016). Fifteen of 23 schools in Moore County have had staff training in the Flippen Group's Capturing Kids Hearts training (Flippen, 2019). Capturing Kids Hearts training is focused on building specific skills in teachers and staff to build a relational connection to students (Flippen, 2019). The training focuses on adult behaviors. Moore County Schools has seen considerable impact from this training and therefore had high interest in building the leadership capacity of our leaders through the Flippen Group's Leadership Blueprint training (Flippen, 2016).

Flippen (2016) describes the approach to the Leadership Blueprint training as “an immersive, participatory experience, not a theoretical or motivational lecture. Leaders learn and practice skills they will use and model on a daily basis. Each School Leadership Academy participant asked 6 colleagues to participate in completing a 360 profile describing the cohort member. This 360 feedback was used to build the Flippen (2016) Profile for each cohort member. The Flippen (2016) profile provides the basis for an action plan for continued and professional development” (p. 1). Through the 2 days of training cohort participants received their respective profiles and had the opportunity to dig into their respective ratings on 13 leadership characteristics. These included urgency and intensity; need to nurture; criticality; energy and expressiveness; self-confidence; self-critical; need for encouragement; dominance; deference; self-control; aggressiveness; need for order; and need for change (Flippen, 2016). Each cohort participant learned more about their respective personal constraints and utilized their top 3 personal constraints to develop a TrAction Plan as documented in Appendix O (Flippen, 2016). This TrAction Plan required cohort participants to make a plan around their top 3 personal constraints and plan for how they were going to work to grow their capabilities in each throughout the next year (Flippen, 2016). The Flippen Profile and subsequent TrAction Plans

have been utilized by each cohort participant to develop their own professional growth goals. These growth goals were shared and followed up on throughout the school leadership academy.

### **Face-to-Face Cohort Meetings**

A significant portion of the school leadership academy has been provided through face-to-face cohort meetings. The meetings were focused on building the leadership capacities of each assistant principal. The learning topics were driven by the NCDPI School Executive Standards that include strategic leadership; instructional leadership; cultural leadership; human resource leadership; managerial leadership; external development leadership; and micro-political leadership (NCDPI, 2011). The meeting learning topics were also driven by the NCDPI's 21 school leadership competencies. These include communication; change management; conflict management; creative thinking; customer focus; delegation; dialogue/inquiry; emotional intelligence; environmental awareness; global perspective; judgement; organizational ability; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; responsiveness; results orientation; sensitivity; systems thinking; technology; time management; and visionary (NCDPI, 2016). Learning topics driven by these North Carolina standards and competencies were coupled with district priorities driven by the Moore County Schools Strategic Plan that included effective and impactful school improvement, effective facilitation of professional learning communities and instructional leadership (Moore County Schools, 2018). Lastly, these monthly meetings have given each participant the opportunity to collaborate around their professional learning goals driven by their respective leadership assessments and Flippen Profiles.

As documented by Appendix H, the first of these face-to-face cohort meetings took place on September 27, 2018. This meeting included:

1. Reemphasizing the expectations for the program;



2. Describing the problem the academy was designed to improve;
3. Grounding the cohort in the standards and competencies the program was driven from;
4. Assigning two leadership assessments as a baseline to monitor the cohort's leadership growth; and
5. The opportunity to dive into the importance of effective school improvement planning.

The Chief Officer and Executive Officer led the meeting along with the Moore County Director for Curriculum and Instruction.

As documented by the example agendas in Appendices I and J, the School Leadership Academy cohort has participated in four additional face-to-face meetings. The meetings were focused on building the leadership capacities of each assistant principal. Each meeting has been designed to push each cohort participant to reflect on and grow their leadership capacity. The Chief Officer and Executive Officer have led these meetings. Principals and district central office leadership have joined these meetings to participate in expert panels and to lead specific professional learning activities. Highlights of these learning activities have included:

1. Continued reflection on each participant's goals from the Flippen Group's Leadership Blueprint training.
2. Continued reflection and collaboration about the school executive standards and leadership competencies.
3. Instructional leadership development through the use of a book study and professional learning activities focused on the use of data.

4. Strategic; instructional; cultural; and human resource leadership development through specific professional learning focused on professional learning communities.
5. Opportunities to learn strategic leadership; instructional leadership; human resource leadership; cultural leadership; and managerial leadership from expert principals and district central office leaders.
6. Opportunities to learn from the Moore County Schools Superintendent.

### **Professional Learning Opportunities**

On October 3, 2018, the Chief Officer along with the School Leadership Academy cohort participants attended the NCPAPA seminar titled School Finance for School Leaders: Maximizing Every Dollar (NCPAPA, 2018). NCPAPA (2018) described the desired outcomes of this seminar were to help school administrator's growth in the areas of:

Understand that they must learn how to do more with less; creative use of budgetary resources is a must for principals who are charged with the responsibility of meeting the highest student performance standards; this seminar will focus on what all school leaders should know about public school finance in North Carolina; and school leaders will learn how to creatively, but legally, manage and maximize their school budgets and resources in ways that lead to greater staff and student support (p. 1).

The cohort participants and the Chief Officer traveled together to the seminar. Traveling together allowed all the opportunity to build a rapport and learn more about each other professionally and personally. This has helped create a close knit cohort that is open and transparent with each other. The seminar was facilitated by a retired school finance officer and included foundational budget and finance information, a facilitated discussion from an expert panel of finance officers and principals and a simulation activity. Information learned from this

seminar was reflected on as participants traveled back to the district together and connected to learning activities that took place in future face-to-face meetings as demonstrated in Appendix H.

It should also be noted that the School leadership academy cohort members will attend the North Carolina Association of School Administrators' (NCASA) 2019 Conference on Educational Leadership. The NCASA (2018) Conference on Educational Leadership is statewide conference that focuses on the “capacity, initiative, foresight [and] influence” (p. 1) of educational leadership. It is designed as a comprehensive learning conference with general and breakout learning sessions on the various strands of educational leadership (NCASA, 2018). The conference will be held in Raleigh, NC in March, 2019. This overnight conference offers the opportunity for the cohort participants to continue to build their relationships and collaboration. In addition, the Chief and Executive Officers will have an opportunity to network with the cohort and assess the cohort at a comprehensive learning conference.

### **Leadership Observation Opportunities**

As documented in Appendix N, School Leadership Academy cohort participants will have the opportunity to observe leadership at another school site during the months of February and March 2019. This opportunity is designed to give cohort participants an opportunity to learn from an accomplished principal at another school site and at another grade level. It should be noted that one cohort member will serve as the interim principal of his current school beginning in March 2019. Therefore, he will not participate in the switch opportunity. Cohort participants are expected to observe from the perspective of the school leadership standards and school leadership competencies. This opportunity will not be complete until after this study is submitted. Cohort participants will reflect and report out on their learning experiences at future face-to-face meetings.

## **Leadership Assessments**

In September 2018 and in January 2019, the School Leadership Academy participants and their supervising principals were asked to complete a leadership assessment survey of the North Carolina School Leadership Competencies as a pre-assessment and post-assessment measurement of the impact of the School Leadership Academy program on growing the leadership capacities of each cohort participant and each respective participant's preparedness to take on a principalship. These include communication; change management; conflict management; creative thinking; customer focus; delegation; dialogue/inquiry; emotional intelligence; environmental awareness; global perspective; judgement; organizational ability; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; responsiveness; results orientation; sensitivity; systems thinking; technology; time management; and visionary. As documented by the example in Appendix K, these pre-assessment and post-assessment surveys were given through the Google Apps survey tool. The survey listed each of the 21 School Leadership Competencies and asked the survey taker to assess themselves or their assistant principal on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being the greatest area in need of improvement and 5 being a strength. Each School Leadership Academy cohort participant and participant supervisor was asked to complete the pre-assessment and post-assessment.

