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**The role of the principal as viewed by North Carolina  
superintendents**

McRae, Robert Redfern, Jr., Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1987

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THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS VIEWED BY  
NORTH CAROLINA SUPERINTENDENTS

by

Robert Redfern McRae, Jr.

A Dissertation Submitted to  
the Faculty of the Graduate School at  
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Education

Greensboro  
1987

Approved by

  

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APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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MCRAE, ROBERT REDFERN, JR., Ed.D. The Role of the Principal as Viewed by North Carolina Superintendents. (1987) Directed by Dr. Dale L. Brubaker.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the view held by public school superintendents in North Carolina concerning the role of the principal. This investigation considered the independent variables of highest degree earned by the superintendent, prior experience as a principal, length of service as a superintendent, awareness of current literature on educational leadership, size of the school system where employed, and the self perception held by the superintendent as to his/her role in the central office.

Data were obtained from a sample of 111 responses to a questionnaire mailed to the total population of 140 superintendents in the state exclusive of the writer. Data were analyzed according to eight specific research questions asked by the study regarding perceptions of the population members as to the role of the principals with whom they work and of those in other school systems in the state. This information was analyzed according to the six independent variables used in the study, and a chi square test was conducted for each set of data. Variables significant at the .01 confidence level were determined.

The findings suggested that none of the independent variables were significant in the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principal. However, all six of the variables were significant in the superintendents' perceptions of the actual roles being assumed by principals. North Carolina superintendents were in general agreement concerning the proper role for principals but did not believe that a majority of principals were actually filling that role.

The strong emphasis given to the principal's importance in an effective school by research will continue to demand a clear understanding as to what superintendents wish school principals to do. An increased amount of attention should be given to defining the views held by superintendents in the state and to communicating those views to the principals who serve under those superintendents.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend special thanks to my advisor and the chairman of my committee, Dr. Dale Brubaker. His guidance was invaluable as was his emphasis on maintaining a timely schedule. I also wish to thank the other members of my committee for their advice and support. They were Dr. Joseph Bryson, Dr. Harold Snyder, and Dr. John Van Hoose.

A special thanks goes to Juli and Molly for giving up Dad for so many days. To my wife, Jackie, goes thanks, love, and a recognition that I would have never reached this point without her encouragement.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

In recent years America has focused critically on its public schools. The last two decades have produced numerous studies and reports which seek not only to evaluate the quality of these schools but also to offer recommendations for improvement.

Out of the plethora of information which has appeared on this topic have come some well researched offerings which have gained a reputation among educators as being worthy of attention. This research, commonly referred to as Effective Schools Research, has become the guide for many school systems to use in quests for improvement.

One of the five correlates of an effective school cited in the research is leadership. "Appropriate and effective leadership is essential in any successful organization. The attitude, as well as the degree of involvement, of an effective principal is very important" (Lezotte, 1983, p. 3). Lezotte (1983) also notes that the research indicates the principal to be the individual in a school who is most responsible for any outcomes of productivity and satisfaction which are attained by the students and staff who interact there.

Other authors have noted the importance of the principal to the success of the school.

If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place; if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching; if students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success. It seems clear that the principal of a school assumes a critical position in its efforts at successful instruction (Lipham, 1981, i).

It follows logically that the ability of the principal to provide effective leadership to a school is influenced significantly by the perception held by the system's chief executive officer as to the appropriate role of the principal. The superintendent's view of the role of the principal provides structure within which the principal must operate. "School principals need the support of the school superintendent and the resources of that office if they are to be effective on the job" (Greenfield, 1982, p. 18).

It behooves the superintendent to clearly communicate what is perceived as the appropriate role for the principal in a school. If this is not the case, then the two administrators may end up working in directions which are not consistent. While a principal could pursue directions deemed inappropriate by the superintendent, such efforts would probably be futile. These efforts would have a much better opportunity for success if they carry the approval of the superintendent. It is also clear from Allan Vann's research (1979) that the principal's perceived importance of an activity, such as curriculum development, ascribed to the superintendent is the only significant factor that influences the principal's leadership in curriculum and instruction. The career future of the principal depends on an adjustment to the superintendent's reward system.

As superintendents evaluate the performance of principals, suggestions for improvement are made based on their perceptions of what the principals should be doing in school. If principals are assuming the superintendent's vision of their proper role, the evaluation will be positive. If not, it is clear that the superintendent must assist each principal in identifying the skills which are needed for a change in building level leadership. Also, the superintendent must make it possible for the principal to acquire the skills which are agreed upon as being needed for improvement (Mayer and Wilson, 1982).

A school seems to take on the personality and espouse the beliefs of the principal. Efforts at becoming more effective will be led at the building level by the principal. It is clear that those efforts will be influenced strongly by the superintendent's feelings about the principal and the proper role of that position.

It is frustrating that the results of research on the principalship do not offer more complete guidelines for principals and superintendents interested in improving the effectiveness of school administrators (Greenfield, 1982, p. 17).

### Statement of the Problem

#### Purpose

This study will explore the perceptions of superintendents in North Carolina as to the proper role of the principal and as to how closely related to that are the actual roles they see being assumed by principals in the state.

The purpose of the study is seven-fold:

1. To determine what superintendents believe is the proper role of the principal.

2. To determine if the highest degree earned by the superintendent shapes his/her view of the proper role of the principal.

3. To determine if experience as a principal or experience as a superintendent shapes the superintendent's view of the proper role of the principal.

4. To determine if the extent that a superintendent reads current literature on educational leadership shapes the superintendent's view of the proper role of the principal.

5. To determine if the size of the school system where employed shapes the superintendent's view of the proper role of the principal.

6. To determine how superintendents view their own role in the central office and if that perception shapes the superintendent's view of the proper role of the principal.

7. To determine if superintendents believe that principals are assuming the proper role.

### Specific Questions

Several questions will be specifically addressed in this study:

1. What do superintendents in North Carolina believe is the proper role of principals with whom they work and of principals across North Carolina?

2. What is the perception of superintendents concerning the actual role of principals with whom they work and of principals across North Carolina?

3. Is there a correlation between highest degree earned and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

4. Is there a correlation between prior experience as a principal and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

5. Is there a correlation between years of experience as a superintendent and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

6. Is there a correlation between the degree to which superintendents read current literature on educational leadership and their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

7. Is there a correlation between the size of the school system where employed and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

8. Is there a correlation between the superintendents' perception of their own role in the central office and their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

#### Research Methodology

The specific questions will be explored according to responses on a questionnaire distributed among superintendents in North Carolina in the winter of 1987. Respondents were the chief executive officers of North Carolina school systems as elected by their respective Boards of Education.

The total population of the study is made up of all North Carolina superintendents exclusive of the writer, numbering 139. The relatively small size of the population made it unnecessary to use a sampling

technique. All superintendents were asked to respond to the entire questionnaire.

The questionnaire required biographical data from the respondents as to the highest degree earned, previous experience as a principal, years of experience as a superintendent, degree to which current literature on educational leadership is read, and the size of the school system where employed.

A more detailed discussion of research procedures may be found in Chapter Three.

#### Definition of Terms

In order to assure consistency throughout the study, the following terms or phrases are presented for use within.

1. Conception - A "paradigm, a pattern of thinking" as defined by Brubaker and Simon's research on the principalship (1986).

2. Effective schools research - An area of recent research in education. Ron Edmonds (1979) defines a school as effective if a minimum of ninety-five percent of all students at each grade level demonstrate minimum academic mastery as measured by performance on a standardized achievement test providing there is no significant difference in the proportion of youth demonstrating this mastery as a function of socio-economic class. This research has been directed at identifying characteristics of schools that can be defined as effective using this criteria.

3. Leadership - The process by which a person influences the actions of others to behave in what he or she considers to be a desirable direction.

4. Local school system - May be used interchangeably with local school district and local education agency.
5. Perception - One's understanding of reality; may be used interchangeably with view.
6. Principal - The officially appointed administrative head of a school.
7. Role - A function or set of functions which the organization expects to be performed by an individual.
8. Superintendent - The officially appointed administrative head of a local school system.

### Propositions and Limitations

#### Propositions

Several propositions are offered as a part of this study. They are subject to change as a result of the research.

The propositions are:

1. Superintendents perceive principals with whom they work differently than principals in general across North Carolina.
2. Superintendents agree as to the proper role of principals in North Carolina.
3. The level of graduate degree attained has a bearing on the perception of superintendents as to the proper role of the principal.
4. Superintendents with prior experience as a principal perceive the proper role of the principal differently from superintendents without prior experience as a principal.

5. Years of experience in the superintendency have little effect on superintendents' perceptions of the proper role of the principal.

6. Superintendents who read current literature on educational leadership perceive the proper role of the principal differently from those who fail to keep abreast of the current literature.

7. The size of the school system where employed has no bearing on the perception of the proper role of the principal held by superintendents.

8. The superintendents' perceptions of their own proper roles in the central office has no bearing on their perception of the proper role of the principal.

9. The results of the study will provide useful recommendations for improving the relationship between superintendents and principals in North Carolina and thereby improving the performance of principals.

### Limitations

The results of this study are limited in that they only investigate the perceptions of superintendents in North Carolina. While one might believe that they could be extended to include superintendents in other states, such expansion would be risky due to differences in requirements for employment as superintendent, state department directions for school objectives, and geographical implications on the mission of schools.

Also, the research on the role played by superintendents in influencing the effectiveness of principals is not extensive. While recent years have seen increased attempts to deal with this subject, the field is still limited.



### Significance of the Study

While the research seems to indicate that the principal plays a major part in the success of a school, there seems to be a need for more study into the relationship which the principal has with the superintendent. A significant amount of attention has been given to the concept of leadership in recent literature. Popular non-education specific writings such as In Search of Excellence (1982), The One Minute Manager (1982), and Iacocca (1984) are evidence of the widespread interest being shown in this concept.

These more general explorations into leadership have spawned specific efforts at analyzing the importance of effective leadership in successful school operations. However, these efforts have frequently stopped short of any careful analysis of how the principal is affected by the relationship of that position with the superintendent's office.

There are several variables affecting this relationship and the way superintendents view the proper role of the principals in their systems. Those which prove to significantly affect the superintendents' perceptions become important factors in setting the course which their principals and schools will pursue.

As superintendents enhance their professional development through advanced degree programs, new knowledge acquired and contacts made may help shape their view of the proper role of the principal. Analysis of the highest degree obtained by superintendents is conceivably an important factor.

Prior experience as a principal might certainly influence a superintendent's view on the role of the principal. One would expect, however, that most superintendents have previously been principals and that the findings concerning this variable could easily be inconclusive or so similar as to not provide any useful information. It might, instead, be that experience as a principal at particular grade levels is a more important variable than general experience as a principal.

Years of experience as a superintendent is another variable which could influence the superintendent's perspective. Over time in the central office a superintendent might alter the expectations for principals and adjust performance appraisal decisions.

Yet another variable which could affect a superintendent's perception of the proper role of the principal is the degree to which current literature on educational leadership is read. The trends promoted by that literature could be expected to be apparent in the view of a superintendent who reads it frequently.

A fifth variable is the size of the school system where the superintendent is employed. Size of the system often dictates grade level organizational decisions, size of auxiliary staff, and opportunities for direct superintendent-principal contact. Such factors could have a direct bearing on the relationship between the two categories of administrators.

How superintendents perceive their own roles in the central office is also a variable to be considered. Superintendents who emphasize curriculum and instruction strongly could logically be assumed to expect

principals under their direction to do the same. Likewise, those who perceive administration to be more managerial in nature might transfer those feelings to their expectations for principals.

Superintendents shape their perceptions of the effectiveness of their principals based on a variety of influences. It is important to both principals and superintendents that it is understood what variables are most important if principals are to exert the kind of positive leadership required in effective schools. That perception of the proper role of the principal is the dependent variable which is influenced by the independent variables cited.

#### Summary

Research indicates the importance of the principal to efforts at building an effective school. No person influences the behavior of the principal more than the superintendent of the system. The description of what influences the superintendent to shape a perspective of how the principal should carry out job responsibilities is valuable information for practicing and prospective school administrators.

Further exploration of the topic will provide the opportunity to share this information. A review of pertinent literature which is conducted in Chapter Two will offer a framework within which to analyze effective leadership in the field of school administration. An examination of how principals and superintendents interact and assume expected roles as leaders will take place there. Chapter Three will describe the procedures used in the study. This will include a description of the population for the study, the research methodology used, and the research

instrument itself. Chapter Four will report the results of the research effort especially in relation to the specific research questions. Conclusions drawn from these results and recommendations for the future will be presented in Chapter Five.

