

A Mixed Methods Study of the Perceived Effectiveness of the Rising Stars Leadership
Development Program for Principals and Assistant Principals

A Dissertation submitted
to the Graduate School
Valdosta State University

in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in Educational Leadership

in the Department of Educational Leadership
of the Dewar College of Education

October, 2015

Kimberly Carter Morgan

MEd, Valdosta State University, 1998
BA, Valdosta State University, 1994

© Copyright 2015 Kimberly Carter Morgan

All Rights Reserved

This dissertation, “A Mixed Methods Study of the Perceived Effectiveness of the Rising Stars Leadership Development Program for Principals and Assistant Principals,” by Kimberly Carter Morgan is approved by:

**Dissertation
Committee
Chair**

James L. Pate, Ph.D.
Professor of Leadership

**Committee
Member**

Steven Downey, Ph.D.
Professor of Leadership

**Committee
Member**

Donald Leech, Ed. D.
Professor of Leadership

**Committee
Member**

Gerald Siegrist, Ed. D.
Professor of Leadership

FAIR USE

This dissertation is protected by the Copyright Laws of the United States (Public Law 94-553, revised in 1976). Consistent with fair use as defined in the Copyright Laws, brief quotations from this material are allowed with proper acknowledgement. Use of the material for financial gain without the author's expressed written permission is not allowed.

DUPLICATION

I authorize the Head of Interlibrary Loan or the Head of Archives at the Odum Library at Valdosta State University to arrange for duplication of this dissertation for educational or scholarly purposes when so requested by a library user. The duplication shall be at the user's expense.

Signature _____

I refuse permission for the dissertation to be duplicated in whole or in part.

Signature _____

ABSTRACT

The principal plays a significant role in the success of a school. It is important that leadership training programs prepare principals to be instructional leaders who know how to employ research based instructional strategies, implement programs that improve student achievement, analyze data, empower others, select appropriate professional development, and create a culture of collaboration and high expectations. The purpose of this study was to determine if the Rising Stars Leadership Training Program developed by Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) was perceived as an effective leadership preparation program by the participants. The research study census included 112 school administrators within a RESA district. A mixed-methods study utilized the Leadership Practices Inventory survey (Kouzes & Posner, 2003) along with open-ended questions and interviews. Results of an independent t-test on the LPI survey results revealed that there was little difference in the perceived leadership practices of administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program and administrators who did not. The open-ended questions and interviews provide data that gives insight to the strengths and weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program as well as areas for improvement. The information gleaned from this study could be instrumental in selecting future leadership training programs.

TABLE OF CONENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION..... 1

 Introduction.....1

 Conceptual Framework.....3

 Problem Statement.....6

 Purpose Statement.....7

 Methodology.....8

 Research Questions.....9

 Population.....11

 Data Collection and Instrumentation.....11

 Data Analysis.....12

 Limitations.....12

 Definitions of Key Terms.....13

 Summary.....14

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....16

 The Changing Role of the Principal.....16

 Principals as Instructional Leaders.....18

 Historical Perspective of Principal Preparation Programs.....21

 Cohort Models.....28

 Grow Your Own Leaders.....30

 Collaboration with Universities.....31

 Leadership Coaching and Mentoring.....32

 Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement.....35

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....40

 Research Questions.....40

 Research Design.....41

 Population.....43

 Instrumentation.....43

 Data Collection.....46

Data Analysis	47
Summary	48
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	50
Introduction.....	50
Demographic Data	51
Organization of Data Analysis.....	53
Data Analysis of Research Question 1.....	53
Data Analysis of Research Question 2.....	68
Data Analysis of Research Question 3.....	80
Data Analysis of Research Question 4.....	86
Summary	93
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	95
Overview of Study	95
Literature Review Summary.....	96
Population	101
Methodology.....	101
Summary of Findings.....	103
Implications.....	108
Limitations	109
Discussion.....	109
Recommendations for Future Research	111
REFERENCE LIST	113
APPENDIX A.....	124
APPENDIX B.....	142
APPENDIX C	144
APPENDIX D.....	146

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Participant Demographic Data.....	51
Table 2. Rising Stars Candidates' Perceptions of Effectiveness of Leadership Training Program	57
Table 3. What are the Skill Levels in the Various Eight Roles of Leadership of Each School Leader Who Has Completed the Rising Stars Program?	71
Table 4. To What Degree Did Participation in the GLISI Rising Stars Program Improve Skill Levels in the Eight Leadership Roles?	74
Table 5. Responses to Leadership Practices Inventory by Kouzes and Posner	88

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and give praise to my precious Heavenly Father for giving me the sound mind, health, ability and drive to accomplish this life goal. May the attainment of this degree and all of my life's work be used to glorify Him.

A big thank you to the wonderful Valdosta State Educational Leadership Department and my committee Dr. Leon Pate, Chair; Dr. Steven Downey; Dr. Jerry Siegrist; and Dr. Don Leech for the lessons learned, your guidance, and support during the journey of earning this degree. Dr. Pate, I appreciate your leadership and expertise as I completed this dissertation, and I realize how fortunate I was to have you as my Committee Chair. Dr. Downey, your data collection and analysis expertise as well as your timely help and guidance are very much appreciated.