As noted in Table 4, cohort participants self-assessed themselves at a high level of criticality. On the self-assessment, cohort participants only rated 4 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a high rate noting it was an area of strength. A high rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 75% or higher frequency. Those competencies were customer focus; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; and sensitivity.

Table 4

*Cohort Participants Pre-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated High*

Competency	Rate High
Customer Focus	84.6%
Personal Ethics and Values	100%
Personal Responsibility for Performance	76.9%
Sensitivity	76.9%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participants as documented in Appendix K. High rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 75% or higher frequency.

As noted in Table 5, cohort participants rated 9 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a low rate noting it was not a strength and was an area in need of improvement. A low rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 50% or lower frequency. Those competencies were change management; conflict management; creative thinking; delegation; dialogue/inquiry; environmental awareness; global perspective; systems thinking; and visionary.

As noted in Table 6, cohort supervisors assessed their respective assistant principals less critically. On the pre-assessment cohort supervisors rated 9 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a high rate noting it was an area of strength. A high rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 75% or higher frequency. Those competencies were communication; customer focus; emotional intelligence; judgement; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; sensitivity; time management; and visionary.

As noted in Table 7, cohort supervisors rated 4 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a low rate noting it was not a strength and an area in need of improvement. A low rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 50% or lower frequency. Those competencies were change management; conflict management; delegation; and emotional awareness.

In January, 2019, the School Leadership Academy participants and their supervising principals were asked to complete a leadership assessment survey of the North Carolina School Leadership Competencies (NCDPI, 2016) as a post-assessment measurement of the impact of the School Leadership Academy program on growing the leadership capacities of each cohort participant and each respective participant's preparedness to take on a principalship.

Table 5

*Cohort Participants Pre-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated Low*

Competency	Rate High
Change Management	46.2%
Conflict Management	42.6%
Creative Thinking	30.8%
Delegation	15.4%
Dialogue/Inquiry	30.8%
Environmental Awareness	30.8%
Global Perspective	23.1%
Systems Thinking	50.0%
Visionary	30.8%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participants as documented in Appendix K. Low rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 50% or lower frequency.

Table 6

*Supervisor Pre-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated High*

Competency	Rate High
Communication	80.0%
Customer Focus	90.0%
Emotional Intelligence	80.0%
Judgment	80.0%
Personal Ethics and Values	80.0%
Personal Responsibility for Performance	90.0%
Sensitivity	80.0%
Time Management	80.0%
Visionary	80.0%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participant supervisors as documented in Appendix K. High rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 75% or higher frequency.



Table 7

*Supervisor Pre-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated Low*

Competency	Rate High
Change Management	50.0%
Conflict Management	50.0%
Delegation	30.0%
Emotional Awareness	50.0%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participant supervisors as documented in Appendix K. Low rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 50% or lower frequency.

As noted in Table 8, cohort participants self-assessed themselves more positively in this post-assessment as compared to the pre-assessment. On the post-assessment, cohort participants rated 7 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a high rate noting it was an area of strength. This is compared to rating only 4 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a high rate on the pre-assessment. A high rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 75% or higher frequency. Those competencies that were rated at a high rate on both the pre-assessment and post-assessment were customer focus; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; and sensitivity. The three additional competencies that were rated highly on the post-assessment were emotional intelligence; judgement; and responsiveness.

As noted in Table 9, cohort participants rated 7 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a low rate, noting, it was not a strength and it was an area in need of improvement. This is compared to rating 9 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a low rate on the pre-assessment. A low rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 50% or lower frequency. The 7 competencies that were rated at a low rate on both the pre-assessment and post-assessment were change management; creative thinking; delegation; dialogue/inquiry; global perspective; systems thinking; and visionary. The 2 competencies that were not rated low on the post-assessment were conflict management and environmental awareness.

As noted in Table 10, when assessing their respective assistant principals, cohort supervisors rated 7 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a high rate noting it was an area of strength. A high rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 75% or higher frequency. This is compared to rating 9 out of the 21 competencies at a high rate on the pre-assessment. The 6 competencies that were rated at a high rate on both the pre-assessment and

Table 8

*Cohort Participants Post-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated High*

Competency	Rate High
Customer Focus	88.9%
Emotional Intelligence	100%
Judgment	88.9%
Personal Ethics and Values	100%
Personal Responsibility for Performance	77.8%
Responsiveness	100%
Sensitivity	88.9%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participants as documented in Appendix K. High rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 75% or higher frequency.

Table 9

*Cohort Participants Post-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated Low*

Competency	Rate High
Change Management	33.3%
Creative Thinking	44.4%
Delegation	22.2%
Dialogue/Inquiry	44.4%
Global Perspective	22.2%
Systems Thinking	33.3%
Visionary	44.4%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participants as documented in Appendix K. Low rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 50% or lower frequency.

Table 10

*Supervisor Post-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated High*

Competency	Rate High
Customer Focus	90.9%
Emotional Intelligence	81.9%
Judgment	81.8%
Personal Ethics and Values	90.9%
Personal Responsibility for Performance	81.8%
Results Orientation	81.8%
Sensitivity	81.8%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participant supervisors as documented in Appendix K. High rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 75% or higher frequency.

post-assessment were customer focus; emotional intelligence; judgement; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; and sensitivity. Results orientation was rated high on the post-assessment. Three competencies that were rated high on the pre-assessment and not rated high on the post-assessment were communication; time management; and visionary. Of the 3 that were not rated high, 2 received a 4 or higher rating at a 50% or higher frequency.

As noted in Table 11, when assessing their respective assistant principals, cohort supervisors rated 4 out of the 21 school leadership competencies at a low rate noting it was not a strength and an area in need of improvement. A low rate was one in which a 4 or higher rating occurred at a 50% or lower frequency. This aligns with the number of competencies rated at a low rate on the supervisor pre-assessment, however, 3 of the 4 are not the same competencies. The 1 competency that was rated low on both the pre-assessment and the post-assessment is delegation. The 3 additional competencies that were rated low on the post-assessment were systems thinking; technology; and visionary. Three competencies that were rated low on the pre-assessment and not rated low on the post-assessment were change management; conflict management; and emotional awareness. Each of these competencies received a 4 or higher rating at a 50% or higher frequency.

### **Principal Screening Interviews**

The final measurement that was used to measure the impact of the Moore County School Leadership Academy on improving the problem, was the results from the principal screening interview process that was required from each school leadership academy cohort member. This was a critical assessment component of the school leadership academy.

Table 11

*Supervisor Post-Assessment of School Leadership Competencies that were Rated Low*

Competency	Rate High
Delegation	36.4%
Systems Thinking	45.5%
Technology	27.3%
Visionary	27.3%

*Note.* Data was pulled from self-assessment survey sent to School Leadership Academy cohort participant supervisors as documented in Appendix K. Low rating was based on a competency receiving a 4 or higher rating from the participants at a 50% or lower frequency.

Cohort members participated in a principal screening interview to provide feedback for continuous improvement. The school leadership academy principal screening interviews were designed to mirror the district's principal selection process.