Results of the research effort will offer both groups of school administrators additional insights into what affects their working relationships. Principals should gain information on what superintendents believe they should be doing in their schools. Superintendents will be able to better understand what factors shape their perceptions of what principals should do. It is likely, however, that as further study is put into the concept of effective schools, further study in superintendent-principal relations will be required.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of public school superintendents in North Carolina concerning the role of the principal as an educational leader. This investigation will consider the variables of highest degree earned, prior experience as a principal, length of service as a superintendent, awareness of current literature on educational leadership, size of the school system where employed, and the perception of their own role in the central office as it influences perceptions held by superintendents regarding the proper role of the principal.

The review of pertinent literature conducted in this chapter is organized into four areas: role theory, leadership, the principalship, and the superintendency. The discussion of leadership includes special attention to the concepts of conservation and change.

#### Role Theory

"When two or more people come together in new relationships over a sustained period of time in order to achieve certain goals" a setting is created (Sarason, 1972, p. 1). When an individual assumes a certain position in a setting, the other members in the relationship expect certain functions to be performed by that person. In other words a role is to be filled. Brubaker (1976) states that people who fill roles tend

to behave in ways that are consistent with the expectations of others. These behaviors become essentially ritualistic, providing the security of predictable behavior.

Goffman (1959) contends that the expectations of the audience for the functions performed by an individual are so significant and so clearly understood by the audience that they are clustered so as to be perceived as that person's role. As people enter new settings they must either create new perceptions of appropriate roles for their positions, assume existing role definitions, or create conflict situations in opposition to previously held role definitions.

Biddle (1979) writes that role expectations are formed in simple ways. They are either developed from the opinions which setting members verbalize or from observing the actions of other setting members, or both. Role expectations are passed along to newcomers and often become quite traditional.

Roles are usually positional (Biddle, 1979).

Individuals in society occupy positions and their role performance in these positions is determined by social norms, demands, and rules; by the role performance of others in their respective positions; by those who observe and react to their performance; and by the individual's particular capabilities and personality (Biddle and Thomas, 1966, p. 4).

It can be contended that the role of the school principal is also described in this way. Clearly, one of the important factors affecting the role of the principal is the reaction of the superintendent to the principal's performance.

"The concept of consensus means that two or more persons are judged to hold similar expectations" (Biddle, 1979, p. 162). When the principal

and the superintendent hold similar expectations as to the role of the principal, there is then consensus. Biddle (1979) goes on to define conformity as involving both this consensus and the fact that the expectations held determine behavior and not vice versa. In instances of conformity the principal submits to the superintendent's expectations and is compliant to them. In such situations the principal can usually expect rewards and affirmations from the school system head.

There also can be instances of dissensus or role conflict. Expectations of the principal may not be consistent with those held by the superior. The fact that both sides of the conflicting expectations have institutional validity provide each with a logical claim to legitimacy (Parsons, 1951). Both parties may then attempt to strengthen their bases of support. The superintendent will often look to the board of education or to the community for such assistance. Often, the principal develops support primarily at the building level through working closely with faculty and staff.

When such conflict occurs in role expectations, the superintendent may use various methods in an attempt to elicit compliance. Skinner (1953) notes several of these methods to be emotion, force, manipulating stimuli, reinforcement, and punishment. Eventually, the most successful method will receive primary focus. The final alternative, if the superintendent cannot compromise expectations, is the punishment, or in this case dismissal procedure. A new person would then be sought to fill the principal's role, one who would fit the consensus rather than the dissensus mode.

Superintendents can contribute to role confusion by issuing conflicting role expectations (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980). Such behavior not only weakens the superintendent's perspective but also presents the principal with the opportunity to solidify the position of personal role beliefs. It is important, therefore, that consensus be pursued by the head of the system, and this requires a clear description of role expectations for the principal.

"For almost every identity that we recognize, we also carry in our minds a set of conceptions concerning the behaviors of those who are its members" (Biddle, 1979, p. 209). We come to expect certain things of certain people. Such is as true of education as it is of other disciplines. People generally acquiesce to the expectations of superiors especially if no fundamental breach of principle is required. Job security in itself may be enough of an influence to generate such conformity.

When an individual assumes an administrative role in an educational setting, a positional identity is assumed. Sergiovanni and Carver (1973) note that as this role is assumed one or more of three sub-roles is also assumed. Principals, for instance, have a collegial relationship with other principals. They also assume a superordinate sub-role in relation to teachers and other staff members in their schools. Finally, they are in a subordinate sub-role to the superintendent.

It is the effect of the superordinate relationship which the superintendent has with the principal that deserves additional attention. As the principal seeks to establish a personal role definition, the superintendent is in a position to significantly influence the final role



definition which is actually assumed.

When an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others which is in his best interest to convey (Goffman, 1959, p. 4).

Few would argue that it is in the best interest of a principal to impress the superintendent. Factors that influence the superintendent's view of the proper role of the principal and how this view overrides, merges with, or yields to the principal's perception of the role to develop a final, agreed upon perception by both parties are important considerations for practicing public school administrators.

Before exploring what research says about the importance of the principal to the success of a school and the influence the superintendent exerts on the role which the principal assumes, a general exploration into the concept of leadership will be conducted.

### Leadership

The concept of leadership has been a topic of interest throughout time. However, recent years have seen increased attention focused upon the subject. Much has been written about leadership as a general topic, and many writers have attempted to capture the essence of the term. Likewise, a significant amount of written material has recently appeared which deals with educational leadership, most specifically the principalship.

Leadership is typically defined somewhat as has been done in Chapter One, "the process by which a person influences the actions of others to behave in what he or she considers to be a desirable direction".

Brubaker (1976) agrees with this concept, and Cunningham (1985) concurs, noting that leading involves getting the members of the setting to pursue a mission. Bennis and Nanus (1985) go on to say that leaders use inspiration not orders to accomplish their mission. It seems that there is general agreement that leadership involves a person or group of persons influencing others to pursue goals which they have established as worthy. Even so, it may at times be that "leadership is like beauty. It is difficult to describe, but you know it when you see it" (Enochs, 1981, p. 178). Some people seem to have a passion for leadership more than others and are consequently more effective.

Burns (1978) offers that there are actually two kinds of leadership. Transactional leadership is managerial and custodial and is needed to keep the institution functioning on a day-to-day basis. Hostetler (1986) contends that the "guiding principles for leadership are transactional, not coercive or charismatic" (p. 35). Burns' other category of leadership is transformational. This kind of leadership gives direction to the institution and is needed for achieving fundamental goals or changes.

Another categorization of leadership establishes the division between emerging leadership and appointed leadership ("The Values of", 1986). A principal is an appointed leader. However, if the principal fails to lead, another leader will emerge from the setting. In educational settings most leadership is appointed.

These concepts relate closely to Sergiovanni and Starratt's (1971) thoughts on hierarchical authority and ability authority. While the appointed leader has hierarchical authority and may have ability authority, the latter is not to be presumed. Emerging leaders probably will not

have hierarchical authority but most certainly will have ability authority. Peters and Waterman (1982) speak of institutions creating environments in which "people can blossom" (p. 86). It is conceivable that such emerging personalities may become emerging leaders.

This concept is especially true if, as Sarason (1972) notes, a change is needed which the followers perceive but the existing leader does not. If, however, the emerging leader cannot acquire positional legitimacy, conflicting goals will continue in the setting. It may be that emergent leadership is generally undesirable. "Reliance on emergent leadership is not sufficient. More highly organized and deliberate attempts to develop leadership are called for" (Cunningham, 1985, p. 18).

Effective leaders seem to have a vision for their organizations. Sergiovanni (1984) and Bennis and Nanus (1985) cite the need for leaders to focus on a desired future state for the setting. This idea fits appropriately in schools as well as in the larger society, a point noted by Rutherford (1985) and Lightfoot (1983). "A principal, for example, must have a vision of what schools should be and must lead his or her staff to have the same vision" (Brewer, 1985, p. 6).

Hersey (1986) believes that this vision can be transferred to other members of the setting. Modeling and reinforcement by the leader are ways by which this transference can take place. This task will be much simpler if the vision of the leader takes into account the needs and goals of the other members of the setting (Burns, 1978; Peters and Austin, 1985). "The organization must be mobilized to accept and support the new vision - to make it happen" (Bennis and Nanus, 1985, p. 143).

Effective leaders teach loyalty and teamwork ("The Values of", 1986). Through building a trust relationship, the leader acquires needed support from others in the group. As these qualities build, the leader will develop a core group on which to rely for advice and additional insight (Sarason, 1972). Additionally, Sarason directs leaders new to a setting to give attention to the history of the setting, the limited resources of the setting, its values and goals, and symptoms of decline if the needed trust of followers is to be cultivated and maintained. Leadership requires this multifaceted perspective if it is to be effective.

#### Conservation and Change

"Settings, like an individual, have an almost infinite capacity to treasure their 'symptoms' at the same time they proclaim their desire to change" (Sarason, 1972, p. 139). Educational settings such as public school systems have traditionally experienced periods of significant change while holding on to other time proven methods of conducting their affairs. The history of education is full of altered emphases represented by such movements as Back to the Basics and the currently popular trend towards learning enhanced by the use of new technology. Educational leaders must pay heed to the same cautions involved in the change process which are faced by leaders in other settings.

Brubaker and Nelson (1975) note the expertise needed to know what should be preserved and what needs to be changed in a setting. "Innovation involves balancing things" (p. 64). Brubaker (1984) goes on to add that conservation and change exist in concert with each other. Leaders

must be able to determine which is which and to generate support for both.

Facilitating change includes convincing those in opposition to it of the value involved. At times, however, change may be easier to implement than conservation may be to perpetuate. At other times the task will be more difficult. Brubaker (1979) notes two types of change that is implemented by leaders. First order change deals with minor revisions needed in a system which is basically perceived to be good. Second order change involves making massive changes in the system. Both types of change are seen in educational settings, and both involve some adjustment on the part of those who are affected. Cunningham (1985) points out that change seldom comes easily and that the people involved look to leadership figures for direction and consultation.

On occasion change may be so difficult to implement that the leader resorts to the use of power as a tool for convincing setting members, or failing to accomplish that, as a tool for making the change in the face of substantial opposition. Some see leadership itself as "a special form of power" (Burns, 1978, p. 12).

Hostetler (1986) says that there are times when power has to be used to maintain a proper balance of affairs. Yukl (1982) agrees that "position power is not inconsequential for leadership effectiveness" (p. 3). However, he also notes that effective principals exercise power in a way which is characterized by tact and the lack of manipulation. Many believe that change in education should not be a burdensome task. Corbett and D'Amico (1986) think that "educational improvement should not have to rely on heroic efforts" (p. 71). These authors believe

that educators can use change positively to improve schools if given proper encouragement and support. Lasting change is viewed as coming from within the system as its people work together (Miller, Cohen, and Sayre, 1985).

Even if the educational change process is less complicated than in some other institutions, there are still times of conflict. Brubaker (1976) points out that conflict is an essential part of change and that leaders must find ways for the resolution of disagreements to be accomplished. He sees this as a positive use of conflict. Yet, Brewer, Wynne, and Ainsworth (1987) believe that many leaders use power to accomplish change in a more manipulative way than as seen by many other authors. Educational leaders are seen as using power plays not only to make changes they desire but also to strengthen the individual positions they hold in the setting. Additionally, they believe that such power plays are critical to the "implementation of effective school systems" (p. 7).

All leaders have to deal with change both in efforts to resist it and in efforts to stimulate it. In order for problems to be solved alternatives must be explored. The best results may at times lie in conservation or preserving the status quo. An effective reading program which is resulting in rising test scores should be allowed to remain in place. At other times change may be required, either of the first order variety or the second order variety depending on the need and the unique characteristics of the setting which is involved. "Persons involved in educational change should move from the problem-solution, question-answer mode of thinking to a dilemma reconciliation way of thinking"

(Brubaker and Nelson, 1975, p. 64) in order to determine the proper uses of conservation and change.

Somehow, the importance of educational leadership is ignored at times. This, of course, does not mean that it is unimportant (Doyle and Hartle, 1985; Yukl, 1982). The important considerations for leaders in other settings are also applicable to educational institutions.

The educational leader assumes the role of 'clinical practitioner' bringing expert knowledge and bearing as they relate to teaching effectiveness, educational program development, and clinical supervision (Sergiovanni, 1984, p. 6).

Snyder and Anderson (1986) believe that educational leaders have an obligation to make certain that their clientele are well served. Failure to do so will almost certainly undermine the effectiveness of the leader. "With effective leadership, however, there is no limit to what a group of teachers can accomplish" (Lezotte, 1983, p. 3).

To gain a clearer perspective of leadership in education, it is practical to investigate what research says about the specific functions of principals and superintendents and how the two positions relate.

### The Principalship

The principalship is the area of educational leadership which has received the most attention in recent research. Many contend that this is rightfully so. "Rebuilding excellence in education means reaffirming the importance of the local school and freeing leaders to lead" (Boyer, 1986, p. 32). Howard (1986) sees the principal as "the catalyst from which good schools develop" (p. 6). Fairman and Clark (1985) promote the principal as the foundation of effective schools.