I appreciate the Brantley County School System and my administrative colleagues for encouraging me to complete this work. A special thanks to Angela Haney for giving me that push to go after this goal and serving as my editor. To the amazing employees and students at Hoboken Elementary School, thank you for making our school a place where a principal loves to work and wants to further her own education so she can better serve the school. To my wonderful family and friends who prayed for my perseverance and dedication as I worked towards achieving this goal in my life, I love you and could not have done it without your support and prayers. Thank you to Dr. Larry Boyette who believed in me, helped me to become a better person, and was the first person to encourage me to get my doctoral degree. My special friend and leadership mentor, Dr. Shelli Tyre, thank you for cheering me on when I needed it most and being an example of a leader that values people.

To my fabulous husband, Craig, and my beautiful daughters, Kiersten and Caitlyn, who have loved and supported me through this process... I am so fortunate to have you, and I look forward to a lot more fun times now that I am done with the dissertation. To the best parents in the world, Don and Dale Carter – thank you for always believing in me and instilling the value of hard work and importance of achieving goals. My brother Brandon is one of my best friends and has been a wonderful example of what a great principal looks like. To my Morgan parents and sister-in-laws, I appreciate all of your support, love and help with the girls. I am one blessed girl to have such an amazing family.

DEDICATION

To my Heavenly Father, I give you the praise and glory for allowing me the opportunity to achieve such a challenging goal. May my life be a reflection of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the three most precious people in my life – my husband and two daughters. My husband, Craig, is my best friend and my number one fan. Thank you for encouraging me to keep on keeping on. Your prayers, constant care and love have supported me through this journey. Kiersten and Caitlyn, you bring this Mama so much joy! I am so proud of the fine Christian young ladies that you have grown into. Remember to set high expectations for yourself, work hard and always seek the Lord for direction in your lives. I love you girls!

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

How can Georgia guarantee that there will be enough qualified school leader candidates to replace the retiring baby boomer generation of principals? How will school systems equip future leaders for the new roles of principalship in the 21st century? What opportunities do aspiring school leaders have to practice performance-based leadership before being assigned to the principal's position? These are just a few of the questions which have spurred school systems and colleges to critically analyze principal preparation programs for aspiring leaders. Today's school administrators are faced with much more than hiring teachers, ordering resources, handling discipline, and maintaining the building. They are also responsible for improving student achievement, analyzing data, empowering others, implementing professional learning, and creating a culture of collaboration and high expectations (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, & Myerson, 2005; Hickey-Gramke & Whaley, 2007; Roekel, 2008). Principals are also expected to be instructional leaders, change agents, and leaders of performance improvement (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, Orr, & Cohen, 2007).

Without doubt, principals play a vital role in the success of schools; however, existing knowledge on the best methods to prepare and develop highly qualified candidates is sparse (Davis et al., 2005). Due to the new roles and increased responsibilities of school administrators, Lashway (2002a) suggests that new methods of training and professional development are needed. Traditional principal training

programs have a reputation for being insufficient and not very effective (Farkas, Johnson, Duffett, Foleno, & Foley, 2001; Levine, 2005; Lockhart, 2007; Murphy, 2002).

Superintendents and principals have reported that their leadership training programs did not prepare them with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively lead a school or school system (Farkas et al., 2001). With the vast number of demands placed on the new principal and the increasing job openings for principals due to retirement, the need for effective principal preparation programs continues to grow.

The Rising Stars Program was developed by the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and was first implemented in 2006 (GLISI, 2008). A Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA) partnered with GLISI and was one of the first agencies to implement the Rising Stars Program. RESAs have been in existence since 1966. There are currently 16 RESAs serving the 180 school systems across Georgia. Local RESAs support educational goals and improvement of school systems by offering research-based professional learning, implementing data-driven school improvement efforts, and providing shared resources and networking opportunities among educators from different school districts.

Teachers and assistant principals who desired to be school leaders were selected by the eight school districts in this RESA area to be included in one of the first pilot Rising Stars Programs in Georgia. GLISI's Rising Stars Project was developed to establish an alternative method of selecting and developing new school leaders by creating a "collaborative" of aspiring leaders paired with leadership performance coaches (GLISI, 2008). The purpose of the program was to prepare teachers and assistant principals for leadership roles and support them through their career transitions (GLISI,

2008). The program allowed for the candidates to meet monthly for leadership meetings that focused on school leadership topics. The Rising Stars Program provided candidates with the opportunities to practice essential leadership skills while working with the support and feedback from a leadership coach. Aspiring school leaders were able to “learn by doing” through the Rising Stars Program (GLISI, 2008).

The Rising Stars pilot program at this Georgia RESA included 13 candidates, consisting of teachers and assistant principals, who already had leadership degrees (GLISI, 2008). The program began in January of 2006, and the candidates completed the program in December of 2007. The following year, seven of the eight superintendents from the RESA area recommended 18 new candidates who also had leadership degrees to participate in the second Rising Stars Program at this RESA. GLISI and the RESA partnered with Valdosta State University during the third year of the Rising Stars Program so that aspiring leaders who did not currently hold a leadership degree could obtain an Ed.S. degree in a performance-based program while enrolled in the GLISI program (GLISI, 2008, p. 2). Participation in the Rising Stars Program led to participants being selected as principals throughout the school districts in the RESA area. These principals could have benefitted from the GLISI leadership preparation program prior to their appointments as principals.