As documented in Appendix L, the process included a pre-interview writing activity that candidates were required to respond to three questions in a limited time period. The purpose of this activity is to assess the writing ability of the cohort member while under pressure. The question topics ranged from requiring the interviewee to describe effective school improvement, respond to an angry parent email to discussing how one can use the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey to continuously improve a school.

On February 7 and 8, 2019, cohort members were interviewed by a panel that included the Moore County Schools Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services; Executive Officer for Academics and Student Support Services; a Moore County School principal; Moore County Schools and Regional Teacher of the Year; Moore County Schools and Regional Teacher Assistant of the Year; Director for Student Support Services; and a Moore County parent. One of the 9 cohort members was unable to participate due to illness. As documented in Appendix L, Questions were designed and driven by both the North Carolina Department of Instruction School Executive Standards and School Leadership Competencies and based on the needs of the Moore County School District.

As documented in Appendix M, after each interview, the panel members documented each of their respective feedback utilizing a principal screening interview feedback form. This form asked each interview panel member to rate the interviewee (cohort member) in six categories on a scale from 1 to 4. One being an area in need of significant growth and four being an area of strength. The categories were:



1. Communication-the interviewee demonstrated a strong communication skill including listening and responding
2. Cultural Leadership-the interviewee demonstrated the ability to support and build a positive and collaborative culture
3. Instructional Leadership-the interviewee demonstrated good knowledge of instruction and that he or she could lead instruction in the school
4. Community and Parent Engagement-the interviewee demonstrated the ability to actively communicate with and engage with parents and the external school community
5. Reflective Practitioner-the interviewee demonstrated that he or she is reflective; they have learned from significant failures or challenges and is focused on continuous improvement
6. Principal Ready-the interviewee demonstrated that he or she is a strong principal candidate and would be considered for a principalship in MCS

As noted in Table 12 the average rating for each category was 3.3 for communication; 3.1 for cultural leadership; 3.4 for instructional leadership; 3.3 for community and parent engagement; 3.0 for reflective practitioner; and 3.3 for principal ready. These average ratings indicate an overall strong rating. It is also important to note that of the 8 cohort members who participated in the screening interviews, 5 of the cohort were rated at a 3 or 4 for principal readiness, thus indicating they would be a strong principal candidate.

On February 13, 2019, the Chief and Executive Officers met individually with each school leadership academy cohort participant to give them feedback from the screening interviews. This impactful feedback included the overall assessment of how well each cohort

Table 12

*Principal Screening Interview Average Feedback*

Category	Average Rating
Communication	3.3
Cultural Leadership	3.1
Instructional Leadership	3.4
Community and Parent Engagement	3.3
Reflective Practitioner	3.0
Principal Ready	3.3

*Note.* Data was pulled from principal screening interview panel member feedback as documented in Appendix M. This form asked each interview panel member to rate the interviewee (cohort member) in six categories on a scale from 1 to 4. One being an area in need of significant growth and four being an area of strength.

participant interviewed and came across to the interview team. The feedback also included the information gleaned from the principal screening interview feedback forms in the categories of communication; cultural leadership; instructional leadership; community and parent engagement; reflective practitioner; and principal readiness. The Chief and Executive Officers shared the areas of strength and the areas in need of improvement. The cohort participant also had the opportunity to ask questions and reflect with the Chief and Executive Officers on strategies and key activities that can continue to grow their respective leadership capacities.

Langford (2014) notes “measures are critical to the process of reflection” (p. 5). Further, data collection allows for the appropriate reflection to take place to measure the success of the improvement strategy intended to attack and improve the problem in the PDSA cycle. The measures of a pre and post leadership assessment from the cohort participants and their respective supervisors and a principal screening interview process has provided key measures to monitor the impact of the Moore County School Leadership Academy. It has also provided formative information to help strengthen the improvement strategy in process. In other words, it has provided information that can drive the Study and Act components of the PDSA cycle of improvement.

Chapter 4 has described the improvement strategy that was designed to impact the problem of the lack of assistant principals who are ready to take on the principalship in Moore County. The improvement strategy was the implementation of a School Leadership Academy of a small cohort of 9 Moore County assistant principals. This chapter has provided specific details of the implementation of the School Leadership Academy. It has also provided specific details based on the data collected including leadership assessment results and results from a principal screening interview process. Chapter 5 will provide an overall concluding summary of the study

including analysis and conclusions on the overall impact of the improvement strategy on the problem. Chapter 5 will also offer recommendations and share best practices and implications for Moore County Schools and for school districts facing a similar problem of practice.

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY

As noted previously, the impact of strong school leadership on the achievement of students within a school and district has long been supported by the research and authorities in education (Brown, 2016). In recent years, the complexity of the principalship has increased. Principals are now faced with a myriad of political, managerial, human resource and academic challenges. The stress and demands of the position are significant (Brown, 2016). Principals are expected to build positive collaborative cultures, while at the same time sustaining continuous academic improvement. Myung, Loeb and Horng (2011) noted that although the need for highly effective principals has increased, many districts throughout the nation have been faced with shortages of highly qualified principal candidates. Pijanowski et al. (2009) noted that rural school systems are more challenged to find highly qualified candidates and experience higher principal shortages.

The problem of practice that was identified to attack in Moore County was that Moore County Schools has too few assistant principals that are ready to take on the principalship. As noted in Tables 1 and 2, Moore County Schools principal turnover rate is at or above the North Carolina principal turnover rate and above the principal turnover rate of our geographical neighboring school districts 4 of the last 5 years. This turnover rate coupled with the natural progression of principals into senior level positions in the district central office, magnified the need for strong assistant principals who are prepared to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Robert P. Grimesey, noted that of the 27 assistant principals currently serving in the district, only 4 to 5 of them were viable candidates to even interview for any vacant principalship (personal communication, April 27, 2018).

Securing high quality principals is critical to the success of schools and their ability to grow student success and achievement. Research has shown that effective school leadership has a statistically significant impact on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). As noted in Table 3, schools with principals rated in the top half of all principals based on leadership effectiveness had a statistically higher percentage of students passing the test than those schools that had principals rated in the bottom half of all principals based on leadership effectiveness (Marzano et al., 2005).

Noting this compelling research and data, the Moore County Schools superintendent and senior staff understood the critical need that the district has to grow and prepare its own assistant principals to transition into the principalship. Moore County Schools currently employs 27 assistant principals. Some efforts have been made to begin to move towards creating a framework for developing the leadership capacity of the district's assistant principals. This has included an annual summer leadership conference and three annual assistant principal leadership meetings. However, our district did not have a systemic process for addressing the problem and the continued need to strategically develop and prepare our assistant principals.

Utilizing the Plan Do Study Act improvement cycle (Langford, 2014), the Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services designed a leadership development framework to specifically target this problem of practice. A school leadership academy for a small cohort of 9 assistant principals was designed and implemented. As noted in Appendix E, the Moore County School Leadership Academy included standards-based face-to-face meetings; professional learning opportunities; leadership assessments; principal screening interviews; and exposure to leadership experts.