Much of the recent focus on the principalship has used effective schools research with its emphasis on educational excellence as a basis for direction. Boyer (1984) believes that building level leadership is needed in order to achieve excellence, as it is the key to pulling together the separate elements in the school into a cohesive system. Finn (1984) contends that hiring the best principal available should be the number one objective of people who desire to improve a school, and Guthrie (1986) says that "a school with a weak principal almost never remains effective for very long" (p. 306). Clearly, research has recognized the importance of a strong principal to the progress a school makes towards being effective.

Many writers have attempted to identify characteristics and functions of effective principals. Stiegelbauer (1985) believes that the principal establishes "a framework of expectations for the school" (p. 8). Additionally, the principal is seen as identifying areas which are in need of improvement and as planning for and initiating the steps required to reduce or eliminate these needs. When innovations are required, the principal should learn about them in order to be actively involved in their implementation.

Shoemaker and Fraser (1981) list several personal goals for an effective principal.

1. Assertive, achievement-oriented leadership.
2. An orderly, purposeful, and peaceful school climate.
3. High expectations for staff and students.
4. Well-designed instructional objectives and evaluation system (p. 180).



These authors see principals as "enablers" (p. 180) who facilitate the work of their staffs. Leadership is seen as including both what the principal does and what the principal allows others to do. DeBevoise (1984) points out that they are innovators, but that it is clear they do not act in isolation from other members of their setting.

Other writers support the concept of principals working in close relation to those around them. Sergiovanni (1984) uses the term leadership density to promote the idea of principals allowing others to assume some of the leadership function in the school. Manasse (1984) also writes of the need for principals to use others to help with leadership. Principals are encouraged to select individuals for assistance who complement their own abilities and characteristics.

There are authors who caution against too much involvement of others by the principal in the leadership process. Huddle (1984) sees effective principals as being willing to take full responsibility for all aspects of what is going on in the school even if such acceptance goes beyond "ordinary boundaries" (p. 66). In 1983 McCoy and Shreve noted the need for the principal to maintain autonomy and control of the implementation process in the school. They went on to say that research had found effective principals to be self-directing and inclined to increase control over a situation in times of disagreement. Enochs (1981) contends that in the end the principals who are most effective are those who have "common sense, character, and good old-fashioned guts" (p. 178). These calls for increased control of the leadership function by principals do not, however, outnumber those which encourage principals to see leadership as a cooperative venture.

Snyder and Anderson (1986) list several requisites of the principalship.

1. A clear vision of possibilities.
2. A broad knowledge base.
3. Unshakable commitment.
4. Social engineering skills (p. 63).

These are indicative of the broad range of skills and insights that researchers are contending as necessary for success in the principalship. McCoy and Shreve (1983) point out the wide range of styles a principal must have available in order to motivate those involved in efforts directed at improvement. Manasse (1984) supports this thought in calling for principals to have personal vision, analysis skills, and interpersonal skills if they are to generate commitment among staff members to newly developed goals for the setting.

There has been an increased call in recent years for state departments and local school systems to plan for the development of needed skills in practicing and potential principals (Lezotte, 1986). There are many examples of training institutes for principals such as noted by Spaedy (1986) and Grier and Draughon (1987). Erlandson (1987) sees these centers as facilitators of growth and relationship which can focus on a unique clientele with specific interests. The training of principals at the university level has long been an important part of the educational administration preparation process. Now the emphasis is expanding to encompass a broader arena for continuing in-service among these leaders.

There has also been significant debate among those interested in educational administration as to the identity of the role which principals should be filling in their schools today. A review of research enables

one to identify three broad areas of involvement for building level administrators: management, administration, and instructional leadership. Some writers see principals as fitting into one of these categories while others believe that they are involved in two or more of the areas.

Rollis and Highsmith (1986) believe that most principals are simply not prepared to be instructional leaders. Management training has been the emphasis for them, and it is in that area where their expertise lies. They "question whether it is practical to expect most principals to perform two roles that are so different and require such diverse skills" (p. 300), referring to instructional leadership as the second role. Principals, in this view, are to keep the day-to-day operations of their schools functioning smoothly. The instructional leadership function is viewed as requiring a much broader perspective and range of skills and better suited to someone else's job description.

Sergiovanni and Carver (1973) believe the principal's role is moving from the realm of head teacher-disciplinarian to the realm of middle management. In such a view the principal must call upon the talents of other setting members to take key positions in the arena of instructional leadership.

Brubaker and Simon (1986) think that a principal has certain inescapable administrative duties. "The principal as administrator is accountable for the governance of the school" (p. 15). In this view the principal must work within the bureaucratic structure to accomplish administrative tasks. These are certain duties which must be accomplished

in the school such as schedule development, discipline, and evaluation. In retrospect it does seem that, as a member of the bureaucracy, it would be very difficult for the principal to avoid all such jobs. A certain amount of routineness is a part of the position. Many would say, however, that it is not the most important part of the job, although a large number of principals seem to enjoy the administrative aspect of their work (Brubaker and Simon, 1987).

The area of principal involvement which has received the most attention in recent years is that of instructional leadership. It is also the area where principals have faced the most difficult task in establishing their credibility. Principals have long been looked upon as effective leaders in a general sense while not being credited with effective instructional leadership (Fairman and Clark, 1985). Principals themselves, however, report a perception of role change to include being such a leader (McCormick-Larken, 1985).

Many believe that it is not only possible for principals to be successful instructional leaders, but that it is also necessary if their schools are to be effective. DeBevoise (1984) sees instructional leadership as being what the principal does or assigns to others to do to promote growth in student learning. Obviously, growth in student learning is a worthy goal of all schools and a role which can easily be argued as of primary importance for a principal. "It now appears axiomatic that an effective school needs a principal who is an instructional leader" (Mitchel, 1985, p. 7). Instructional leaders are seen as attaching a high level of importance to facilitating student learning and as communicating that importance to the entire school community.

Howard (1986) notes research that indicates the principal as so crucial to effective schools that it is logical to assume that an effective school is not possible in the absence of a principal who is perceived by teachers as a strong instructional leader. Clinton (1986) recommends that principals in schools characterized by consistently poor performance be replaced, thus indicating the pressure on these administrators to pay attention to the instructional program. Continuing certification of principals, he says, "should be based on results" (p. 209).

Rollis and Highsmith (1986) suggest that the characteristic distinguishing effective principals may in fact be a set of attitudes and beliefs about instruction as opposed to a set of skills and behaviors. Principals who are effective instructional leaders place instructional improvement at the top of their agenda and pursue the resources, both in materials and human talent, to accomplish that improvement. Edmonds (1979) led the initiative among researchers promoting this view in recent years.

There is also a significant position in research which recognizes the multiplicity of functions for the principal. Huddle (1984) discusses the complexity of the principal's job which can be seen in the tremendous variety of functions that are required to be performed daily, often simultaneously. Principals have to juggle their duties and attend to them all.

McDaniel (1982) believes that improving instruction requires good management and good leadership and that the principal is the key to

this improvement. Principals are seen as influencing the quality of instruction "sometimes in their role as managers and sometimes in their role as instructional leaders" (pp. 465-466). Behling and Champion (1984) note that all principals who are effective instructional leaders are also functioning as good managers.

Research indicates that principals of effective schools do not experience confusion about the multiple nature of their roles (McPhail-Wilcox and Guth, 1983). They are able to handle the different duties and to move back and forth between them as needed. The requirements of the modern principal's job when coupled with state laws and regulations tell the principal that both administration and instructional leadership are necessary components of the position (Brubaker and Simon, 1987).

"The effective principal's role may vary from director to facilitator on any given day in any given school" (Good Schools, 1981, p.14). Effective principals provide time for instructional leadership by knowing how to manage time and people efficiently. Guth (1984) cites research that indicates gains in pupil achievement when principals are able to handle the complex nature of their role with little frustration.

Brubaker and Simon (1986) note that in the history of our nation principals have functioned within one of five roles. These are consistent with the three categories of a principal's responsibilities mentioned previously. In seeking to identify what superintendents view as the proper role of the principal it is helpful to use these five conceptions as roles for categorization. A description of Brubaker and Simon's five conceptions of the principalship (1987) follows:

1. Principal Teacher: Routinely engages in classroom teaching for a portion of each school day; also responsible for daily school routines and clerical duties; does not believe special training is needed to be an effective school principal.
2. General Manager: Is the official liaison between the school and the central office; spends the majority of time on clerical duties; relies upon common sense and reacts to problems as they arise; has the right to give and enforce orders to teachers; implements the curriculum as mandated by the state and local school board.
3. Professional and Scientific Manager: Spends more time in classroom supervision than routine administrative duties; uses test data as a basis for planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction; is accustomed to the bureaucratic command-compliance organizational system; is interested in efficiency and the use of time to meet management goals and objectives.
4. Administrator and Instructional Leader: Recognizes that his/her role encompasses both governance functions and instructional leadership functions; handles governance functions through the bureaucratic organizational structure; expects and accepts some friction between governance and instructional leadership functions; treats teachers as professionals, giving them significant input into staff hiring, scheduling, evaluation, procurement of materials, selection of objectives, methods, etc.
5. Curriculum Leader: Views the curriculum in very broad terms (more than a course of study) to mean: what each person experiences in cooperatively creating learning settings; believes that the role of the principal is too complex to reduce to simple technical procedures; does not attempt to dichotomize administrative and instructional functions, realizing that all tasks impact on what is learned; believes that the learning of adult educators is as important as the learning of children and youth (p. 73).

According to research conducted, 71% of principals surveyed in North Carolina viewed themselves as filling the role of "Administrator and Instructional Leader" (Brubaker and Simon, 1987, p. 73).

This categorization of roles of the principal moves the principal from a conception where the principal "was not a student of administration in any sense" (Brubaker and Simon, 1986, p. 6) to a conception where the

principal has a "richness and diversity not seen in previous conceptions" (p. 24).

The role of the principal can take on many facets depending on whose perception of it carries the most influence. The role can even change depending on the availability of resources for assistance such as central office support (Gersten, Carnine, and Green, 1982). Yet, principals must understand which role is most important for them to assume. If DuFour (1984) is correct that the most indispensable characteristic of effective schools is effective leadership, the role of the principal must be clear. It is the superintendent who exerts the greatest influence on that role definition.

"Inept principals must not be allowed to remain in key positions" (Finn, 1984, p. 522). The superintendent who must lead the determination of that ineptness and the principal involved must understand on what basis that determination will be made. To accomplish that, role expectations must be established by the superintendent.

### The Superintendency

Rebore (1985) believes that the superintendent is the most influential administrator in a school system. The responsibilities of that position affect all operations in the unit. It is the superintendent who "sets the tone within which all other administrators will function" (p. 87). McCurdy (1983) says that the real extent of a principal's influence is up to the superintendent who retains the final power for the system's decisions.



Snyder and Anderson (1986) contend that role expectations for the principal are typically controlled by the superintendent. This is due to the need perceived by most superintendents for principals to serve not only their schools but also the system. Dianda (1984) believes that if a principal is hostile to the superintendent's expectations, he or she should be replaced. "If that is not possible, then neither is school improvement" (pp. 53-54).

Murphy, Hallinger, and Peterson (1985) conclude that superintendents are actively engaged in role modeling. It is through this process that principals come to understand what their superiors want them to do. Tolcacher (1986) encourages an applicant to talk with the superintendent before accepting a principal's job for the purpose of determining if the role expectations of the system's leader match the role definition which that applicant has. The effective superintendent "sets the agenda and develops the mission" (Fortenberry, 1985, p. 3). Lezotte (1986) agrees. The superintendent should let people know what is considered the most important business of the school system.

There seems to be general agreement as to how the superintendent can clearly communicate these role expectations. McCurdy (1983) mentions the desire of many principals for superintendents to visit their schools more often. Davidson (1986) calls upon superintendents to become involved in the school level planning process and to provide needed in-service for principals after doing so. Highly visible school system leaders who spend a great deal of time in their schools are also called for by Murphy et al (1985). When needed skills are seen as deficient in the principal, the superintendent should provide coaching for improvement (Snyder, 1986).

Many writers call upon the superintendent to give the principal a greater degree of involvement in selecting school level goals than has often been the case in the past. Heckman, Oates, and Sirotnik (1983) suggest that the superintendent assume a supportive role which allows the principal freedom to identify school level needs. Davidson (1986) points out that the principal "must have both the responsibility and the authority to serve as a leader at the local campus level" (p. 6). McCurdy (1983) promotes the establishment of joint goals by the two categories of educational leaders. Principals cannot be successful, says Sapone (1983), unless granted a meaningful role by the superintendent. Principals who feel unimportant or merely a go-between in the middle of the central office and teachers fail to assume the responsibilities of assertive leadership at the building level. A major area of attention for superintendents should be the selection of promising principals along with the development in them of the skills needed for independent leadership (Goodlad, 1984). Even if this independency occurs, it is the superintendent who allows it.