Conceptual Framework

While classroom teaching is the first influence, school leadership is the second most important influence on pupil learning (Davis et al., 2005; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008). The ever-increasing demands of the principalship and its impact on student achievement increases the need for effective principal development programs

(Hall, 2008). Scholars recognize that support programs for new principals can make a huge difference in the success of the leader (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006). While most every new teacher had the benefit of working with a successful master teacher during the student-teaching experience, most novice principals enter their challenging position without an exemplary role model (Hall, 2008). Creators of successful principal preparation programs are beginning to realize the value of having seasoned exemplary principals act as leadership coaches for aspiring leaders (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). The mentor-coach experience supports the new leader by accelerating learning, reducing isolation, and increasing confidence and skills (Robinson, Horan, & Nanavati, 2009). Lovely (2004) asserts that leadership coaches help beginning principals grow on the job and gain confidence. Lovely proclaims that beginning principals should have the opportunity to become exemplary leaders by training with a masterful coach. School systems profit from leadership coaching by gaining competent new leaders who are more skilled and have had on the job-embedded professional learning which leads to greater productivity (Alsbury & Hackmann, 2006).

Recent literature about principal preparation programs reports many authors and colleges support cohort models (Brown, 2011; Evans & Coutts, 2010; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Krueger & Milstein, 1997) . Cohorts allow students to collaboratively problem solve with other professionals, seek and give advice from colleagues, and learn to value professional relationships (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988). Cohorts provide opportunities through teamwork for professionals to learn from each other's experiences (Welch, 2010). Members of a cohort serve as a support system for each other during the leadership development program (Brown, 2011). Evans and Coutts (2010) agree that the

cohort group design is beneficial to principal preparation programs. In their study, one hundred percent of the cohort learning participants expressed that they had more support in their cohort than they would have in a traditional setting. Some of the advantages of cohort groups are support, assistance, networking, and sharing of ideas through collaboration (Evans & Coutts, 2010).

Leadership coaching or mentoring is a concept that is becoming more popular with leadership preparation programs. Many new school leaders feel overwhelmed and unprepared to handle the new responsibilities and challenges of the principalship (Holloway, 2004). Leadership coaching and mentoring programs provide new school administrators with support and guidance to master new skills, make difficult decisions, learn to manage time, and deal with other challenges during the first years as a principal (Holloway, 2004; Reyes, 2003; Searby, 2010). Aspiring or new administrators receive work-based learning practice opportunities in the form of leadership coaching or mentoring from an experienced and competent school leader (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005). The coach or mentor supports, provides performance feedback, and gives career advice to the new administrator (Kelsen, 2011). Some of the benefits of a mentoring program for school leaders include an acceleration of the learning, reduced feeling of isolation, and increased confidence levels of the new school administrators (Robinson, Horan, & Nanvati, 2009). Leadership coaching and mentoring from an experienced and competent school leader is an essential component to many effective leadership programs for school administrators (Davis & Jazzar, 2005).

Statement of the Problem

Our nation is facing a shortage of competent principals to lead our schools (Hickey-Gramke & Whaley, 2007). Peterson (2002) wrote that there are some areas in our nation where sixty percent of the principals will retire, resign, or otherwise leave their positions during the next five years. In other parts of the country, the issue has less to do with the supply of available principals and more to do with the number of certified administrators who are not competent. There is a need for qualified candidates that are adequately prepared and committed to school leadership (Peterson, 2002). As the impact of leadership on student achievement became a focus, the pressure was increased on principals as rewards and sanctions for success or the lack thereof became increasingly common (Davis et al., 2005). Experts believe the job expectations for the principal have become too unrealistic causing many certified candidates not to apply for the opportunity to serve as principal (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). In addition to the number of principals retiring, the increased job complexity of the principalship, rising standards, and greater demands of job accountability have led to increased vacancies among principals because so many educators find the responsibilities to be undesirable (Fullan, 2008). Superintendents complain that fewer qualified candidates were seeking to move into administration due to the job responsibilities (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Kelsen (2011) agreed that the current accountability movement combined with the long hours, huge demands, and frequent turnover of principals can discourage quality teachers from choosing to go into administration (Kelsen, 2011).

The most serious concerns facing the principalship include role expectations, huge time commitment, lack of support, politics, and accountability measures from No

Child Left Behind (Fullan, 2008; Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010) .

These factors have contributed to a decreased interest in the principal position (Fullan, 2008; Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010). In spite of the principal shortage, an increasing number of school leaders are graduating from leadership programs (Davis et al., 2005). As a result of low entrance standards and poor rigor, many aspiring administrators are too easily admitted into leadership programs and have passed through the coursework without the skills, necessary knowledge, and on-the-job experience to be successful as a principal (Davis et al., 2005).

The Rising Stars Program was developed to help prepare lead teachers and assistant principals for the essential tasks of being a school administrator (GLISI, 2008). Although a substantial amount of time, money and human resources have been invested into the Rising Stars Program in this study's RESA district area, there has not been a study to evaluate the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program. The findings from this study could provide the RESA area administrators and educational leaders across the country with feedback on the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program. The results of the study could influence states to implement similar "grow-your-own" administrator programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the Rising Stars Program was perceived as an effective leadership preparatory program by the participants. The information gained in this study from the former Rising Stars Participants could be significant in deciding whether or not to bring a similar leadership development program back to the RESA area now that it has been five years since the last

cohort completed the program in December of 2009. Furthermore, many of the participants who completed the Rising Stars Program from 2006-2009 have been practicing administrators for several years now and can report whether or not the program helped prepare them for their current jobs. The information gained from this study could inform educational leaders of alternatives to traditional school administrator preparation at the system, RESA, and college level. The findings from this study may help universities and leadership program directors to assess and improve the quality of their school leadership programs. Results from this study could benefit future leadership candidates in the selection of a leadership preparation program. Beneficial components of the Rising Stars program and suggested strategies to improve leadership training could be identified for consideration in designing future principal preparation programs.