In order to monitor and study the impact of the improvement strategy, the Chief Officer utilized the following measurement tools to measure the effectiveness of the academy at improving the problem:

1. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina School Leadership Competencies survey from all school leadership academy participants
2. Pre-assessment and post-assessment North Carolina School Leadership Competencies survey from school leadership academy participant supervisors
3. Results of the principal screening interviews of the school leadership academy participants

In September 2018 and January 2019, the School Leadership Academy participants and their supervising principals were asked to complete a leadership assessment survey of the North Carolina School Leadership Competencies as a pre-assessment and post-assessment measurement of the impact of the School Leadership Academy program on growing the leadership capacities of each cohort participant and each respective participant's preparedness to take on a principalship. These include communication; change management; conflict management; creative thinking; customer focus; delegation; dialogue/inquiry; emotional intelligence; environmental awareness; global perspective; judgement; organizational ability; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; responsiveness; results orientation; sensitivity; systems thinking; technology; time management; and visionary. As documented by the example in Appendix K, these pre-assessment and post-assessment surveys were given through the Google Apps survey tool. The survey listed each of the 21 School Leadership Competencies and asked the survey taker to assess themselves or their assistant principal on a 1 to 5 scale with 1 being the greatest area in need of improvement and 5 being a

strength. Each School Leadership Academy cohort participant and participant supervisor was asked to complete the pre-assessment and post-assessment.

The final measurement tool that was used to monitor and study the impact of the Moore County School Leadership Academy on improving the problem, was the results from the principal screening interview process that was required from each school leadership academy cohort member. This was a critical assessment component of the school leadership academy. Cohort members participated in a principal screening interview to provide feedback for continuous improvement. The school leadership academy principal screening interviews were designed to mirror the district's principal selection process.

On February 7 and 8, 2019, cohort members were interviewed by a panel that included the Moore County Schools Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services; Executive Officer for Academics and Student Support Services; a Moore County School principal; Moore County Schools and Regional Teacher of the Year; Moore County Schools and Regional Teacher Assistant of the Year; Director for Student Support Services; and a Moore County parent.

As documented in Appendix M, after each interview, the panel members documented each of their respective feedback utilizing a principal screening interview feedback form. This form asked each interview panel member to rate the interviewee (cohort member) in six categories on a scale from 1 to 4. One being an area in need of significant growth and four being an area of strength. The categories were:

1. Communication-the interviewee demonstrated a strong communication skill including listening and responding
2. Cultural Leadership-the interviewee demonstrated the ability to support and build a positive and collaborative culture



3. Instructional Leadership-the interviewee demonstrated good knowledge of instruction and that he or she could lead instruction in the school
4. Community and Parent Engagement-the interviewee demonstrated the ability to actively communicate with and engage with parents and the external school community
5. Reflective Practitioner-the interviewee demonstrated that he or she is reflective; they have learned from significant failures or challenges and is focused on continuous improvement
6. Principal Ready-the interviewee demonstrated that he or she is a strong principal candidate and would be considered for a principalship in MCS

Principal pipeline work in other districts, as Mendels (2017) notes, has seen success when focusing on key components such as leadership standards, professional learning and impactful evaluation processes. The Moore County School Leadership Academy was designed to utilize these same key components. This chapter includes a concluding summary of the study including analysis and conclusions on the overall impact of the improvement strategy on the problem and it will also offer recommendations and share best practices and implications for Moore County Schools and for school districts facing a similar problem of practice.

### **Analysis and Conclusions on the Overall Impact of the Improvement Strategy**

The analysis and conclusions of the impact of the Moore County School Leadership Academy on the problem of practice was derived from two primary measures. First, the North Carolina School Leadership Competencies (NCDPI, 2016) self-assessment and supervisor assessment and secondly the principal screening interview feedback ratings.

The analysis of the data from the North Carolina School Leadership Competencies cohort participant self-assessment and supervisor assessment, indicated inconsistency in the ratings. Facticeau and Craig (2001) noted that self-assessment and supervisor assessment ratings do not often match. Facticeau and Craig (2001) went on further to note that this could be caused as result of the fact “that different rater groups have different conceptualizations about the dimensionality of job performance” (p. 216).

In general, the School Leadership Academy participants rated themselves more critically than their supervisors. In both the pre-assessment and post-assessment the cohort participants rated more competencies at a low rating than their supervisors. Additionally, the competencies that were rated high and low in the pre-assessment by the cohort participants and their supervisors did not align entirely with the competencies that were rated high and low in the post-assessment.

While these inconsistencies from the assessment data make it difficult to make a conclusion on the impact of the Moore County School Leadership Academy on the problem of practice, it is important to note the leadership competencies that were rated high on the post-assessment by both the cohort participants and their respective supervisors. These were customer focus; emotional intelligence; judgement; personal ethics and values; personal responsibility for performance; and sensitivity. It is also important to note that the cohort participants rated 7 school leadership competencies high on the post-assessment as compared to only 4 on the pre-assessment. This suggests, as Facticeau and Craig (2001) noted, the participants developed a better conceptualization of the competencies and their respective applications to their daily work as each cohort member participated in the academy. While not conclusive, the leadership assessment results do strongly indicate that both the cohort participants and their supervisors

indicate that the Moore County School Leadership Academy has positively impacted and grown the leadership competencies of the participants.

The analysis of the data from the Moore County School Leadership Academy principal screening interview process was profound. Each of the cohort participants were rated on six categories by the principal screening interview panel. The panel included the Moore County Schools Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services; Moore County Schools Executive Officer for Academics and Student Support Services; a Moore County School principal; Moore County Schools and Regional Teacher of the Year; Moore County Schools and Regional Teacher Assistant of the Year; Director for Student Support Services; and a Moore County parent. This panel composition mirrored the composition of principal selection panels for the district. The six categories that the panel rated the cohort participants on were communication; cultural leadership; instructional leadership; community and parent engagement; reflective practitioner; and principal ready. The categories were driven by the North Carolina School Executive Standards (NCDPI, 2011); North Carolina School Leadership Competencies (NCDPI, 2016); and through the school leadership experiences of the Chief Officer. These categories and standards were also integrated throughout the School Leadership Academy.

According to the data from the screening interviews, overall, the cohort participants were rated highly, with all areas receiving a 3 or higher average rating on a scale from 1 (indicating an area in need or improvement) to a 4 (indicating an area of strength). This data indicates that overall, the Moore County School Leadership Academy has helped to grow the leadership capabilities of each cohort participant and help to better prepare them for the principalship.

The principal screening data also indicates, that 5 out of the 8 cohort participants who were interviewed, were rated as principal ready; indicating he or she is a strong principal

candidate and would be considered for a principalship in MCS. This outcome is compelling and strongly indicates that the School Leadership Academy has positively impacted the problem of too few assistant principals being ready to take on the principalship in Moore County.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the Chief Officer's experience with facilitating the Moore County School Leadership Academy and based on the data generated from the measurement tools, the following recommendations and best practices are offered for the Moore County School district and other practitioners.

- Practitioner studies, like the ones done by Miller (2015) and Wilson (2015), found that a district run cohort model held great value and that it held great advantages to a leadership development program ran by a University (Miller, 2015). A cohort model is one that brings a small group of learners, or in this case, assistant principals together to go through a learning experience as a team or cohort. The leadership assessment data, principal screening interview data and the experiences of the participants in the Moore County School Leadership Academy also indicate the great value and impact of a school district level cohort model. This study indicates that the design of a leadership development program for assistant principals to prepare them to become principals should be one that incorporates the value of the cohort model.
- Based on the observations of the Chief Officer throughout this study, it would be recommended that a leadership development cohort be no more than 10 participants. The Moore County School Leadership Academy included 9 cohort participants. The observations throughout this study indicated that maintaining the cohort at a small

number of participants allowed both the facilitators and the participants to leverage the value of the cohort learning model.