McCormick-Larken (1985) sees successful schools as those which have loosened the linkage between the school and the central office in order to give the members of the local school setting a greater sense of ownership. Dianda (1984) supports this view. However, some superintendents feel threatened by such a position.

Superintendents too often are unable to transcend considerations of potential loyalty and the absence of boat rocking tendencies in return for the greater assets of intelligence, creativity, and courage (Goodlad, 1984, pp. 306-307).

At times principals try to perpetuate a separateness from central office operations (Blumberg and Greenfield, 1980; McCurdy, 1983). Some principals are able to run their schools much as they desire "sometimes heeding the superintendent's desires, sometimes paying them lip service, and sometimes ignoring them altogether" (Blumberg, 1985, p. 212). Perhaps some incidents of such behavior are because frequent turnover in the superintendency make it difficult for that person to keep a firm hand on building level activity (Bacharach and Conley, 1986). At other times it may be due to insecurity or indifference on the part of the principal. It may also be due to the fact that the many demands of the superintendency prevent enough attention to the specific school sites to insure conformity (Blumberg, 1985).

Whatever level of control the superintendent maintains over principals, it remains the function of that person to evaluate the work of the school leader (Buser and Banks, 1984; Cuban, 1985). The principal's future depends on this evaluation of performance (Morris, Crowson, Porter-Gehrie, and Hurwitz, 1984), and loyalty to the system is important even to the point at times of "telling the boss what he thinks the boss wants to hear" (Carmichael, 1982, p. 58).

Honig (1985) contends that the most important strategy for improvement in a school is the development of a system for holding the principal accountable. The superintendent will do that in connection with the role perception held for the principal. Murphy et al (1985) believe that when the superintendent pays close attention to the evaluation function, achievement in schools rises. Evaluation serves to link the school with the school system and its goals. The view of the proper

role of the principal which is held by the superintendent is crucial to the development of those system level goals. Principals who fail to fill the role desired by the superintendent face poor evaluations and possible demotions or dismissal.

The superintendency is a very important position in the system. Goodlad (1984) believes that even most parents see the most important decisions which affect the system and their schools as being made at that level. Schools do not operate at a level independent of the school system (Wood, Freeland, and Szabo, 1985). Dianda (1984) considers the superintendent as the key actor in any improvement effort.

Recent effective schools research has caused superintendents to focus specifically on academic achievement (Cuban, 1983). Expectations which the superintendent has for principals change as new goals and directions emerge. The superintendent has the "responsibility to communicate expectations to all" (Fortenberry, 1985, p. 3). If the principal agrees with the expectations, the superintendent can be of great assistance in achieving improvement by adding support and even clout to the effort (Dianda, 1984).

#### Summary

This chapter has focused on four major topics: role theory, leadership, the principalship, and the superintendency.

Research has clearly spoken to the importance of the principal's leadership in an effective school. Other research supports this view and includes the superintendent as a figure of extreme importance (Goldberg, 1984; Huberman, 1983).

These two leadership positions are closely tied together. The superintendent is seen as a role definer for principals (Sergiovanni and Carver, 1973). The principal's ability to take care of the local school impacts significantly on the superintendent's ability to operate the school system successfully (Davidson, 1986).

Superintendents "seem to have a tendency to offer prescriptions (to principals) about what things have to be done in order to perform the job successfully" (Blumberg, 1985, p. 205). Principals must deal with these prescriptions.

For if the principal embodies the potential for creating the conditions that breed good schools, it is the superintendent directly who deters or enables principals to fulfill their potential (McCurdy, 1983, p. 56).

The role of the principal has experienced change over time (Brubaker and Simon, 1986). Whatever the role, however, the principal has remained a central figure in school operations. Recent years have produced increased calls for accountability in schools. Principals have come under an increasingly watchful eye by their system level leaders. They are evaluated by superintendents who use their own perceptions as a framework for their expectations for principals.

Little has been done to look specifically at how superintendents in North Carolina view the role of the principal. The view held by these superintendents significantly influences the performances of the principals who work for them. This study is concerned specifically with what view of the role of the principal is held by superintendents in the state. These views may be influenced by several variables: highest degree earned by the superintendent; their prior experience as

a principal and length of service as a superintendent; their awareness of current literature on educational leadership; the size of the school system where the superintendent is employed; and the perception these superintendents hold concerning their own role in the school system.

These independent variables were a part of a questionnaire distributed to 139 superintendents in North Carolina. A description of the research methodology, population, procedure, and instrument used to gather the data are given in Chapter Three.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURES

#### Introduction

This study is concerned with the view of the proper role of the principal which is held by public school superintendents in North Carolina. It was undertaken based on the assumption that the knowledge of such a view is of extreme importance to the principal, as it is the superintendent who evaluates the principal's work and makes related employment decisions such as tenure, transfer, and dismissal. Six independent variables which might influence the superintendent's view have been identified: (1) highest degree earned by the superintendent; (2) prior experience as a principal; (3) length of service as a superintendent; (4) awareness of current information on educational leadership through up-to-date reading; (5) size of the school system where employed; and (6) the view held by superintendents of their own role in the central office.

Data were obtained from 111 responses to a questionnaire mailed to the population of 139 superintendents of public school systems in the state. This included all superintendents in the state exclusive of the writer of the study.

This chapter is a description of the research methodology, instrument used, and population surveyed for this study.

### Research Methodology

The method of data collection used for the study was by a written survey instrument which was mailed to each of the 139 subjects selected for participation. The survey was designed to study the relationship between the dependent variable, the view of the role of the principal held by superintendents, and each of the six independent variables identified above. A two page questionnaire was designed and mailed to the superintendents involved. The survey instrument was developed from a similar instrument constructed by Brubaker and Simon (1987) which was used in 1985 to explore the perception of the role of the principal which was held by North Carolina principals themselves. Gay (1981) was also used as a guide when developing the particular instrument to be used in this study.

In studies such as this independent variables often contribute to the prediction of a dependent variable. In this correlational study the six independent variables cited in the introduction to this chapter were studied as predictors of the dependent variable identified above. The survey also sought to determine if superintendents believed that the actual role being filled by principals under their supervision and across North Carolina was the same as what they perceived the proper role of the principal to be.

### Instrument

Survey participants received a two page questionnaire designed to gather data concerning how superintendents perceived the role of the principal. The questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter which



explained the study and by an additional page which defined the five conceptions of the principalship as defined by Brubaker and Simon (1987). This additional page was crucial to the completion of the survey as respondents had to react to six questions which required the use of this categorization of roles.

The first page of the questionnaire itself concerned the five conceptions of the role of the principal. As noted previously, it was developed from the questionnaire which Brubaker and Simon (1987) used in their original study. During the 1985-86 school year, they surveyed 370 principals in North Carolina as to what they perceived to be the role of principals in the state. Principals surveyed were asked the following questions:

1. What is your present leadership role?
2. What leadership role would you like to have?
3. What leadership role do the three principals you know best assume?
4. What leadership role do most principals in North Carolina play? (Brubaker and Simon, 1987, p. 72).

The first page of the survey instrument for this study was adapted from Brubaker and Simon's instrument to allow superintendents to provide information useful to this study, emphasizing what roles they perceived as being filled by principals in North Carolina. This part of the survey also provided information concerning what the superintendents perceived to be their own role, both actual and desired.

The following six items of information were provided on the first page of the survey when returned by superintendents:

1. The number of principals in the superintendent's school system who fit in each respective role conception.
2. The role conception which was seen as most appropriate for the principals in the superintendent's school system.
3. The role conception which most accurately described the majority of the principals in North Carolina as seen by the superintendent.
4. The role conception which was seen as most appropriate for principals in North Carolina as seen by the superintendent.
5. The role conception which most accurately described each superintendent's perception of his/her own job in the central office.
6. The role conception which was seen as most appropriate for each respective superintendent in his/her own setting.

The second part of the survey instrument asked for the following personal data from each participant:

1. Number of years experience as a superintendent.
2. Size of the school system where employed as a superintendent.
3. Existence of prior experience as a principal.
4. Length of service as a principal.
5. Highest degree earned by the superintendent.
6. Sex.
7. Age.
8. Professional publications read regularly.
9. Perception of adequacy of amount of reading regarding educational leadership held by superintendent.

This completed the collection of data for the study. Surveys were marked so as to allow the author the opportunity to send a follow-up request to superintendents who did not respond to the initial mailing of the questionnaire, however the anonymity of respondents was assured.

Surveys returned revealed minimal confusion on the part of the respondents. There were very few unsolicited comments on the surveys which were returned. Those few surveys which did contain remarks not requested mentioned the difficulty superintendents had in fitting principals into the conceptions provided or in fitting themselves into those same conceptions in their role as superintendent. That did not, however, seem to be a difficulty for most respondents. While such comments were not discouraged in the directions for completion, they cannot be considered in the analysis of survey results due to the lack of any way to measure them quantifiably. Twelve of the surveys which were returned had to be discarded due to failure to be completed in accordance with the directions which were provided. The large number of returned questionnaires which were completed correctly lead the author to assume that instructions were adequate.

### Validity

Brubaker and Simon's (1987) five conception framework of the role of the principal receives support from the review of literature in Chapter Two. As noted in that chapter, their five role identities are closely related to the areas within which principals perform as cited by numerous authors. Terminology varies among these authors, but the tasks which are specified fit well in the Brubaker and Simon model.

Brubaker and Simon (1987) pilot tested the instrument from which the research instrument used in this study was derived for clarity of directions and item analysis. The results allowed the authors to proceed with their study.

When evaluated in terms of the review of literature, the instrument used in this study has content validity as defined by Gay (1981). Content validity includes item validity and sampling validity. Item validity is indicated since items included deal specifically with the subject of the study, the role of the principal. Sampling validity is also indicated based upon the literature's support of Brubaker and Simon's five conception framework as being inclusive of the possible roles a principal might assume.

Further evidence of the validity of the instrument is provided by Williams (1987). In a study designed to investigate the view of the role of the principal held by teachers in North Carolina Williams used an instrument derived from the one developed by Brubaker and Simon. Her research instrument used the same five conception framework which was used in this study and was quite similar in design.

Williams compared answers to two free response questions in her survey to items marked on the research instrument to see if similar responses with qualities similar to those described in the free response questions were chosen. Results indicated the validity of the instrument to be acceptable.

### Population

There are 140 local public school systems in North Carolina. Each of the 100 counties of the state has at least one system. Twenty-eight of the counties contain more than one system. Each school system has a superintendent as its chief executive officer and secretary to the board of education.

Seventy of the school systems have 5,000 students or less as indicated in the 1986-87 North Carolina Education Directory. Thirty-eight of the systems have between 5,001 and 10,000 students, and twenty-two of the systems have between 10,001 and 20,000 students. Nine systems have more than 20,000 students.

Due to the relatively small size of the population, sampling was not attempted. In cases where there was no person filling the position of superintendent, the interim superintendent completed the questionnaire. Each school system's acting chief executive officer received a survey.

The first mailing of the survey was on January 7, 1987. Returns were noted using the numerical code assigned to the potential respondents. One hundred and four surveys were returned by mid-February. A second mailing to superintendents who had failed to respond was made on February 20, 1987. Nineteen additional surveys were returned. The return rate for the questionnaire was 88.5 percent. When the twelve surveys which had been completed incorrectly were eliminated, one hundred and eleven usable surveys remained. This represented a rate of 79.9 percent of all questionnaires available for analysis, allowing a high confidence level for results.

The population involved in the research received the questionnaire during a period when the North Carolina public schools had been heavily involved in reviewing research on characteristics of effective schools. By the time the survey was conducted each of the superintendents in the state had received considerable information on effective schools research themselves, and most, if not all, had been familiarized with the North Carolina Effective Teaching Training Program. It should be clear to

each of these chief school system administrators that the principal is identified by the research as a key to the realization of effective schools.

Additionally, the Institute of Government has begun its first Superintendents' Executive Program for thirty-two superintendents in this state. This program is patterned after the Principals' Executive Program which began in 1983 and is an indication that increasing attention is now being paid to the leadership function which is assumed by superintendents in North Carolina. It should be evident to all of these superintendents that they exert significant influence on the actions of the principals who serve under them and on the role identities which those principals assume.

#### Summary

This study involves correlational research which "collects data in order to determine whether, and to what degree, a relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables" (Gay, 1981, p. 183). The work also involves multi-variate analysis. The two page questionnaire which was mailed to the chief executive officer of each of the 140 local school systems in North Carolina, exclusive of the system where the writer currently works, was adapted from a questionnaire designed in 1985 by Brubaker and Simon. That questionnaire was used to survey 370 principals in the state as to how they perceived the role of the principal.