Methodology

A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was used to conduct the research. The explanatory sequential approach involved collecting and analyzing quantitative data, then collecting qualitative data to further explain the quantitative data (Creswell, 2009). First, surveys were administered to school assistant principals and principals to collect the quantitative data about their leadership practices. Individual interviews as well as open-ended questions were used with former Rising Stars participants to obtain rich qualitative data concerning their perceived effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1. To what degree do participants in the Rising Stars Program perceive the program to be an effective aspiring school administration training program?

Research Question 2. What is the Rising Stars Participants' perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles?

Research Question 3. Outside of the Eight Leadership Roles, what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses?

Research Question 4. To what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program as compared to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program?

The research design used in this study is explanatory sequential mixed methods. In an explanatory sequential mixed methods design, quantitative data is first collected and then qualitative data is collected to further explain the quantitative results (Creswell, 2009). A mixed-methods approach was desirable to get both exact quantitative comparison data as well as rich qualitative interview data. One major strength of quantitative research is the ability to analyze reality in quantifiable variables (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Merriam (1988) suggested that the advantage of qualitative research is its focus on process and rich detail. Mixed methods allows the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research to be used together to provide more in depth analysis and insight into the study (Creswell, 2009). An explanatory sequential mixed methods research approach was most suitable for this study in order to thoroughly explore the four research questions. The purpose of the explanatory sequential design is to use the qualitative

findings to better explain the initial quantitative results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Although a quantitative approach would provide answers to research questions one, two and four, a qualitative approach will allow us to explore the perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program as mentioned in question three. The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach allowed us to look deeper at questions one and two by having interviews with candidates of the Rising Stars Program after they have been identified through the survey results. Interviews provide the researcher with information pertaining to participants' experiences and viewpoints (Turner, 2010). The interview questions allowed the researcher to expand the understanding of the degree of perceived effectiveness of the program by exploring why the candidates feel the way they do about the program. Questions that arose from the survey data were explored during the interview process.

The research was conducted in two phases. First, the quantitative phase of the study utilized a survey that included 4 demographic questions, 24 questions specific to the Rising Stars Program, and the Leadership Practices Self Inventory (LPI) by Kouzes and Posner (2003). The data from the LPI survey was analyzed to see if there was a significant difference between the perceived leadership behaviors of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program and school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program. The survey was mailed to all 112 Assistant Principals and Principals in the eight school districts within the RESA area. Next, the qualitative phase of the study was conducted and included a questionnaire with six open-ended questions as well as six individual interviews with selected school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program.

Population

The population for this study included 112 principals and assistant principals from all the schools in the Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) district. A population is the group which the researcher intends to study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). A census was conducted as the survey was sent to all of the population and not a sample of the population. A census occurs when one attempts to gather data from every member of the population being studied rather than choosing a sample (Harding, 2006). District and school administrators were encouraged to allow their employees to participate in the study in order to gain feedback on the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program in which they have invested people, time and money.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

The research was conducted in two phases. The first phase was quantitative while the second phase was qualitative. The Leadership Practices Inventory by Kouzes and Posner (2003) was given to all 112 principals and assistant principals in the RESA schools. The researcher gained permission from Kouzes and Posner to use this survey (see Appendix B). The LPI is one of the most used leadership assessment instruments with over 1.1 million respondents since 1985. Repeated usage and analysis of the LPI has proven it to be a reliable and valid instrument that measures a leader's effectiveness (Schaefer, 2013). The survey also included four demographic questions and 18 questions directly related to Rising Stars Program.

The qualitative phase of the study involved conducting individual interviews to give detailed insight to the Rising Stars Program from the school administrators' perspectives. Interviews allow the researcher to understand the points of view of others

and to better understand their experiences (Patton, 2002; Turner, 2010). In addition to the interviews, a questionnaire of six open-ended questions was given to the candidates to explain the benefits and weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program. Responses to open-ended questions helped the researcher understand the perspectives of participants without predetermined answer categories (Patton, 2002).

Data Analysis

The survey results were analyzed and a mean score and standard deviation for each question on the survey was calculated. The survey data from the former Rising Stars candidates was analyzed to answer the fourth research question. Data was examined to determine if the Rising Stars participants perceive the Rising Stars Program as preparing them to meet the current work expectations of the principalship. The interview data was coded and interpreted to gain more descriptive information on the impact of the Rising Stars Program of the administrative candidates. The triangulation of the survey data, open-ended questions, and interview data allowed the researcher to gain a better understanding of the overall effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program.

Limitations

The study is limited to the Rising Stars Program cohorts in this one Georgia RESA district from 2006 to 2009. The size of the population also limited the study. A larger study including more feedback from other Rising Stars cohorts throughout Georgia would provide valuable information to the overall research of the GLISI Rising Stars Program. The study is limited by the number of participants in the cohort that are presently serving as a principal or assistant principal.