- Based on the observations of the Chief Officer throughout this study, it would be recommended that university principal preparation programs be attentive to developing the capacity of aspiring administrators in the areas of managerial and cultural leadership. It was observed through this study that the cohort participants did not have strong foundations in managerial leadership, including school finance and school law, or in cultural leadership, including the overall understanding of organization culture, how to access it and then shape it.
- The cohort participants participated in Leadership Blueprint training (Flippen, 2016) as a beginning component of the School Leadership Academy. This 360 assessment of the cohort participants' leadership characteristics and their top personal constraints was impactful. Each participant created a TrAction Plan (Flippen, 2016) and this plan was followed up on throughout the academy. It pushed each participant to grow as reflective practitioner. Moore County should look to repeat this opportunity in the future or bring in other similar opportunities like those offered through On Track Press, Inc. (Coble, 2019) that focuses on 360 assessment and leadership development.
- The opportunity to meet face-to-face has been critical component of the School Leadership Academy. It has been impactful in several ways including:
  1. It has allowed the Chief Officer to get to know each cohort member's strengths and how they interact with and collaborate with their respective colleagues;
  2. It has allowed the cohort participants to develop a learning network that each of the participants will be able to access as they continue their careers;

3. It offered the opportunity for district leaders to provide targeted professional learning based on the desired outcomes of the academy;
4. It allowed the cohort participants to learn from current principals through panel discussions;
5. It allowed the cohort participants to learn from the Moore County School superintendent.

This study strongly indicates that holding face-to-face meetings would be a critical component of any leadership development framework designed to grow the capacity of assistant principals to take on the principalship.

- This study indicates that it would be recommended that any district led leadership development framework include exposing participants to professional learning opportunities like the NCPAPA’s School Finance for School Leaders: Maximizing Every Dollar (NCPAPA, 2018). Not only should participants be exposed and participate in targeted professional learning opportunities like this seminar, district leaders should attend with the participants. This exposes participants to broad best practices and allows the participants and district leadership to learn together. Participation in external professional learning experiences together can be impactful to building a culture that is committed to continuous improvement.
- This study has indicated that the opportunity to observe principal leadership in other schools and at other grade levels is a meaningful learning opportunity for leadership development. While this component is ongoing and was not completed prior to the completion of this study, participants were already noting the impact of this experience. One participant noted, “I have learned so much in just one visit”

(Participant, personal communication, February 13, 2019). It would be recommended that the Moore County School district and other practitioners consider including this component in leadership development frameworks.

- Mendels (2017) reviewed the Wallace Foundation’s support of the work of several districts to develop effective principal pipelines. Mendels (2017) noted that each of these districts’ principal pipeline work included the key component of integrating leader standards that define the role of the principalship. The Chief Officers’ study would also indicate that a key component of any leadership development framework should be utilizing clearly defined leadership standards and leadership competencies. The use of the North Carolina School Executive Standards (NCDPI, 2011) and the North Carolina School Leadership Competencies (NCDPI, 2016) as the foundation for the Moore County School Leadership Academy design contributed to the overall success of the academy on positively impacting the problem.
- Hattie and Timperley (2007) note that “feedback is one of the most powerful influences on learning and achievement” (p. 81). Hattie and Timperley (2007) further note that feedback can be more than just correctional, it can be “instructional” (p. 82). The Chief Officer’s study strongly indicated that the School Leadership Academy cohort participant’s participation in a principal screening interview offered specific and impactful feedback that was not just correctional but also “instructional” (Hattie and Timperley, 2007, p. 82). Hattie and Timperley also note that “feedback has no effect in a vacuum; to be powerful in its effect, there must be a learning context to which feedback is addressed” (p. 82). The cohort members’ participation in the principal screening process that included specific feedback integrated into the

context of being principal ready was extremely impactful to the cohort members. Participants commented that this type of specific feedback on their respective readiness for a principalship as expressed by an interview panel was an extremely impactful learning experience (Participant, personal communication, February 13, 2019). This would be a highly recommended strategy for Moore County and other districts to include in any future leadership development professional learning and frameworks.

### **Implications and Overall Summary**

Effective school leadership is critical to the success of a school and a school district. The job of the school administrator has become increasingly complex. Myung, Loeb and Horng (2011) noted that school leadership positions today require leaders who possess a high level of skill to navigate a complex environment of accountability and expectations. The overall importance of leadership on the success of any organization is prevalent in research overall. Northouse (2016) noted that “leadership is a highly sought-after and highly valued commodity” (p. 1). Securing high quality principals is critical to the success of schools and their ability to grow student success and achievement. Research has shown that effective school leadership has a statistically significant impact on student achievement (Marzano et al., 2005). Hallinger and Heck (1998) also noted that it is evident that principals impact school effectiveness and a school’s continuous improvement.

The Moore County School superintendent and senior staff, like Pijanowski et al. (2009) indicated, understood the critical need for highly effective principals in order to have a highly effective school district. However, it was also clear, that Moore County did not have enough assistant principals who were ready to take on the principalship. This study allowed the Chief



Officer to attack this problem through the development of a School Leadership Academy designed to work with a small cohort of assistant principals. The data and observations from this study indicate that this improvement strategy has had a positive impact on the problem.

The study also has implications for the Moore County School district and its work to develop an overall leadership development framework. These implications would include:

1. Analyze and develop systems to develop the capacities of principals to develop their assistant principals in their current settings;
2. Analyze and develop strategies to recognize, support and grow aspiring school administrators who are still in the classroom;
3. Analyze and develop strategies to mentor and support early career principals;
4. Analyze and develop strategies to continuously grow the leadership capabilities of experienced principals;
5. Continue the implementation of a School Leadership Academy model on a bi-annual basis to strategically prepare a pipeline of assistant principals for the principalship; and
6. Explore opportunities to provide resources to support a sustainable leadership development framework.

These implications should all be considered by the district as it continues to create and sustain its overall leadership development framework.

In conclusion, the opportunity to impact a significant problem of practice of the Moore County School district was humbling and invigorating. Leadership development is not just based on research, it is based on experiences and wisdom of practitioners who have experienced leadership positions in the past. This study allowed the Chief Officer to not only reflect on his

own experiences and learned wisdom but to also continuously develop and grow his own leadership capacity and to drive his desire to continue to develop leadership in Moore County Schools.

The study offered the Chief Officer to opportunity to address a direct need of the school district. Attacking this problem of practice was not only part of the role and job responsibilities of the Chief Officer but as Walt Disney once said “Besides, you don’t work for a dollar; you work to create and have fun” (Barnes, 2015, p. 26). In short, creating the improvement strategy of the Moore County School Leadership Academy was hard work, but it was work that was enjoyable and impactful to the district and to the Chief Officer’s own learning.

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## APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

12/10/2018

<https://epirate.ecu.edu/App/sd/Doc/0/NB1R363C7RO4N0V0GFBJ2JO04E/fromString.html>



**EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY**  
**University & Medical Center Institutional Review Board**  
4N-64 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682  
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834  
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284**  
[www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb](http://www.ecu.edu/ORIC/irb)

### Notification of Exempt Certification

**From:** Social/Behavioral IRB  
**To:** [Timothy Locklair](#)  
**CC:** [Kermit Buckner](#)  
**Date:** 12/3/2018  
**Re:** [UMCIRB 18-002160](#)  
Preparing Assistant Principals for the Principalship in Moore County

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 12/3/2018. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #1 & 2.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

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IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418  
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418

## **APPENDIX B: DISTRICT INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW APPROVAL**

January 18, 2019

*Tim Locklair  
Graduate Student  
East Carolina University*

Dear Mr. Locklair,

I am pleased to inform you that the Moore County Schools Internal Review Board has supported your request for permission to conduct research in Moore County Schools.