One hundred and eleven usable surveys were returned for this study. Responses on these surveys provided data on the view of the role of the principal held by superintendents in North Carolina. Analysis of the data will be reported and interpreted in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER IV  
ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the perceptions of public school superintendents in North Carolina concerning the role of the principal. All superintendents in the state, exclusive of the writer, were asked to respond to a survey which explored their views of the actual and the proper role of principals both in their system and across North Carolina. They were asked to place principals in the five conception framework developed by Brubaker and Simon (1987). These five conceptions or roles which were used in the survey are:

- Principal Teacher
- General Manager
- Professional and Scientific Manager
- Administrator and Instructional Leader
- Curriculum Leader

The study considered the relationship of several independent variables to the dependent variable, the superintendent's view of the role of the principal. Independent variables considered were highest degree earned by the superintendent, prior experience as a principal, length of service as a superintendent, awareness of current literature on educational leadership, size of the school system where employed, and the view superintendents held concerning their own role in the central office.

Data were collected from 111 responses to the questionnaire mailed to the population for the study, a number which represents 79.9% of the superintendents in North Carolina who were surveyed.

Research questions specifically addressed in the study are:

1. What do superintendents in North Carolina believe is the proper role of principals with whom they work and of principals across North Carolina?

2. What is the perception of superintendents as to the actual role of principals with whom they work across North Carolina?

3. Is there a correlation between highest degree earned and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

4. Is there a correlation between prior experience as a principal and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

5. Is there a correlation between years of experience as a superintendent and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

6. Is there a correlation between the degree to which superintendents read current literature on educational leadership and their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

7. Is there a correlation between the size of the school system where employed and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

8. Is there a correlation between the superintendents' perception of their own roles in the central office and their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?



Each of the above questions is addressed in more detail in this chapter through the use of the data from the investigation.

### Discussion of Results

Question 1: What do superintendents in North Carolina believe is the proper role of principals with whom they work and of principals across North Carolina?

Respondents to the survey were asked to indicate which conception in Brubaker and Simon's model best described the role principals in their system should try to assume. They were also asked to indicate which of the conceptions best described the role which principals across the state should try to assume.

Table 1 reports the frequencies and percentages which relate to the first research question. They are gathered from responses to questions two and four on the survey (see Appendix C). As one might expect, the results indicate a high degree of consistency between the superintendents' perceptions of the proper role for their own principals and for those principals across the state.

No superintendent believed that principals, either in their own system or across North Carolina, ought to assume the role of Principal Teacher. 0.9% of the superintendents surveyed felt that principals in their own system and in North Carolina ought to be General Managers.

It was in the next two categories that very slight differences occurred between the respondents' perceptions of the proper role for their own principals and for those in other parts of the state. 4.5% of those surveyed felt the proper role for principals in their own system was that of Professional and Scientific Manager while 5.4% of those surveyed felt that

Table 1

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of Principals With Whom  
They Work and Across North Carolina

Role of Principal	Own System	North Carolina
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	1(0.9%)	1(0.9%)
Prof/Sci Manager	5(4.5%)	6(5.4%)
Adm/Inst Leader	96(86.5%)	95(85.6%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>9(8.1%)</u>	<u>9(8.1%)</u>
TOTAL	111(100.0%)	111(100.0%)

this was the proper role for principals across the state. 86.5% of the respondents believed the proper role for principals within their system to be Administrator and Instructional Leader while 85.6% of those surveyed believed this role to be most appropriate for principals throughout North Carolina. 8.1% of respondents felt that principals in their own system and throughout the state ought to be Curriculum Leaders.

The results indicate a clear consensus among superintendents that there is no difference in the role principals in their own system ought to assume and in the role principals in other North Carolina school systems ought to pursue. In fact only one survey indicated a difference in the two perceptions. Clearly, superintendents in general believe that principals in North Carolina ought to function as Administrators and Instructional Leaders. The next most frequent response indicated that both groups should try to be Curriculum Leaders, but the percentage of such responses was small.

Question 2: What is the perception of superintendents as to the actual role of principals with whom they work and of principals across North Carolina?

Questions one and three on the survey provide the data for the analysis of the second research question. Question one asked superintendents to place each of their own principals into one of Brubaker and Simon's five conceptions, while question three asked them to indicate which conception best described other principals in North Carolina. Table 2 reports the responses of superintendents to question one.

The 111 respondents perceived 3.2% of principals with whom they work as Principal Teachers. 12.7% of those principals were categorized as Curriculum Leaders, while 16.1% were placed in the Professional and

Table 2

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Actual Role of Principals With Whom They Work

Role of Principal	Actual Role
Principal Teacher	47(3.2%)
General Manager	470(31.8%)
Prof/Sci Manager	237(16.1%)
Adm/Inst Leader	534(36.2%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>187(12.7%)</u>
TOTAL	1475(100.0%)

Scientific Manager conception. The largest percentages of principals were described as either Administrators and Instructional Leaders (36.2%) or General Managers (31.8%).

These results indicate a substantial difference between the actual role superintendents saw as being filled by principals in their own system and the view those superintendents held as to the proper role for the same administrators. While 86.5% of respondents felt principals should be Administrators and Instructional Leaders, only 36.2% of principals were actually placed in that conception. Interestingly, only 39% of superintendents responding felt that one-half or more of their principals filled the role which they viewed as most desirable.

Table 3 reports the results of question three on the survey. Superintendents responding saw most principals in North Carolina as General Managers (67.6%). Equal percentages saw principals in the state as being either Professional and Scientific Managers or Administrators and Instructional Leaders. No superintendents felt that most of the principals in the state were Principal Teachers or Curriculum Leaders. It is interesting to note from these results that superintendents seem to feel that while many of their own principals do not assume the proper role, such principals do so to a greater degree than do principals in other school systems. It is also apparent that substantial numbers of principals, both within and outside of the superintendents' own systems, are perceived to be General Managers.

Question 3: Is there a correlation between highest degree earned and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

Table 3

Superintendents Perceptions of the Actual Role of Principals Across  
North Carolina

Role of Principal	Actual Role
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)
General Manager	75(67.6%)
Prof/Sci Manager	18(16.2%)
Adm/Inst Leader	18(16.2%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>0(0.0%)</u>
TOTAL	111(100.0%)

Each of the 111 respondents used in the study was placed into one of three potential categories for North Carolina superintendents as to highest degree earned. In the state superintendents must have earned a graduate degree at the Master's level. Other possibilities for degrees held by superintendents are the Sixth Year Degree and the Doctorate. When the respondents were so categorized, 9% were in the Master's Degree category. 32% of those responding had earned the Sixth Year Degree as their highest degree, and 59% had received a Doctorate.

Table 4 reports the frequencies and the percentages for the conception superintendents selected as being most proper for their own principals to assume according to highest degree earned by the superintendent.

Examination of the results indicates that the responses of superintendents were similar regardless of level of degree earned. A majority in all three categories (approximately 80%) saw the proper role of the principal to be Administrator and Instructional Leader. The remainder of the surveys (approximately 20%) indicated low percentages for each of the other categories. Curriculum Leader was the next most frequent conception cited, however responses in that category were still low. Calculation of chi square indicates that there is no significant difference between the expected and observed frequencies for the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to highest degree earned.

It is interesting to compare these results to those which indicate what superintendents perceive to be the actual role being assumed by their own principals according to highest degree earned. Table 5 reports these results. While there are slight variations in percentages in all

Table 4

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of the Principals With Whom They Work by Highest Degree Earned

Role of Principal	Degree		
	Master's	6th Year	Doctorate
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(1.5%)
Prof/Sci Manager	1(10.0%)	2(5.6%)	1(1.5%)
Adm/Inst Leader	7(70.0%)	32(88.8%)	58(89.2%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>2(20.0%)</u>	<u>2(5.6%)</u>	<u>5(7.8%)</u>
TOTAL	10(100.0%)	36(100.0%)	65(100.0%)

$$x^2=5.42$$

$$\underline{df=8}$$

$$p.01$$

With a df=8 a  $x^2$  of 5.42 indicates no significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the proper role of the principals with whom they work according to highest degree earned.



Table 5

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Actual Roles of Principals With Whom They Work by Highest Degree Earned

Role of Principal	Degree		
	Master's	6th Year	Doctorate
Principal Teacher	2(2.4%)	8(2.4%)	37(3.5%)
General Manager	24(29.2%)	101(30.1%)	345(32.6%)
Prof/Sci Manager	11(13.4%)	62(18.5%)	164(15.5%)
Adm/Inst Leader	38(46.3%)	143(42.7%)	353(33.4%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>7(8.6%)</u>	<u>21(6.3%)</u>	<u>159(15.0%)</u>
TOTAL	82(100.0%)	335(100.0%)	1058(100.0%)

$$x^2=28.74$$

$$df=8$$

$$p.01$$

With a df=8 a  $x^2$  of 28.74 indicates a significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the actual role of the principals with whom they work according to highest degree earned.

three categories, the majority in each views most principals as being in the Administrator and Instructional Leader conception. The next largest percentage in all three categories is in the role of General Manager. Yet, calculation of chi square indicates that there is a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies of the conceptions selected by superintendents for the principals with whom they work according to highest degree earned. While there are many similarities between the three groups, superintendents with a Doctorate seem more inclined to see principals as functioning as Curriculum Leaders than superintendents in the other two categories.

When comparisons are made between the superintendents views as to the proper role for their principals and the actual role being assumed by those building level administrators, an important difference can be noted. It is clear that while most superintendents believe that their principals should be Administrators and Instructional Leaders, it is also clear that a majority of those principals are not seen to be currently filling that role when superintendents are classified according to highest degree earned.

In response to the particular research question highest degree earned by the superintendent does not significantly affect the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

Question 4: Is there a correlation between prior experience as a principal and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

The sample population for the study was divided according to whether or not superintendents involved had prior experience as a principal. 80% of respondents had prior experience as a principal, and 20% did not. Table 6 reports the frequencies and percentages for the conceptions which superintendents selected for question two of the survey according to prior experience as a principal or the lack of such experience.

The results show that the opinions of both groups are quite similar. Approximately 87% of respondents view the proper role of the principal to be Administrator and Instructional Leader. The remainder of responses are spread among the other categories except for that of Principal Teacher where there were no responses. Analysis of the responses using chi square indicates that there is no significant difference between the expected and observed frequencies for responses to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to prior experience as a principal.

When superintendents, according to prior experience as a principal, categorized their own principals as to the actual roles they assume, those with prior experience as a principal categorized 38.5% of their own principals as Administrators and Instructional Leaders. They also categorized 32.0% of their principals as General Managers, 15.8% as Professional and Scientific Managers, 9.9% as Curriculum Leaders, and 3.8% as Principal Teachers. Superintendents without prior experience as a principal categorized 31.4% of their own principals as General Managers, 28.8% as Administrators and Instructional Leaders, 21.0% as Curriculum Leaders, 16.9% as Professional and Scientific Managers, and 1.1% as

Table 6

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of the Principals With Whom They Work by Prior Experience as a Principal

Role of Principal	Prior Experience	
	Yes	No
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	1(1/1%)	0(0.0%)
Prof/Sci Manager	4(4.5%)	1(4.5%)
Adm/Inst Leader	78(87.6%)	19(86.4%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>6(6.8%)</u>	<u>2(9.1%)</u>
TOTAL	89(100.0%)	22(100.0%)

$$x^2 = .21$$

$$df = 4$$

$$p < .01$$

With a  $df=4$  a  $x^2$  of .21 indicates no significant difference at the  $p < .01$  level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the proper role of principals with whom they work according to prior experience as a principal.

Principal Teachers. These results are reported in Table 7. Differences can be seen between the two groups. Analysis of the responses using chi square indicates a significant difference between the expected and observed frequencies of response for the actual role of their own principals when superintendents are observed according to prior experience as a principal.

While most superintendents, when classified according to prior experience as a principal, believe their principals should be Administrators and Instructional Leaders, superintendents without such prior experience classified the largest percentage of their own principals as actually being General Managers. Superintendents with prior experience as a principal classified the largest percentage of their principals as Administrators and Instructional Leaders but also classified a substantial number of them as being General Managers.

In response to the specific research question involved the existence of prior experience as a principal did not affect the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

Question 5: Is there a correlation between years of experience as a superintendent and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

Superintendents responding to the survey had experience levels which ranged from less than one year to twenty-seven years. Of the 111 respondents used, 38% had from less than one to five years of experience as a superintendent, 28% had from six to ten years of experience, 16% had from eleven to fifteen years of experience, and 18% had sixteen years of experience or more.