The researcher is a principal in one of the school districts in the study. I was a Rising Stars Participant in the first pilot cohort at the RESA in 2006-2007. There is a concern for the possibility of researcher bias. The researcher utilized multiple data sources and methods of collection to limit such bias.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following terms and definitions are listed to provide understanding of terms used throughout this dissertation. Definitions without a citation were defined by the researcher.

Census. A census occurs when one attempts to gather data from every member of the population being studied rather than choosing a sample (Harding, 2006).

Cohort Model. A graduate program style where a group of students begin and finish the program together. They share experiences and collaborate together.

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI). GLISI is an independent, non-profit organization that is committed to working with Georgia district and school leaders to build leadership capacity and improve student achievement (GLISI, 2012).

Grow Your Own Administrator. The “grow your own” school leadership programs are established by school systems to prepare their own employees for the role as a school administrator within their current school system (Joseph, 2009; Morrison, 2005; Potter, 2001).

Leadership Coach. The Leadership Coach is a role served by an experienced and competent administrator who provides support, feedback, and career advice to a new or aspiring school leader (Kelsen, 2011).

Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The Leadership Practices Inventory is a survey consisting of 30 statements that measure the frequency of leadership behaviors (Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA). RESAs are organizations that support educational goals and improvement of school systems by offering professional learning and providing shared resources and networking opportunities among educators from different school districts.

Rising Stars Program. The Rising Stars Program was a leadership training program that was developed by the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and was designed to prepare aspiring school leaders for the role of administrator (GLISI, 2008).

Summary

Chapter one provides an introduction to this mixed methods study of the Rising Stars Program. The chapter begins with a brief history of the work of Georgia Leadership Institute of School Improvement (GLISI) and the birth of the Rising Stars Program. The chapter also includes the conceptual framework for the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, methodology, research questions, population, and sample. The data collection, data analysis, and limitations of the study are also discussed in chapter one.

Chapter two explores the literature relevant to this study. The role of school administrators and the historical perspective of principal preparation programs are reviewed through the literature. Discussed among the current literature on principal

preparation programs are cohort models, collaboration with universities, the need for quality leaders, leadership coaching and mentoring.

Chapter three describes the methodology, the research questions, and the research design. The population, sample, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis are included in chapter three.

Chapter four presents the data analysis for this mixed methods study. The findings as they reflect the research questions will be discussed. Chapter five will include the summary and conclusions of this study. A discussion of results, expectations for future principal preparation programs, and suggestions for further research close the chapter.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

A review of the literature introduces the changing role of the principal including the principal's role as instructional leader. The historical perspective of principal preparation programs and current principal preparation programs are discussed.

Components of the principal preparation programs shared in this chapter include cohort models, a "grow your own leaders" approach, collaboration with universities, administrative coaching and mentoring. The chapter concludes with an overview of the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and the organization's work to develop the leadership preparation program known as Rising Stars.

The Changing Role of the Principal

The days of the principalship being awarded to the football coach extraordinaire allowing him to relax as he prepares to ride off into the sunset of retirement are about as long-gone as the memory of the one-room schoolhouse and the premise that one test can determine the overall success of a student, teacher, or school. As high stakes testing and student achievement accountability have put principals in the hot seat, the expectations and roles of principals have changed (Corcoran, Casserly, Price-Baugh, Walston, Hall, & Simon, 2013).

Today's school leaders must come into the profession fresh, poised for continuous growth and learning, and skilled enough to motivate students, teachers, and parents to follow them into the vast unknown of new curriculum standards, instructional

innovations, performance-based assessments, and ever-changing accountability measures (Roekel, 2008). Hale and Moorman (2003) describe the role of principal as both demanding and challenging. They suggest aspiring new educational leaders need a firm preparation program before becoming an administrator. Just as strong leadership is the heart of all effective organizations and businesses, research confirms that strong leadership is also important for public schools (Hale & Moorman, 2003). As sustained efforts to raise academic standards and improve teacher performance have continued to thrive in U.S. political and social agendas, the focus is now on the significant role that administrators play in school improvement (Duffett, Farkas, Foleno, & Johnson, 2001).

Effective leadership is one of the most essential steps to improving the nation's schools (Duffett et al., 2001). Various studies, supporting the principal as the main influence in addressing school success, have been the focal point of much standards-based school reform for the past two years (Davis et al., 2005; Herrington & Willis, 2005; Lashway, 2002a). Numerous findings support the principal as the major source of influence when addressing the challenges of accountability directed at the school level (Duffett et al., 2001; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Herrington & Willis, 2005; Lashway, 2002b). The principal's responsibility is to influence and shape the learning so that it improves student achievement (Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

Many superintendents agree that behind every great school is a great principal and that given the right leadership, even the most at-risk school districts can be turned around and experience increases in student achievement (Duffett et al., 2001). Hale and Moorman (2003) declare that the leadership abilities and values of a principal greatly

determine the academic success of a school. Principals are under pressure to improve teaching and learning (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Today's principals need to be instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment gurus, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations specialists, finance managers, and facility managers (Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Kelsen, 2011). Additionally, the school leader needs to enforce and oversee special programs, legal and policy mandates, and change initiatives that further build the academic and economic success of their buildings (Davis et al., 2005). With these demands being made on the principal, critics are beginning to examine whether or not leadership programs are adequately preparing future leaders for the role of principal (Davis et al., 2005). Roberts (2009) agrees and adds that the focus on school improvement has heightened the crucial need for strong principal leadership and has resulted in criticism of school leaders and the programs that prepare these leaders. Study results indicate a disconnect between curriculum taught in principal preparation programs and the "real-world" complexities of the job (Davis et al., 2005). As a result, many superintendents believe too many leadership graduates are certified for the position, but not truly qualified to effectively serve as a principal (Davis et al., 2005).