As per your research design, you are permitted to conduct your research in line with your proposal and utilize results of survey data collected through your program proposal. You may use this letter as evidence of MCS Internal Review Board approval.

Staff participation in all aspects of the study is completely voluntary. Any interviews or additional follow-up should be scheduled so as not to conflict with the academic day.

As we agreed, Moore County Schools and its staff shall not be named in the final reports or subsequent presentations of your research.

When your research is completed and approved by your university, a final copy of your research must be submitted to Moore County Schools at the Office of Planning, Accountability, and Research.

Moore County Schools wishes you success with your research and looks forward to learning from your findings.

Sincerely,

Kate Faw  
Director for Planning, Accountability, and Research



## APPENDIX C: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

### ANNOUNCEMENT

#### **URGENT-Exciting Leadership Development Opportunity**

1 message

**Tim Locklair** <tlocklair@ncmcs.org>

Thu, Jun 21, 2018 at 4:36 PM

To: All Asst Principals <AllAsstPrincipals@ncmcs.org>

Cc: All Principals <Allprincipals@ncmcs.org>,

Assistant Principals,

Good afternoon.

Congratulations on another great school year! I hope you all have some plans over the summer to spend time with your family and friends and recharge your batteries.

Dr. Mike Metcalf and I wanted to reach out to you and share an opportunity for leadership development we are providing next school year. During the 2018-2019 school year, we will provide an opportunity for a cohort of 8-10 assistant principals to participate in a school leadership academy in addition to our quarterly assistant principal leadership meetings. The School Leadership Academy will offer the opportunity for the cohort to participate in targeted professional learning that will support your leadership development. Participants in the academy will be required to meet 12-15 days throughout the year. Additional readings, self-assessments, school improvement projects and school-based work outside of these meetings will be required. This academy is designed to rigorously push your learning, development and preparedness to take on a principalship in Moore County Schools. Learning opportunities will include at minimum:

- Participation in the Flippen Group's Leadership Blueprint training on August 1 & 2
- Monthly cohort meetings that are focused on leadership development and continuous school improvement
- Participation and attendance at NCPAPA's seminar on School Finance for School Leaders
- Participation and attendance at NCASA's 2019 Conference on Educational Leadership
- Participation in a principal screening interview to provide feedback for continuous improvement
- Opportunities to observe school leadership in other schools

In order to apply please send an email of interest to Dr. Mike Metcalf and me no later than **July 11** that includes:

- An updated resume
- A letter of recommendation from your principal
- Completion of the attached reflection questions

The selection process for the school leadership academy cohort will also include an interview. If you are chosen for an interview, Dr. Metcalf and I will reach out to you to schedule a 30-minute interview on July 12, 16, 17 or 18.

Please let me know if you have any questions. Thank you for all that you do each day in support of our students and staff. Have a great evening!

Tim Locklair  
Chief Officer for Academics and Student Support Services  
Moore County Schools  
PO Box 1180  
5277 Hwy 15-501  
Carthage, NC 28327  
Office: (910) 947-2976

 **MCS.SLA.Reflection.Questions.6-21-18.docx**  
38K



MOORE COUNTY SCHOOLS

*Growing to Greatness*

**2018-2019**

**Assistant Principal School Leadership Academy  
Application Reflection Questions**

**Reflection Questions:**

Please review and answer the questions below. Please note each question has a word limit.

1. In 25 words or less, provide a written **belief statement** of your school leadership philosophy.

**(25 words)**

2. How do your behaviors as an instructional leader demonstrate your core beliefs about teaching and learning? **(350 words)**

3. Define intentional and purposeful cultural leadership that creates and supports a positive and collaborative culture. **(350 words)**

**APPENDIX D: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY SCHEDULE**

**2018-2019 School Leadership Academy Schedule**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
<b>7/31-8/2</b>	Aberdeen, NC	Summer Leadership Conference. Participation in the Flippen Group's Leadership Blueprint Training.
<b>*9/27</b>	County Office	
<b>*10/3</b>	Raleigh, NC	NCPAPA's School Finance for School Leaders. You have all been registered for this training. We will rent a van and travel together to the training in Raleigh.
10/10	County Office	
11/14	County Office	
12/5	County Office	
<b>1/16</b>	County Office	
2/7—8	County Office	Principal "Screening Interviews". Each cohort member will participate in a screening interview and receive feedback. This will be an approximate two-hour commitment.
<b>2/13</b>	County Office	Principal "Screening Interviews" feedback sessions.

3/28—29	Raleigh, NC	NCASA Leadership Conference on Educational Leadership. Cohort members will be registered for this conference. We will rent a van and travel together to the training in Raleigh. One night accommodations will be provided through the district office.
4/10	County Office	
5/15	County Office	

*\*Rescheduled due to Hurricane Florence*

**APPENDIX E: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY DESIGN**

Moore County Schools Leadership Academy Design



**APPENDIX F: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY APPLICANT**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Candidate:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2018-2019 School Leadership Academy Applicant Interview Questions**

1. Why are you interested in this learning opportunity? Where do you hope to be in 3-5 years?
2. Briefly, how would you describe your leadership style.
3. What three adjectives would your teachers use to describe you and your leadership? Is there an area in your leadership/communication style that people misread you and if so, how do you address it?
4. What is one area of strength and one area of improvement that your principal has pointed out to you?
5. Are you fully committed to the requirements of the Academy (readings, School Improvement projects, leadership self-assessments, participation at two conferences, monthly meetings)?
6. How would you hope your learning and growth would be impacted by your participation in this cohort?

APPENDIX G: MOORE COUNTY 2018 SUMMER LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

AGENDA

**2018 Moore County Schools Summer Leadership Conference**  
**🌀 Tuesday, July 31, 2018 🌀**

<b>7:30 a.m.</b>	<b>Breakfast</b>
<b>8:30 a.m-9:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Greetings and Launch</b> Robert P. Grimesey, Ed.D., Superintendent
<b>9:15-10:00 a.m</b>	<b>Grounding Activity</b> Kim Bullard, Chad Chisholm, Tracy Metcalf, Lisa Scott
<b>10:00 a.m.</b>	<b>Technology Break</b> <i>Operational administrators may return to their work sites</i>
<b>1:15 a.m.</b>	<b>Strategic Plan</b>
	<b>PLC Non-Negotiables</b> Tim Locklair, Chief Officer
<b>2:20 p.m.</b>	<b>Breakout Session*</b>
<b>12:20-1:30</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>1:30-2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Breakout Session*</b>
<b>2:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Technology Break</b>
<b>2:45-3:45 p.m.</b>	<b>Breakout Session*</b>
<b>3:50-4:50 p.m.</b>	<b>Breakout Session*</b>
<b>4:55-5:30</b>	<b>Debrief</b>
<b>5:45-</b>	<b>Optional Activity-</b> <i>Sandhills Bowling Center</i>
	<b>Bowling</b>