Table 7

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Actual Roles of the Principals With Whom They Work by Prior Experience as a Principal

Role of Principal	Prior Experience	
	Yes	No
Principal Teacher	43(3.8%)	4(1.1%)
General Manager	362(32.0%)	108(31.4%)
Prof/Sci Manager	179(15.8%)	58(16.9%)
Adm/Inst Leader	435(38.5%)	99(28.8%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>112(9.9%)</u>	<u>75(21.8%)</u>
TOTAL	1131(100.0%)	344(100.0%)

$$x^2=42.08$$

$$df=4$$

$$p.01$$

With a  $df=4$  a  $x^2$  of 42.08 indicates a significant difference at the  $p.01$  level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the actual role of the principals with whom they work according to prior experience as a principal.

These four categories of experience levels were used to analyze the data. Table 8 reports the frequencies and percentages for the conceptions which superintendents selected for question two of the survey according to years of experience as a superintendent.

The large majority of superintendents in each category believed principals should be Administrators and Instructional Leaders. Results in the other four conceptions were small and varied, however Curriculum Leader seemed to be the next most favored role, especially by superintendents with from six to ten years of experience and by those with sixteen or more years of experience.

Calculation of chi square, however, indicates no significant difference in the perception of superintendents as to the proper role of principals with whom they work according to years of experience as a superintendent.

When superintendents in these same categories classified their own principals as to the actual roles which they assumed, the majority of principals in all four categories were classified as either Administrators and Instructional Leaders or as General Managers. In three of the categories the largest number of principals were classified as Administrators and Instructional Leaders. In the group with eleven to fifteen years of experience principals were most frequently noted as being General Managers. Professional and Scientific Managers was the next most frequently used conception except for the group with from six to ten years of experience which saw its third largest number of principals as being Curriculum Leaders. In all groups the Principal Teacher conception was used least as a classifier of the actual role of the principal. These results are reported in Table 9.

Table 8

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of the Principal With Whom They Work by Years of Experience as a Superintendent

Role of Principal	Years of Experience			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16 and Above
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	1(2.4%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Prof/Sci Manager	0(0.0%)	1(3.2%)	2(11.1%)	2(10.0%)
Adm/Inst Leader	40(95.2%)	25(80.7%)	15(83.3%)	15(75.0%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>1(2.4%)</u>	<u>5(16.1%)</u>	<u>1(5.6%)</u>	<u>3(15.0%)</u>
TOTAL	42(100.0%)	31(100.0%)	18(100.0%)	20(100.0%)

$$x^2=12.37$$

$$\underline{df}=12$$

$$p.01$$

With a  $\underline{df}=12$  a  $x^2$  of 12.37 indicates no significant difference at the  $p.01$  level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the proper role of principals with whom they work according to years of experience as a superintendent.



Table 9

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Actual Role of the Principals With Whom They Work by Years of Experience as a Superintendent

Role of Principal	Years of Experience			
	0-5	6-10	11-15	16 and Above
Principal Teacher	36(7.4%)	6(1.1%)	1(0.5%)	4(1.9%)
General Manager	162(33.3%)	157(29.6%)	95(38.9%)	56(26.0%)
Prof/Sci Manager	70(14.4%)	55(10.4%)	63(25.8%)	49(22.8%)
Adm/Inst Leader	176(36.2%)	198(37.4%)	70(28.7%)	90(41.9%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>42(8.7%)</u>	<u>114(21.5%)</u>	<u>15(6.1%)</u>	<u>16(7.4%)</u>
TOTAL	486(100.0%)	530(100.0%)	244(100.0%)	215(100.0%)

$x^2=138.15$

df=12

p.01

With a df=12 a  $x^2$  of 138.15 indicates a significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the actual roles of the principals with whom they work according to years of experience as a superintendent.

Calculation of chi square indicates a significant difference between the observed and expected frequencies of response for the actual role of principals as seen by superintendents according to years of experience in that position. The number of years of experience as a superintendent does make a difference in the perceptions superintendents hold as to the actual role of the principals with whom they work.

When comparisons are made concerning superintendents' perceptions of the proper role of principals and the actual roles assumed by their own principals, it can be seen that the general consensus as to the proper role of the principal disappears in the categorization by actual role. The Administrator and Instructional Leader conception remains important, but the General Manager and Professional and Scientific Manager conceptions also are often noted.

In response to the specific research question length of experience as a superintendent did not affect the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

Question 6: Is there a correlation between the degree to which superintendents read current literature on educational leadership and their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

81% of the respondents indicated that they kept up-to-date with literature concerning educational leadership. Among the most frequently mentioned sources of such information were Phi Delta Kappan, Educational Leadership, Executive Educator, American School Board Journal, and Education Week. 19% of the respondents felt they did not keep abreast of this literature.

Table 10 reports the frequencies and percentages of the responses according to literature on educational leadership read for question two of the survey which asked respondents about the proper role for their principals. Both groups placed heavy emphasis on the need for principals to be Administrators and Instructional Leaders. Percentages throughout the other conceptions are similar for both groups. Analysis of the responses using chi square indicates no significant difference in the perception of superintendents as to the proper role of the principals with whom they work according to the degree of up-to-date literature read concerning educational leadership.

When the same categorization of superintendents is used to analyze how the actual role of principals with whom they work is perceived, results are similar to those in previous research questions. These results are reported in Table 11. The role of Administrator and Instructional Leader remains important, but the gap between it and other conceptions, especially that of General Manager, is narrowed considerably. Both groups see the second largest number of their own principals as being General Managers. However, the order of the next two conceptions is reversed. Those superintendents who keep abreast of literature on educational leadership see more principals as actually being Professional and Scientific Managers than Curriculum Leaders. Results are opposite for superintendents who fail to keep abreast of that literature. Both groups place the fewest numbers of principals in the Principal Teacher conception.

Calculation of chi square indicates a significant difference between the expected and observed frequencies of responses of superintendents as

Table 10

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of Principals With Whom They Work by Reading Literature on Educational Leadership

Role of Principal	Read	
	Yes	No
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	1(1.1%)	0(0.0%)
Prof/Sci Manager	3(3.3%)	2(9.5%)
Adm/Inst Leader	79(87.8%)	17(81.0%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>7(7.8%)</u>	<u>2(9.5%)</u>
TOTAL	90(100.0%)	21(100.0%)

$$x^2=1.81$$

$$df=4$$

$$p.01$$

With a  $df=4$  a  $x^2$  of 1.81 indicates no significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the proper role of principals with whom they work according to degree of literature read on educational leadership.

Table 11

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Actual Roles of the Principals With Whom They Work by Reading Literature on Educational Leadership

Role of Principal	Read	
	Yes	No
Principal Teacher	45(3.5%)	2(1.0%)
General Manager	415(32.7%)	55(26.7%)
Prof/Sci Manager	203(16.0%)	34(16.5%)
Adm/Inst Leader	459(36.2%)	75(36.4%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>147(11.6%)</u>	<u>40(19.4%)</u>
TOTAL	1269(100.0%)	206(100.0%)

$$x^2=14.28$$

$$\underline{df=4}$$

$$p.01$$

With a df=4 a  $x^2$  of 14.28 indicates a significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the actual roles of principals with whom they work according to degree of literature read on educational leadership.

to the actual role of principals with whom they work according to degree of literature read on educational leadership.

When the data expressed in Table 10 are compared with the data expressed in Table 11, results again indicate the perceived importance of the Administrator and Instructional Leader conception. However, when the actual role data are studied, the gap between this conception and the others becomes smaller. The General Manager conception is the second most used response while the Professional and Scientific Manager and Curriculum Leader conceptions are also noticeably more prevalent.

In response to the specific research question the degree to which superintendents read literature on educational leadership did not significantly affect their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

Question 7: Is there a correlation between the size of the system where employed and the superintendents' perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

The sample population consisted of 111 superintendents, 58% of whom work in school systems whose size consists of 5,000 or fewer students. 21% of the superintendents involved in the study are from systems whose student population is between 5,001 and 10,000. 14% of the respondents work in systems which have student populations of 10,001 to 20,000, and 7% of the respondents are from school systems whose student size is above 20,000.

Table 12 reports the frequencies and percentages of the responses to question two of the survey according to the size of the school system where the superintendent is employed. The results are predictable based

Table 12

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of the Principals With Whom They Work by Size of the School System

Role of Principal	Size			
	1-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-20,000	20,000 & Above
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	1(6.7%)	0(0.0%)
Prof/Sci Manager	4(6.2%)	1(4.3%)	0(0.0%)	1(12.5%)
Adm/Inst Leader	55(84.6%)	21(91.4%)	14(93.3%)	5(62.5%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>6(9.2%)</u>	<u>1(4.3%)</u>	<u>0(0.0%)</u>	<u>2(25.0%)</u>
TOTAL	65(100.0%)	23(100.0%)	15(100.0%)	8(100.0%)

$\chi^2=13.06$

df=12

p.01

With a df=12 a  $\chi^2$  of 13.06 indicates no significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the proper role of principals with whom they work according to the size of the school system where the superintendent is employed.

on the previous research questions. The majority of respondents in each category indicates the Administrator and Instructional Leader conception to be the proper role for the principal. Percentages throughout each of the four categories for respondents are low in all conceptions except the aforementioned one. The Curriculum Leader conception is the most favored after Administrator and Instructional Leader, but again the responses are small for the role mentioned second in terms of frequency. Even though 25% of superintendents in systems which have more than 20,000 students see the role of Curriculum Leader as most appropriate for principals, the size of that category's population is so small as to negate any real significance being attached to that figure.

Analysis of the data using chi square indicates no significant difference between observed and expected frequencies of response of superintendents in the different categories used for size of school system as to the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

When the data concerning how superintendents classify the principals with whom they work as to actual role assumed according to size of school system is reviewed, the results offer some interesting comparisons. Table 13 reports the results. While in the two smallest categories of system size, the results seem to be the same as with other independent variables, there is some change in the two largest categories of system size. In the 10,001 to 20,000 size superintendents place the largest number of principals in the General Manager conception. The second largest number of principals are placed in the Administrator and Instructional Leader role. In the systems which have more than 20,000 students the largest number of principals are placed in the Curriculum Leader conception. The next largest



Table 13

Superintendents' Perception of the Actual Roles of the Principals With Whom They Work by Size of the School System

Role of Principal	Size			
	1-5,000	5,001-10,000	10,001-20,000	20,000 & Above
Principal Teacher	16(3.7%)	6(2.0%)	4(1.2%)	21(5.2%)
General Manager	147(33.9%)	87(28.9%)	134(39.4%)	102(25.5%)
Prof/Sci Manager	57(13.2%)	65(21.6%)	51(15.0%)	64(16.0%)
Adm/Inst Leader	188(43.4%)	121(40.2%)	129(37.9%)	96(23.9%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>25(5.8%)</u>	<u>22(7.3%)</u>	<u>22(6.5%)</u>	<u>118(29.4%)</u>
TOTAL	433(100.0%)	301(100.0%)	340(100.0%)	401(100.0%)

$x^2=178.91$

df=12

p.01

With a df=12 a  $x^2$  of 178.91 indicates a significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the actual roles of principals with whom they work according to size of the school system where employed.

number are categorized as General Managers, and the Administrator and Instructional Leader group is third.

These results from the 20,001 and up group differ sharply from those of the other three system size categories where Curriculum Leader is the third most used conception for actual role of the principal. Calculation of chi square indicates a significant difference between expected and observed frequencies of response of superintendents as to the actual role of principals with whom they work according to the size of the school system where employed. Those superintendents in the largest systems seem more inclined to describe their principals as Curriculum Leaders, General Managers, and Administrators and Instructional Leaders. In the other three categories the importance of the Curriculum Leader conception is not emphasized. In those groups it ranks fourth behind all conceptions except Principal Teacher.

When the data from both tables is compared, it is again observed that while most superintendents want their principals to be Administrators and Instructional Leaders, they do not perceive this to be overwhelmingly true in terms of the actual roles those principals are assuming.

In regards to the specific research question the size of the school system where employed does not significantly affect the perception superintendents hold as to the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

Question 8: Is there a correlation between the superintendents' perception of their own role in the central office and their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work?

The 111 respondents to the survey were asked to classify their own role in the central office by using Brubaker and Simon's five conception model. No superintendents saw themselves as filling the Principal Teacher role. 11% of superintendents placed themselves in the General Manager role. 8% of the respondents saw themselves as Professional and Scientific Managers. 75% of the superintendents saw their role as being that of Administrator and Instructional Leader, and 6% saw themselves as being Curriculum Leaders.

Table 14 reports the responses of superintendents to question two of the survey when categorized by their self-perception. In all categories where responses existed the large majority of superintendents saw the proper role of the principal as that of Administrator and Instructional Leader. Percentages varied in the other conceptions with Curriculum Leader receiving a small amount of attention more than did the other three conceptions.

Calculation of chi square indicates no significant difference between the expected and observed responses of superintendents who have been placed in the five conception framework themselves according to self-perception. The majority in all categories saw the proper role of the principal as being Administrator and Instructional Leader.