Principals as Instructional Leaders

High stakes accountability for student achievement and the responsibility of being the lead learner among a staff of highly qualified teachers makes the principal's work more complex and demanding than in the past (Hickey-Gramke & Whaley, 2007). Although a principal's day is full of school operations and problem solving, making instructional leadership a priority is a must for successful leadership (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982; DeBevoise, 1984; Horng & Loeb, 2010; Kelsen, 2011).

Jenkins (2009) defines instructional leadership as the concept that student learning is given top priority in a school with everything else focused on improving student learning. Instructional leadership requires principals to dedicate time and effort to improving teaching and learning (Jenkins, 2009). The roles of instructional leadership are defined as setting clear goals, allocating resources for instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, evaluating teachers, using student achievement data to make informed instructional decisions, and leading professional learning communities that both share effective teaching practices and reflect on methods to improve instructional practices (DeBevoise, 1984; Jenkins, 2009; Lashway, 2002a; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008). Blasé and Blasé (2000) similarly described instructional leadership with behaviors such as giving instructional feedback to teachers, modeling effective instructional strategies, supporting collaboration among teachers, and providing professional development opportunities. DeBevoise (1984) defined instructional leadership as the actions a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning.

Educational reformers agree that a primary responsibility of the principal is to align all aspects of school to support improved instruction so all students can be successful (Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, Orr, & Cohen, 2007; DeBevoise, 1984). The growth of standards-based accountability demands that principals be instructional leaders (Lashway, 2002a; Welch, 2010). Principals have to be focused on student achievement in order to meet the demands of accountability (Kelsen, 2011). The importance of effective instructional leadership in the success of a school has been well documented in the literature (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003;

Lashway, 2002a; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008). School principals need to be instructional experts who can provide teachers with performance feedback (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

The 1980s view of instructional leadership included traditional tasks such as setting goals, selecting instructional resources, reviewing lesson plans, and teacher observations (Lashway, 2002a). Today's high-stakes accountability system demands a deeper involvement in the teaching and learning process (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; DeBevoise, 1984; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Jenkins, 2009; Lashway, 2002a; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008). The principal must know how to select the right professional learning to ensure teachers are continuously improving instructional practices through learning communities, implementing a standards-based curriculum, and using balanced assessments to inform instruction (Davis et al., 2005; Lashway, 2002a). Making data-driven decisions is another key task of this decade's instructional leader.

Lashway (2002a) reported six important roles of instructional leaders: make student and adult learning a priority; set high expectations for performance; implement standards-based instruction; create a culture of continuous learning for the adults; use data to assess learning and make decisions; and build community support for school success. Lashway (2002a) lists several key behaviors of principals who act as the instructional leaders in the building. These include: communicating instructional suggestions, giving feedback on performance, modeling effective instruction, asking for teacher's opinions, providing teacher-collaboration opportunities, selecting professional development that supports the goals of the school, and praising effective teachers.

DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) declare that principals who are instructional leaders should support teachers, maintain focus on school tasks, communicate effectively, and coordinate instructional programs.

Instructional leaders can influence student achievement through two methods: the support and development of efficient teachers; and the implementation of effective organizational processes (Davis et al., 2005). Three important aspects of the principal's role while serving as instructional leader. These include developing an understanding of how to support teachers by offering feedback and professional learning to improve instruction; managing the curriculum so that student learning is promoted and organizational performance is enhanced; and creating a productive and collaborative school culture that encourages exemplary teaching and learning for all students (Davis et al., 2005).

Historical Perspective of Principal Preparation Programs

The demands on schools and principals began to increase during the latter part of the 20th century. Prior, principals were considered effective if they were decent building managers who ensured a safe learning environment, managed the budget, and maintained discipline (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Universities focused on introducing leadership candidates to the latest trends and theories in educational leadership, but provided limited opportunities for the candidates to apply their new knowledge in a real school setting (Buckner, Evans, Peel, Wallace, & Wrenn, 1998). The aspiring leaders had a lot of course work on administrative and educational theories during their leadership preparation courses; however, they were not adequately prepared for the vast demands that awaited them as principal (Buckner et al., 1998; DiPaola & Tschannen-

Moran, 2003). As a result, many new principals find themselves overwhelmed with the job responsibilities (Farkas et al., 2001; Holloway, 2004). Hale and Moorman (2003) suggest that traditional educational leadership programs emphasized management and administrative issues as opposed to curricular and instructional issues.

Concerns about the content of principal preparation programs and practices of school leaders began to emerge during the 1980s and sparked a major review in 1987 of leadership training practices by the University Council of Education Administration. The review gave birth to a report called *Leaders for America's Schools* (Griffiths, Stout, & Forsyth, 1988; Milstein, 1992; Welch, 2010). This report described how school leadership should be restructured. These recommendations included the following core elements: define effective school leadership; advocate for the recruitment of quality candidates having great potential to serve as future school leaders; develop collaborative relationships between universities and school district leaders; promote continuing professional development for practicing school leaders; redesign the school leadership preparation programs so that they are organized sequentially, provide current and relevant content, and include relevant and challenging internship experiences (Milstein, 1992; Welch, 2010).