**🌀 Wednesday, August 1, 2018 🌀**

**🌀 Thursday, August 2, 2018 🌀**

**Leadership Blueprint**

Hampton Inn 7:30-5:00

**Attendees:**

School Leadership Academy Members

All School Principals

Directors

All Senior Staff



## APPENDIX H: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY AGENDA

### EXAMPLE 1

**School Leadership Academy**  
**September 27, 2018**  
**8:30 AM—3:00 PM**  
**Central Office Board Room**

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Review the purpose and desired outcomes of the academy
- Share the expectations and schedule for the year
- Participate in a self-assessment activity of the North Carolina School Executive Standards
- Ground ourselves in the systems and process of school improvement in Moore County Schools
- Participate in an introduction to the book 17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong

<b>AGENDA</b>			
<b>WHAT (content)</b>	<b>HOW (process)</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>TIME (minutes)</b>
Good Things	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Welcome, agenda review and opening comments	Report out	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Grounding Activity	Share out & Engage	Mike Metcalf	<b>15 minutes</b>
SLA Schedule and Participant Expectations	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Social Contract	Share out & Engage	Mike Metcalf	<b>30 minutes</b>
<u>North Carolina School Executive Standards</u> -Key Words -Review your own self-assessment	Share out & Reflect	Tim Locklair	<b>40 minutes</b>
<b>BREAK</b>			<b>15 minutes</b>
North Carolina School Executive Standards -3 Strengths and 3 Areas to Grow -Consensus Place Mat	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>45 minutes</b>

Self-Assessment “Homework” -Executive Standards -21 Leadership Competencies	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
<b>LUNCH</b>	PROVIDED	Cindy Parker	<b>45 minutes</b>
School Improvement Overview	Share out & Engage	Bridget Johnson	<b>90 minutes</b>
<b>BREAK</b>			<b>10 minutes</b>
“17,000 Classroom Visits Can’t Be Wrong”	Share out & Engage	Mike Metcalf	<b>30 minutes</b>
Wrap up & Questions	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Future Meeting Dates: <i><b>-October 3, Leaving CO @ 7:00 AM</b></i> -October 10, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM -November 14, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM -December 5, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>5 minutes</b>

## APPENDIX I: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY AGENDA

### EXAMPLE 2

**School Leadership Academy  
October 10, 2018  
8:30 AM—3:30 PM  
Education Center**

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Debrief our learning experience from NCPAPA’s School Finance for School Leaders
- Grow our capacity to lead the Professional Learning Communities work in our schools
- Have the opportunity to learn from “district experts” about managing budgets and finance
- Debrief about the assessment activities and applicable leadership competencies

<b>AGENDA</b>			
<b>WHAT (content)</b>	<b>HOW (process)</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>TIME (minutes)</b>
Good Things	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Welcome, agenda review and opening comments, social contract	Report out	Tim Locklair	<b>5 minutes</b>
Grounding Activity <b>3-2-1</b>	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>30 minutes</b>
Professional Learning Communities	Share out & Engage	Bridget Johnson	<b>75 minutes</b>
<b>BREAK</b>			<b>15 minutes</b>
Professional Learning Communities	Share out & Engage	Bridget Johnson	<b>75 minutes</b>
<b>LUNCH</b>	PROVIDED	Cindy Parker	<b>45 minutes</b>
Expert Panel Q & A NCSES Standard 5: Managerial Leadership	Share out & Engage	Debbie Warren Nora McNeill Jeni Wiley Marcy Cooper Mike Bundy	<b>90 minutes</b>
<b>BREAK</b>			<b>15 minutes</b>
Reflections on Leadership Competencies	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>45 minutes</b>
Wrap up & Questions	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Future Meeting Dates: -November 14, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM -December 5, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>5 minutes</b>

## APPENDIX J: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY AGENDA

### EXAMPLE 3

**School Leadership Academy**  
**November 14, 2018**  
**8:30 AM—3:30 PM**  
*Central Office - Board Room*

**Desired Outcomes:**

- Interact with Chapter One through Chapter Three of the book *17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong – Strategies That Engage Students, Promote Active Learning, and Boost Achievement*;
- Develop an understanding of EVASS reports that connect to School Improvement, Educator Effectiveness and Leadership Effectiveness;
- Develop a deeper understanding of the personnel evaluation process; and
- Debrief about applicable leadership competencies.

<b>AGENDA</b>			
<b>WHAT (content)</b>	<b>HOW (process)</b>	<b>WHO</b>	<b>TIME (minutes)</b>
Good Things	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Welcome, agenda review and opening comments, social contract	Report out	Tim Locklair Mike Metcalf	<b>5 minutes</b>
Leadership Competencies	Share out & Engage	Tim Locklair	<b>45 minutes</b>
<u>Book Study</u> : <i>17,000 Classroom Visits Can't Be Wrong – Strategies That Engage Students, Promote Active Learning, and Boost Achievement</i>	Share out & Engage	Heather Stewart	<b>60 minutes</b>
<b>BREAK</b>			<b>15 minutes</b>
<u>EVASS Reports</u> : School Improvement, Educator Effectiveness, and Leadership Effectiveness.	Share out & Engage	<b>Heather Stewart</b>	<b>90 minutes</b>
<b>LUNCH</b>	PROVIDED	Cindy Parker	<b>60 minutes</b>
Personnel Evaluations	Share out & Engage	Dr. Anita Alpenfels	<b>90 minutes</b>
Wrap up & Questions	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>10 minutes</b>
Future Meeting Dates: December 5, 2018 8:30AM-4:00 PM January 16, 2019 8:30AM-4:00 PM	Share out	Tim Locklair	<b>5 minutes</b>

# APPENDIX K: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY SCHOOL

## LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT SURVEY

10/1/2018

BOY Self-Assessment of Leadership Competencies

### BOY Self-Assessment of Leadership Competencies

Using the questions below, rate your leadership skills from 1 to 5. A level 1 is an area for improvement and a 5 is a strength in your leadership skills. Use the descriptors provided after each competency to help you determine your rating.

Your email address ([tlocklair@ncmcs.org](mailto:tlocklair@ncmcs.org)) will be recorded when you submit this form. Not **tlocklair**?

[Sign out](#)

\* Required

1. Your name: \*

---

2. **Communication - Effectively listens to others; clearly and effectively presents and understands information orally and in writing; acquires, organizes, analyzes, interprets, maintains information needed to achieve school or team 21st century objectives. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

3. **Change Management - Effectively engages staff and community in the change process in a manner that ensures their support of the change and its successful implementation. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

4. **Conflict Management - Anticipates or seeks to resolve confrontations, disagreements, or complaints in a constructive manner. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

5. **Creative Thinking - Engages in and fosters an environment for others to engage in innovative thinking. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**6. Customer Focus - Understands the students as customers of the work of schooling and the servant nature of leadership and acts accordingly. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**7. Delegation - Effectively assigns work tasks to others in ways that provide learning experiences for them and in ways to ensure the efficient operation of the school. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**8. Dialogue/Inquiry - Is skilled in creating a risk free environment for engaging people in conversations that explore issues, challenges or bad relationships that are hindering school performance. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**9. Emotional Intelligence - Is able to manage oneself through self awareness and self management and is able to manage relationships through empathy, social awareness and relationship management. This competency is critical to building strong, transparent, trusting relationships throughout the school community. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**10. Environmental Awareness - Becomes aware and remains informed of external and internal trends, interests and issues with potential impacts on school policies, practices, procedures and positions. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**11. Global Perspective - Understands the competitive nature of the new global economy and is clear about the knowledge and skills students will need to be successful in this economy. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**12. Judgement - Effectively reaching logical conclusions and making high quality decisions based on available information. Giving priority and caution to significant issues. Analyzing and interpreting complex information. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**13. Organizational Ability - Effectively plans and schedules one's own and the work of others so that resources are used appropriately, such as scheduling the flow of activities and establishing procedures to monitor projects. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**14. Personal Ethics and Values - Consistently exhibits high standards in the areas of honesty, integrity, fairness, stewardship, trust, respect, and confidentiality. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**15. Personal Responsibility for Performance - Proactively and continuously improves performance by focusing on needed areas of improvement and enhancement of strengths; actively seeks and effectively applies feedback from others; takes full responsibility for one's own achievements. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**16. Responsiveness - Does not leave issues, inquiries or requirements for information go unattended. Creates a clearly delineated structure for responding to requests/situations in an expedient manner. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