When the data concerning how superintendents categorize the actual role which their own principals are seen as assuming according to self-perception of the superintendent are reviewed, some changes are notable. These results are reported in Table 15. Superintendents who see themselves as General Managers select that same conception as most appropriate

Table 14

Superintendents' Perceptions of the Proper Role of the Principals With Whom They Work by Perception of Their Own Role

Role of Principal	Self-Perception				
	Prin. Tea.	Gen. Mgr.	Pr/Sc Mgr.	Ad/In Lead.	Curr. Lead.
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
General Manager	0(0.0%)	1(8.3%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Prof/Sci Manager	0(0.0%)	1(8.3%)	1(11.1%)	3(3.6%)	0(0.0%)
Adm/Inst Leader	0(0.0%)	10(83.4%)	8(88.9%)	72(86.8%)	5(71.4%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>0(0.0%)</u>	<u>0(0.0%)</u>	<u>0(0.0%)</u>	<u>8(9.6%)</u>	<u>2(28.6%)</u>
TOTAL	0(0.0%)	12(100.0%)	9(100.0%)	83(100.0%)	7(100.0%)

$x^2=14.9$

df=16

p.01

With a df=16 a  $x^2$  of 14.9 indicates no significant difference at the p.01 level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the proper role of the principals with whom they work according to the perception those superintendents hold concerning their own role in the central office.

Table 15

Superintendents' Perception of the Actual Roles of the Principals With Whom They Work by Perceptions of Their Own Role

Role of Principal	Self-Perception				
	Prin. Tea.	Gen. Mgr.	Pr/Sc Mgr.	Ad/In Lead.	Curr. Lead.
Principal Teacher	0(0.0%)	13(6.1%)	7(5.3%)	17(1.7%)	10(6.3%)
General Manager	0(0.0%)	82(38.7%)	50(38.2%)	315(32.4%)	23(14.4%)
Prof/Sci Manager	0(0.0%)	22(10.4%)	20(15.3%)	161(16.5%)	34(21.4%)
Adm/Inst Leader	0(0.0%)	74(34.9%)	48(36.6%)	382(39.3%)	30(18.9%)
Curriculum Leader	<u>0(0.0%)</u>	<u>21(9.9%)</u>	<u>6(4.6%)</u>	<u>98(10.1%)</u>	<u>62(39.0%)</u>
TOTAL	0(0.0%)	212(100.0%)	131(100.0%)	973(100.0%)	159(100.0%)

$$x^2=161.87$$

$$df=16$$

$$p.01$$

With a  $df=16$  a  $x^2$  of 161.87 indicates a significant difference at the  $p.01$  level in the perceptions of superintendents as to the actual roles of the principals with whom they work according to self perception of the superintendent.

appropriate for the principals with whom they work. The next largest number of principals for this group are labeled Administrators and Instructional Leaders. The same is true for superintendents who placed themselves in the Professional and Scientific Manager conception. In both of these groups the third largest number of principals are categorized as Professional and Scientific Managers.

Superintendents who see themselves as Administrators and Instructional Leaders place the largest number of their principals in that same conception followed closely by General Managers. Professional and Scientific Managers are third. However, among superintendents who see themselves as Curriculum Leaders the largest number of principals are also described as Curriculum Leaders. Professional and Scientific Managers are next followed by Administrators and Instructional Leaders and General Managers in that order. In only one of the categories are principals in the Principal Teacher role not the fewest in number. Among superintendents who see themselves as Professional and Scientific Managers, fewer principals are placed in the Curriculum Leader role than the Principal Teacher role.

Analysis of the data using chi square indicates that there is a significant difference between the expected and observed frequencies of the conceptions selected by respondents as to the actual role of principals with whom they work depending on the self-perception which they hold.

When the data from the two tables are compared, categories used for placement of principals group more closely together in response to proper role perception than for actual role perception. While superintendents in all categories perceive the proper role of the principal to be Administrator

and Instructional Leader, that is not true for their perceptions of the actual roles of the majority of principals with whom they work.

In response to the specific research question the self-perception of superintendents responding does not significantly affect the perception those superintendents hold regarding the proper role of the principals with whom they work.

### Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of the principal as viewed by superintendents in North Carolina. In addition to a summary of the frequencies of each conception selected by superintendents the selected roles were studied in relation to six independent variables - the highest degree earned by the superintendent, the existence of prior experience as a principal, the length of service as a superintendent, awareness of current literature on educational leadership, size of the school system where employed, and the perception superintendents held concerning their own role in the central office.

The questions presented at the beginning of the chapter are summarized below:

1. Superintendents in North Carolina believe the proper role of principals both within their own system and across the state to be Administrator and Instructional Leader. There is a clear indication that superintendents see the proper role of principals with whom they work to be the same as for other principals in the state.

2. Superintendents responding to the survey believed that most of their principals were filling the roles of Administrator and Instructional Leader followed closely by that of General Manager. When asked what role

they felt was being filled by most principals in other systems, superintendents strongly indicated a belief that it was the General Manager role. Only 41% of superintendents responding felt that 50% or more of their own principals were operating in the same role as most principals across the state.

3. The highest degree earned by the superintendents does not make a significant difference in their view of the proper role of the principal. Respondents in all three categories clearly favored the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader for principals with whom they work.

4. The existence of prior experience as a principal does not make a significant difference in the view superintendents hold concerning the proper role of the principals with whom they work. Both categories of respondents favored the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader heavily.

5. The length of experience as a superintendent does not significantly affect the perception respondents have concerning the proper role of the principals with whom they work. All four categories of respondents clearly favor the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader.

6. The degree to which superintendents keep abreast of current literature on educational leadership has no significant effect of the view superintendents hold concerning the proper role of the principals with whom they work. Both categories of respondents in this research question also favor the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader.

7. The size of the school system where employed does not make a significant difference in the superintendent's view of the proper role of the principal. Superintendents from all four categories of local



school system size favored the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader.

8. The superintendents' perception of their own role in the central office makes no significant difference in their perception of the proper role of the principals with whom they work. Superintendents in each of the four conceptions where they placed themselves clearly favored the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader for their building level administrators. Interestingly, 84% of superintendents responding felt their actual role in the central office corresponded directly to what their proper role should be.

When the results of the survey were investigated as to how superintendents categorize the principals with whom they work as to their actual roles, significant differences arose for each of the six independent variables. While the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader continued to receive much favor, the roles of General Manager and Curriculum Leader also were used noticeably more often. Throughout the study it is apparent that superintendents believe few principals to be operating in the Principal Teacher conception.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study from this investigation are reported in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V  
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR FURTHER STUDY

Introduction

This study focused on the view of the proper role of the principal which is held by the superintendents of public school systems in North Carolina. Surveys were mailed to all superintendents in the state, exclusive of the writer, to determine their perceptions of the proper role for principals both within and outside of their systems. The surveys also asked for information which would indicate what role principals in their systems and across the state were actually assuming according to their perception. Six independent variables - the highest degree earned by the superintendent, prior experience as a principal, length of experience as a superintendent, awareness of current literature on educational leadership, size of the school system where employed, and the superintendents' perceptions of their own role in the central office, were examined to see if they significantly influenced perceptions held by the respondents.

The superintendent's perception of the proper role for a principal is a major influence on the actions of the chief building level administrator. Principals must either attempt to assume that role definition, change the superintendent's view on what the proper role is, or face the prospects of poor performance appraisals, possibly even a dismissal action.

Certainly, it is advantageous to a principal to know what the superintendent expects, and most principals adjust their behaviors accordingly.

In this chapter a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations for further study will be presented. The information acquired should be used to enhance communications between superintendents and their principals and to help assure that principals develop a more complete understanding of what their role can be.

### Summary

139 superintendents in North Carolina were surveyed to determine their perceptions of the proper role for principals and the actual role being filled by principals both within their own systems and across the state. Data were obtained from a total of 111 usable responses to the questionnaire which was distributed.

The validity of the instrument was supported by the literature and by the work of Brubaker and Simon (1987) and Williams (1987) with survey instruments similar to that used in this study, all of which used the same five conception framework for the role of the principal.

The data collected provides insights into how superintendents view their own principals as compared to other principals in North Carolina. The first part of the questionnaire was concerned with the five conception framework for the role of the principal and the related perceptions which superintendents held, and the second part provided information needed to analyze the independent variables used in the study.

Data were analyzed according to six questions asked by the survey instrument regarding perceptions held by superintendents as to the proper

and actual roles for principals. The correlation between the six independent variables and the dependent variable was also analyzed. A chi square test was conducted for the data, and variables significant at the .01 confidence level were determined.

The findings of the study based on the analysis of data are:

1. A majority of superintendents prefer that their principals operate as an Administrator and Instructional Leader. Yet, it is clear that many principals are not seen by their superintendents as filling that role. While the largest group of principals was placed as actually assuming the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader, a number almost as large was seen as actually being General Managers. Well over one half of the principals classified were not placed in the Administrator and Instructional Leader conception. Almost one third of the group was seen to be functioning as General Managers.

2. The role desired for principals across the state was consistent with what superintendents felt their own principals should assume. However, superintendents clearly believed their own principals to be closer to the proper role than those in other parts of the state. Over two thirds of the superintendents surveyed believed most principals in other systems were assuming the role of General Manager. To a lesser degree, but still visible, was the fact that while no superintendents felt principals across the state were functioning as Curriculum Leaders, there were some so perceived in their own systems.

3. There is no significant difference as to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to the highest degree earned by the superintendent. The role of Administrator

and Instructional Leader is heavily favored. However, when this variable is analyzed as to its effect on the actual role of those principals as perceived by the superintendent, a significant difference is observed. Superintendents with Master's and Sixth Year Degrees were more inclined to see their principals as actually being Administrators and Instructional Leaders than those with a Doctorate were so inclined. Those with a Doctorate were more inclined than those in the other two groups to see principals as actually being Curriculum Leaders.

4. There is no significant difference as to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to prior experience as a principal. The role of Administrator and Instructional Leader is clearly favored by superintendents with and without such experience. However, when this variable is analyzed as to its effect on the actual role of the principal perceived by superintendents, a significant difference is observed. Superintendents with prior experience as a principal were more inclined to see their principals as actually being Administrators and Instructional Leaders than those without such experience. Those without this experience were more inclined than those with it to see principals as actually being Curriculum Leaders.

5. There is no significant difference as to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to length of service as a superintendent. Respondents in each of the four categories established favored the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader. However, when this variable is analyzed as to its effect on the actual role of those principals perceived by superintendents, a significant difference is observed. Superintendents with from 11 to 15 years of

service were less inclined to see their principals as being Administrators and Instructional Leaders than those in the other three groups, and those in the 16 years and above group were the most inclined to see their own principals as being in that most favored role. Also, superintendents with from 6 to 10 years of service were more inclined than the other groups to see principals as actually being Curriculum Leaders. Superintendents in the 0 to 5 years of service category had a greater tendency than the others to see principals as actually being Principal Teachers.

6. There is no significant difference as to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents between those who keep current in reading literature on educational leadership and those who do not. Both groups clearly favor the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader. However, when this variable is examined as to its effect on the actual role of those principals perceived by superintendents, a significant difference is observed. Superintendents who keep abreast of this literature were less inclined than those who do not to label principals as Curriculum Leaders, while principals in systems where superintendents did not keep abreast of the literature were less often labeled as General Managers than those in the other group.

7. There is no significant difference as to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to the size of the system where employed. Each of the four groups favored the role of Administrator and Instructional Leader. However, when this variable was analyzed according to its effect on the actual role of those principals perceived by superintendents, a significant difference was observed. Superintendents in systems with more than 20,000 students

were least inclined to label principals as Administrators and Instructional Leaders and most inclined to label them as Curriculum Leaders. More difference existed between categories in this variable than in the other five.

8. There is no significant difference as to the proper role of their own principals as perceived by superintendents according to the perception they hold concerning their own role in the central office. The majority of superintendents saw themselves as Administrators and Instructional Leaders, and all categories listed favored that role for their principals. However, when this variable was analyzed according to its effect on the actual role of those principals perceived by superintendents, a significant difference was observed. Superintendents who saw themselves as Curriculum Leaders were less inclined to label their principals as an Administrator and Instructional Leader or as a General Manager than the other groups and more inclined to label them as Curriculum Leaders.

### Conclusions

Current literature supports the belief that a school must have strong leadership from its principal in order to be effective. A review of the literature also points out that the superintendent has a profound influence on the principal's ability to give strong leadership to the faculty. If the principal accepts the superintendent's views and is able to operate within them, their relationship will be enhanced. If the two parties are not able to agree, conflict may arise. The board of education which is involved may have to eventually choose sides, and the school will be caught in the middle.