Nearly twenty years of efforts to improve school leader preparation programs have produced little progress, and the literature on leadership preparation programs makes it clear that there is a need for reform (Hale & Moorman, 2003). According to Hale and Moorman (2003), the systems that prepare school leaders are in trouble and lack a clear definition of good educational leadership. There is a lack of collaboration among the school districts and universities which leads to preparation programs which contain

irrelevant curriculum and absent of clinical experiences. Hale and Moorman (2003) report that many principals agree the administrative training they received was not adequate and did not prepare them for the job. These principals reported that their preparation programs were “out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today’s schools” (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p.5). The consensus among these principals was that the leadership preparation programs they experienced were too theoretical and not relevant to the daily demands of the principalship. They believe courses focused too much on management and did not spend enough time on how to be an instructional leader. Because practicum experiences were limited or non-existent, the leadership candidates did not have opportunities to develop practical understanding or real-world job competence.

Painter (2003) reports that the admission standards for principal preparation programs are not high enough and are resulting in the admission of unqualified students, a less demanding curriculum, and students who are not prepared for the job. Hale and Moorman (2003) supported the premise that admission standards to educational leadership programs were too low. Duffett et al. (2001) wrote that superintendents are skeptical about the skills and competency of new principals coming into the profession. Many school leaders reported that leadership programs in graduate schools are out of touch with the reality of what it takes to lead and be a successful school administrator (Duffett et al., 2001). Further, they felt that improving these leadership preparation programs would be an effective strategy for improving school leadership and ultimately school success.

The increased expectations for school leadership is requiring principals and superintendents to no longer serve as just supervisors and managers, but to lead their schools in the rethinking of goals, priorities, finances, staffing, curriculum, pedagogies, learning resources, assessment methods, technology, and use of time and space (Levine, 2005). After an extensive four year study called *Educating School Leaders*, Levine (2005) concluded that the preparation of future school leaders must change to address the new dynamics of school leadership. Many of the practicing principals have not been prepared for the extreme transformation that has taken place in the education field (Levine, 2005). Levine believes the competition of universities for students has led to lower admission standards for leadership candidates, coursework that is not rigorous or relevant to the job, and degrees that are faster and less demanding to attain. All of these factors have a negative impact on the applicant pool of future school leaders. Levine's research also revealed school districts that reward teachers for taking administrative courses, regardless of the rigor and relevance to their jobs, are unintentionally increasing the number of low quality candidates who enter school leadership preparation programs.

Levine (2005) suggested some leading factors that contributed to the downfall of educational administrative programs. The curriculum in the majority of leadership programs is not rigorous enough and does not prepare principals and superintendents for the vast demands of school leadership. Low admission standards to leadership programs and low graduation standards have enabled graduate students who are not leadership material to receive degrees in school leadership. Levine claimed that many university leadership programs were at a disadvantage because they were taught by professors who had no experience as a principal or superintendent. Although many aspiring leaders want

opportunities to connect their course work with practical experience in the schools, inadequate clinical instruction was another weakness found in the study. Levine also reported there are too many degrees and certificates in school leadership, and they are quite different from university to university. Levine reported the change needed to prepare future school leaders cannot rest solely on the university leadership programs. Improvement of the programs will require a collaborative effort from the universities, school districts and state agencies (Levine, 2005).

After the four year study, *Educating School Leaders*, Levine (2005) made three recommendations to improve the quality of leadership programs. First, school systems and the state agencies need to eliminate the incentives that favor low-quality programs by finding alternatives to salary scales that give raises based only on credit hours and degrees. Secondly, school leadership programs need to adopt and enforce minimum standards for quality. Lastly, educational leadership programs should be redesigned to include a challenging curriculum that adequately prepares school leaders.

Levine (2005) listed nine criteria that could be used to evaluate leadership programs. The researcher begins this list by arguing the purpose of the program should be clear, and the goals should focus on the needs of school leaders, schools and children. Curriculum standards should be rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the various skills needed by school leaders. The curriculum must also have a balance of integrating theory taught in university classrooms with clinical work in schools with successful administrators. Leadership programs should have a strong faculty who are experts in school leadership. Effective leadership programs ought to have admissions criteria that recruit highly motivated and quality candidates that have the capacity to become strong

school leaders. The graduation standards need to be high, and the degrees awarded should be appropriate to the job. High quality research that is useful to school leaders and policy makers should be a part of the leadership program. There should be enough resources to support the program. The last criteria pointed out by Levine (2005) is that leadership programs should continuously conduct self-assessments to identify areas for improvement.