**17. Results Orientation - Effectively assumes responsibility. Recognizes when a decision is required. Takes prompt action as issues emerge. Resolves short-term issues while balancing them against long-term goals. \***

*Mark only one oval.*

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

18. **Sensitivity - Effectively perceives the needs and concerns of others; deals tactfully with others in emotionally stressful situations or in conflict. Knowing what information to communicate and to whom. Relating to people of varying ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

19. **Systems Thinking - Understand the interrelationships and impacts of school and district influences, systems and external stakeholders, and applies that understanding to advancing the achievement of the school or team. \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

20. **Technology - Effectively utilizes the latest technologies to continuously improve the management of the school and enhance student instruction. \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

21. **Time Management - Effectively uses available time to complete work tasks and activities that lead to the achievement of desired work or school results. Runs effective meetings. \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

22. **Visionary - Encourages Imagineering by creating an environment and structure to capture stakeholder dreams of what the school could become for all the students. \***

Mark only one oval.

1      2      3      4      5

Area for improvement                  Strength

Send me a copy of my responses.





**APPENDIX L: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PRINCIPAL  
SCREENING INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**SLA Principal Screening Interview**

**Pre-interview questions**

**You have a total of 30 minutes to briefly respond to the following questions. Please print out two copies of your answers.**

1. Describe an effective School Improvement process? How would this process drive your work as the instructional leader in the building? Cite specific examples of how you have lead effective school improvement.
2. You have received the following email, how do you respond?

*“Mr./Mrs. Principal*

*Johnny came home last night crying and said Ms. Smith was very angry with the class and screamed at them calling them all the worse class she had ever taught in her 15 years. She then did not let them go out for recess! Isn't this required per law! My Johnny needs to exercise. Later, when they were working on a stack of math worksheets, Johnny tried to ask a question and she said, Johnny-don't you ask any more frivolous questions until you finish all your work. Johnny was devastated and just would not stop crying about it. I am furious. She should not be teaching. I want Johnny out of that class! What are you going to do about this?*

*I expect to hear from you immediately.*

*Mrs. Jones.*

3. Briefly describe how you have used the North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey results to celebrate and continuously improve a school? Cite specific examples or strategies.

**SLA Principal Screening Interview Questions**

-Briefly describe your background and experiences and why you are interested in and excited about this opportunity to become a principal?

-Walking in as a new principal, how do you get to know a school's culture and then positively build it? Describe the culture that you would want to cultivate and continuously develop.

-As a new principal, how do you build trusting and supportive relationships with teachers and staff? Describe the relationship you feel needs to exist between the principal and the teachers/staff?

-Describe the most significant failure of your professional career (if the candidate cannot think of an example, ask them to describe a significant challenge). What did you learn from this experience?

-What does managerial leadership mean to you as a principal? How do implement this in a collaborative and positive manner?

-How do you approach student discipline? How do you ensure fairness, firmness and consistency?

-How do you balance input and ideas you receive from parents that you may or may not implement without losing their interest and energy in being involved in the school?

-How would you work to establish positive relationships with school's parents and broader school community?

-What would you want to see as effective core instruction when you walk into each classroom? How can digital tools support effective core instruction?

-As your supervisors, how can we support you and help you be successful? With that in mind, how will you know if you have been successful at the end of your first year? How will you measure your success? What will you reflect upon?

**APPENDIX M: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY PRINCIPAL  
SCREENING INTERVIEW FEEDBACK FORM**

**MCS School Leadership Academy Principal Screening Interview Feedback Form**

*Cohort Member Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Interview Panel Member Name:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Interview Panel Member Role:* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please rate the interviewee in the following categories from one to four. One being an area in need of significant growth and four being an area of strength.*

**Communication**-the interviewee demonstrated a strong communication skill including listening and responding

1      2      3      4

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**Cultural Leadership**-the interviewee demonstrated the ability to support and build a positive and collaborative culture

1      2      3      4

---

**Instructional Leadership**-the interviewee demonstrated good knowledge of instruction and that he or she could lead instruction in a school

1      2      3      4

---

**Community and Parent Engagement**-the interviewee demonstrated the ability to actively communicate with and engage with parents and the external school community

1      2      3      4

---

**Reflective Practitioner**-the interviewee demonstrated that he or she is reflective; they have learned from significant failures or challenges and is focused on continuous improvement

1      2      3      4

---

**Principal Ready**-the interviewee demonstrated that they are a strong principal candidate and would be considered for a principalship in MCS

1      2      3      4

---

**APPENDIX N: MOORE COUNTY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

**OBSERVATION SWITCH SCHEDULE**

**School Leadership Academy Leadership Observation Switch Schedule**

Participant		Current Location	Switch Location
		New Century MS	Sandhills Farm Life ES
		Robbins ES	New Century MS
		Elise MS/Highfalls K-8	West End ES/Carthage ES
		Aberdeen Primary	<b>Interim Principal</b>
		Sandhills Farm Life ES	Elise MS/Highfalls ES
		Union Pines HS	Robbins ES
		West End ES/Carthage ES	Union Pines HS
		Vass Lakeview ES	West Pine MS
		West Pine MS	Vass-Lakeview ES

*\*This switch time should take place between February 4, 2019 and March 29, 2019. Each SLA Cohort Participant should arrange a total of one week switch time with their respective supervisor[s] (this can be during one week or over the total two months). Activities will be focused around this switch time at our cohort meetings in April and May.*

## APPENDIX O: FLIPPEN GROUP (2016) LEADERSHIP BLUEPRINT

### TRACTION PLAN

#### TrAction Plan

For use with Capturing Kids' Hearts 2, Leadership Blueprint, Leadership Blueprint Recharged, and Coaching Greatness.

Name:

Date:

Goal: (This is your call to action. It should stir you. What's your why? "I want to change so that...")

Strengths: (What strengths were in your Flippen Profile®? What other strengths have you shown?)

Top Constraints: (What behaviors hold you back? What strengths can you take too far? You can group profile scales and use summary phrases for the top constraints, but still list the Flippen Profile scale names and the direction of change. In some cases, the direction may be situational, such as "Find the right balance of \_\_\_\_\_.")

1

2

3

Impact: (Add a sentence on how your constraints play themselves out. What impact do they have?)

TrAction Steps: (What will be your behavioral, observable steps/tweaks to mitigate your constraints? Ideally, group them under the respective constraints they address.)

Get more quick feedback by confidently asking questions such as, "What could I have done/said better?" or "Any tips for me on...?" Homework: Get 4 feedbacks in 4 weeks.

Homework/Accountability:

Post and email a few copies of this - create some conversations.

Put a daily reminder on my calendar for 30 days to read this document.

Ideally, meet quarterly one-on-one with a few colleagues to review my TrAction Plan