Any principal must deal with what the superintendent perceives to be his/her proper role. It is extremely important for a principal to

have a clear understanding of what that perception is before beginning a job.

This study is based upon perceptions of superintendents in North Carolina. Those perceptions could certainly be influenced by a wide variety of factors, each of which probably relates to the superintendents' past experiences and current involvements. In this study an attempt was made to determine what the superintendents' perceptions were concerning the proper and actual roles of principals in the state and to determine if those perceptions could be influenced by the six independent variables which were selected.

The final conclusions of the study, determined through an analysis of the data from the survey, are:

1. Superintendents perceive the proper role of principals both within their own systems and across the state to be the same, that of Administrator and Instructional Leader. However, those same superintendents believe that their own principals come closer to actually filling that role than do principals in other school systems in the state. It could be concluded that superintendents believe they have enough influence with their own principals to insure that more of them fill the proper role than is generally the case throughout North Carolina. They do not seem to feel that their colleagues in other systems possess that same degree of influence, however.

2. While superintendents do agree that the proper role of the principal is that of Administrator and Instructional Leader, they also believe that the majority of principals in the state are actually operating as General Managers.



3. The highest degree earned by the superintendent does not make a difference in the perception held as to the proper role of the principal but does make a difference in the perceptions held concerning the actual roles principals assume. It can be concluded from the data that the additional experience of earning a Doctorate may allow superintendents to better envision the conception of Curriculum Leader for principals, possibly the result of their advanced study in this more recently developed conception.

4. Prior experience as a principal does not make a difference in the perception held as to the proper role of the principal but does make a difference in the perception held concerning the actual roles principals assume. Interestingly, those without prior experience see a greater percentage of principals as being Curriculum Leaders, a circumstance not without an element of surprise. Perhaps this is because many superintendents without prior experience as a principal do have lengthy experience in curriculum work in the central office and believe they have an insight into such work that enables them to identify certain areas of the principal's responsibility as more accurately labeled curriculum work than as general administration.

5. Length of service as a superintendent does not make a difference in the perception held as to the proper role of the principal but does make a difference in the perception held concerning the actual roles principals assume. There seems to be no specific pattern to the differences as length of experience increases, however those superintendents with the most years of service were the most inclined to see their principals as actually assuming the proper role. Perhaps this is an

indication that the superintendents' efforts at influencing their principals to assume the proper role cannot be successful in a short period of time but are instead a lengthy developmental process. This thought does, however, seem to be refuted in the 11 to 15 years of experience group.

6. Reading current literature on educational leadership does not make a difference in the perception held by superintendents as to the proper role of the principal but does make a difference in the perception held concerning the actual roles principals assume. Yet, those results are confusing. Superintendents who did not keep abreast of current literature were more likely than those who did to label principals as Curriculum Leaders. It would seem that the opposite would be more logical since this conception relates more directly to the principalship in recent years. It is possible that a high degree of reading in this field may result in the superintendent believing that most principals are currently interested in managerial concerns and need to move more towards instructional concerns in order to be effective leaders, a thought expressed by numerous current authors.

7. The size of the school system where employed does not make a difference in the perception held by superintendents as to the proper role of the principal but does make a difference in the perception held concerning the actual roles principals assume. Since the superintendents in the largest systems perceived more principals to be Curriculum Leaders, it may be concluded that the additional support services and positions available in larger systems allow principals more opportunity to be concerned with curriculum in the broad perspective.

8. The self perception held by superintendents does not make a difference in the perception held concerning the proper role of the principal but does make a difference in the perception held concerning the actual roles principals assume. In general superintendents were inclined to see more of their own principals as assuming the same role in their schools as the superintendents felt they assumed in the central office. This seems to be logical.

In conclusion while a large majority of superintendents believe principals ought to be Administrators and Instructional Leaders, they do not believe that principals across North Carolina are actually filling that role. While they do believe the largest number of their own principals are assuming this most favored role, they see that number as being well below one half of the population. The role of Principal Teacher, which has its roots in the early years of American education, is no longer considered a viable role for principals or one which is even being assumed by more than a few. Many principals are still seen as being General Managers, and the conceptions of Professional and Scientific Manager and Curriculum Leader seem to enjoy a level of significance in the perceptions of North Carolina superintendents comparable to each other.

Principals are influenced by the view which their superintendent holds for them and need to know clearly what that view is. While several independent variables do seem to influence how superintendents see their principals as actually performing, they do not significantly affect the view superintendents hold as to how they want those same principals to perform.

### Recommendations for Further Study

North Carolina has increased its financial support for education dramatically in recent years. With this increase in dollars has also come an increase in the interest in accountability for its schools. The citizens of the state have expressed a desire not only to see the resources available to public schools expand but also to see those schools produce noticeable improvements in student achievement and to deal more effectively with the affective needs of their students.

Effective schools research repeatedly recognizes the importance of strong leadership by the principal to the realization of an effective school. Much attention is being given in North Carolina to developing the leadership potential of its principals, and the ability of the principals to put that potential to work in a school is directly affected by the relationship held with the superintendent of the system.

Accompanying all of this attention to educational leadership in the state has been a call for the schools to assume increasing responsibilities from society in general for the prevention and resolution of problems such as child abuse and drug abuse. Superintendents must constantly evaluate the appropriateness of their perception as to the proper role of the principal. With this in mind several recommendations are offered as outgrowths of this study.

Further study is needed into what superintendents perceive to be the proper role of the principal. The scope of such studies should expand outside of North Carolina to see if geographical considerations influence such perceptions. The amount of research into how the beliefs and actions

of superintendents influence the behavior of principals is not extensive enough and should be expanded.

Within North Carolina expanded efforts at leadership development for superintendents should become a major goal. Much attention has been given to this area of concern for principals, but the surface has only been scratched for superintendents. A part of this effort should focus on informing superintendents as to what degree their perceptions influence the work of the principals beneath them.

Additional inquiry is needed in what factors influence a superintendent's perception of the proper role of the principal. The results of this study are so similar in regards to each of the independent variables used that it is difficult to determine why superintendents have focused so specifically on the conception of Administrator and Instructional Leader as the proper role for principals throughout the state.

Future investigations should expand into the qualitative mode. While questionnaires can provide the researcher with an abundance of useful information which can be analyzed statistically, additional insights can be gained through qualitative procedures such as interviews and case studies. A more complete picture of this topic can be acquired by combining the results of quantitative and qualitative studies.

The five conception framework of the role of the principal was developed from a study of the history of the principalship in American education. That history will continue to unfold, and other conceptions may eventually appear. Researchers should continue to study the framework used in this study with the goal of expanding or refining it as circumstances in the future demand.

Additional studies which explore the perceptions of others as to the role of the principal would be helpful. Other groups to be studied might include the school community at large, boards of education, and students. Researchers interested in such efforts should continue to look for improved means of investigation.

The role a principal assumes is critical to the success of the school. Only through a clearer understanding of what that role should be can the principal be expected to lead the school to a high level of effectiveness. The superintendent will continue to play a major part in the establishment of that role perception in the principal's mind, and it is important that recognition be given to that fact.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Letter to Superintendents

KINGS MOUNTAIN DISTRICT SCHOOLS  
P. O. BOX 192, 500 WEST PARKER STREET  
KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA 28086  
TELEPHONE 704-739-4589

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ROBERT R. McRAE, JR., Superintendent  
LARRY F. ALLEN, Assoc. Supt.

MEMORANDUM

To: Superintendents of North Carolina School Systems

From: Bob McRae, Superintendent *PRM*  
Kings Mountain District Schools

Date: January 23, 1987

Re: Study - "The Role of the Principal as Viewed by Superintendents  
in North Carolina"

Research attempting to identify characteristics of effective schools recognizes the importance of a strong building level administrator in such a setting. North Carolina has been a leader in recent improvement efforts in education, and considerable attention has been given to in-service programs aimed at strengthening the competencies of principals in this state.

The leadership role of the principal is also significantly affected by the perceptions held by superintendents as to the proper role for principals to assume in their schools. Such perceptions often have great influence on school operations and in fact may determine the outcome of efforts at improvement.

I am doing a study which will focus on the principal's role as an effective leader as perceived by superintendents in this state.

Would you please assist me in this study by taking a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire and returning it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided before February 13, 1987? Your participation in the study will provide valuable information to me and will be greatly appreciated.

Your name and the name of your local unit will not be used in the study, and the data will not be cited in such a way as to imply either name.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

APPENDIX B

Conceptions of the Principalship



1. Principal Teacher: Routinely engages in classroom teaching for a portion of each school day; also responsible for daily school routines and clerical duties; does not believe special training is needed to be an effective principal.

2. General Manager: Is the official liaison between the school and the central office; spends the majority of time on clerical duties; relies upon common sense and reacts to problems as they arise; has the right to give and enforce orders to teachers; implements the curriculum as mandated by the state and local school board.

3. Professional and Scientific Manager: Spends more time in classroom supervision than routine administrative duties; uses test data as a basis for planning, implementing and evaluating instruction; is accustomed to the bureaucratic command-compliance organizational system; is interested in efficiency and the use of time to meet management goals and objectives.

4. Administrator and Instructional Leader: Recognizes that his/her role encompasses both governance functions and instructional leadership functions; handles governance functions through the bureaucratic organizational structure; handles instructional leadership functions through a collegial organizational structure; expects and accepts some friction between governance and instructional leadership functions; treats teachers as professionals, giving them significant input into staff hiring, scheduling, evaluation, procurement of materials, selection of objectives, methods, etc.

5. Curriculum Leader: Views the curriculum in very broad terms (more than a course of study) to mean: what each person experiences in cooperatively creating learning settings; believes that the role of the principal is too complex to reduce to simple technical procedures; does not attempt to dichotomize administrative and instructional functions, realizing that all tasks impact on what is learned; believes that the learning of adult educators is as important as the learning of children and youth.

Note: This questionnaire is adapted from *The Five Conceptions of the Principalship* by Larry Simon and Dale Brubaker, 1983.

APPENDIX C  
Survey Instrument

**Instructions:**

1. In column A, please indicate the number of principals with whom you work that fit the description of each conception. i.e.: an LEA has ten (10) principals. Five (5) may fit conception 2--General Manager; three (3) may fit conception 4--Administrator and Curriculum Leader; and two (2) may fit conception 5--Curriculum Leader.
2. In column B, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes where you think those principals should be.
3. In column C, please place a check beside the conception that you feel most accurately describes most of the principals across North Carolina.
4. In column D, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes where you think the principals in North Carolina should be.
5. In column E, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes what you are presently doing in your role in the superintendency.
6. In column F, please place a check beside the conception that most accurately describes what you feel your role in the central office should be.

A   B   C   D   E   F

A	B	C	D	E	F	
						1. Principal Teacher
						2. General Manager
						3. Professional and Scientific Manager
						4. Administrator and Instructional Leader
						5. Curriculum Leader

Please complete the following information:

1. Number of years you have served as a superintendent: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Size of the school system where you are employed:
  - 1 - 5000 \_\_\_\_\_; 5001 - 10,000 \_\_\_\_\_;
  - 10,001 - 20,000 \_\_\_\_\_; 20,001 & above \_\_\_\_\_
3. Were you ever a principal? \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Check all that apply) K - 5 \_\_\_\_\_; 6 - 8 \_\_\_\_\_; 9 - 12 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of years as a principal: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Your highest degree completed:
  - Master's \_\_\_\_\_; 6th Year \_\_\_\_\_; Doctorate \_\_\_\_\_
6. Sex: Male \_\_\_\_\_; Female \_\_\_\_\_
7. Age: \_\_\_\_\_
8. What professional publications/journals do you read regularly?  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Do you feel that you keep up-to-date with readings concerning educational leadership?
  - Yes \_\_\_\_\_
  - No \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you

APPENDIX D

Follow-up Letter to Superintendents

KINGS MOUNTAIN DISTRICT SCHOOLS  
P. O. BOX 192, 500 WEST PARKER STREET  
KINGS MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA 28086  
TELEPHONE 704-739-4589

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ROBERT R. McRAE, JR., Superintendent  
LARRY F. ALLEN, Assoc. Supt.

To: Selected Superintendents

From: Bob McRae, <sup>IRM</sup> Superintendent  
Kings Mountain District Schools

Date: February 20, 1987

Re: "The Role of the Principal as Viewed by Superintendents in North Carolina"

A few weeks ago I sent you a questionnaire, the results of which are to be used in a study which I am presently doing. The questionnaire dealt with how superintendents in our state perceive the proper role of the school principal.

I notice that you have not returned the questionnaire. I realize that this is a busy time for you, but if you have a few minutes I would appreciate your completing the survey and returning it to me. For your convenience I have included another copy to be used.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this request. Your assistance will be very beneficial to me. If you have mailed the survey within the last few days, please disregard this communication and accept my appreciation.

I wish you and your system the very best.