The role of principal has expanded to include such challenging tasks as instructional leader, assessment and data analysis expert, public relations expert, disciplinarian, budget analysts, conflict resolution specialist, and change leader (Davis et al., 2005; Hickey-Gramke & Whaley, 2007; Roekel, 2008). Many scholars and practitioners fear that the job requirements have become unreasonable for one person and that the traditional methods of preparing school leaders are no longer adequate for today's leadership challenges faced in public schools (Davis et al., 2005). Change needs to occur within leadership preparation programs so that they are better able to support and train new school leaders (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

New principals are thrown into the job to sink or swim. We must do better if our schools are going to improve and succeed at high levels (Hall, 2008, p. 449). Although studies have shown that principals play a vital and complex role in creating schools that are positive and productive workplaces for teachers and that have vibrant learning opportunities for students, current knowledge of the best methods for developing these competent leaders is scarce (Davis et al., 2005). Most certified teachers have participated in a non-paid student teaching experience where the teacher in training was able to work with a competent veteran teacher and gain hands-on experience doing the real work of a

teacher (Davis et al., 2005). This practice needs to occur for new school administrators. Studies have shown that the traditional training principals receive in university classrooms is not enough to adequately prepare an educator for all of the difficult roles of a principal (Davis et al., 2005; Hall, 2008; Petzko, 2008). Hall (2008) agrees that research and theory classes can only prepare the principal candidate for so much. Hall suggested principal preparation programs need to provide opportunities for leaders to do the real work of a principal.

School leader preparation program advocates should understand that school leadership is complex and requires managerial skills as well as being savvy in politics and becoming an instructional leader (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The principal preparation programs that have experienced the most success in preparing tomorrow's leaders have some common attributes. Hale and Moorman (2003) claim that they are usually cohort based and include field based activities where future principals are given opportunities to practice their problem-solving skills in real schools, not just discuss scenarios in a college classroom. The program faculty work closely with the school district administrators to mold the program so that students will master identified critical competencies (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Davis et al. (2005) reported some of the same characteristics of effective leadership programs when they stated that principal preparation should be research-based, have real world curriculum, provide experience in real life situations, use cohorts and mentors, and be structured to support collaboration between the leadership program and school districts.

Lauder (2000) identified trends in improved school leadership programs to include strict entrance requirements, cohort models, performance standards, development

of leadership skills, reflective practice emphasis and continuous program review. The leadership programs should attract educators with the competency and deep desire to lead (Lauder, 2000). Jackson and Kelley (2002) identified similar characteristics of principal preparation programs that are considered exceptional and innovative. Those characteristics include: higher expectations for students; careful screening and selection process; a more coherent and focused program with sequenced courses; strong collaboration with area school districts; cohorts of 20 to 25 students; and aligning faculty to work with school administrators to develop a coherent program that meets needs of students and schools. These exceptional programs require an extensive time commitment, a clear vision, a well-defined curriculum, and instructional strategies that are selected with the future leaders' needs and knowledge base in mind. The creators of these programs believe that fieldwork in real life school situations is the primary tool for learning among school leaders (Jackson & Kelley, 2002).

Cohort Models

The cohort learning model is becoming a popular choice for universities as they strive to respond to the demand for reform in leadership programs (Evans & Coutts, 2010). Evans and Coutts report that leadership program cohorts have become an important part of the partnership between colleges and school districts to train highly qualified principal candidates. The school leadership programs that have been more successful in preparing principals for the 21st century are typically cohort-based where a group of students enter the program at the same time and bond to become a community of learners (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Welch (2010) agrees that cohort models are

particularly advantageous for leadership students as they learn to appreciate professional relationships and learn professional values from each other.

The cohort model offers a support system and fosters a sense of community for the future leaders (Harris, 2006). When candidates begin, continue, and finish the leadership program together, they are able to learn from each other and problem solve together (Evans & Coutts, 2010). Harris (2006) explained that cohort designs emphasize the shared experiences of candidates and decreases the anxiety and stress that many leadership candidates feel when moving from the teacher to administrative role. Welch (2010) found that leadership students in cohorts view themselves as more than a collection of individuals. These students report that the support and respect they receive from other cohort members are significant to their learning. Harris (2006) wrote that as the use of the cohort model became more widely used in leadership preparation programs, academic performance of candidates increased through teamwork and collaboration.

Krueger and Milstein (1997) reported that peer support provides the leadership candidates with motivation to get through the difficult time during the leadership courses and transition from the classroom to the administrator's office. In addition, Krueger and Milstien suggest that cohorts promote professional networking both during the leadership program and long term during the rest of the administrator's career. Future principals who have been trained through cohorts are more likely to use collaboration when promoting learning among teachers and students (Krueger & Milstein, 1997).

Teitel (1997) suggested the cohort model allows students to have deeper investigations and discussions on sensitive issues. The meaningful conversations that

take place among cohort participants hold great value and lead to the professional growth of the members. Some of the positive effects that result from cohort-based learning include a connected group acceptance, social and emotional support structure, motivation, persistence, and collaborative learning (Harris, 2006). Cohorts can help build knowledge, inspire creative thinking, view problem situations from various perspectives, and model team building that is encouraged among school faculty (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001).

Grow Your Own Leaders

The “grow your own” school leadership programs are defined as programs established by school systems to prepare their own employees for the role as a school administrator within their current school system (Joseph, 2009; Morrison, 2005; Potter, 2001). According to Potter (2001), an excellent solution to the principal shortage would be for school systems to tap into their own pool of top quality teachers and groom them for administration. Grow your principal preparation programs increase the applicant pool with quality leaders that school system superintendents support as future administrators (Morrison, 2009; Turnbull, Riley, Arcaira, Anderson & MacFarlane, 2013).

Additionally, the grow your own school leadership programs expedite the pipeline for moving quality applicants into the role as school administrator (Turnbull et al., 2013).

School district superintendents are beginning to take the “grow your own” approach to selecting, grooming and training future school administrators for their own school districts (Lashway, 2002b). The superintendents view the principal development program as a problem-solving opportunity for school districts to strengthen their own human capital (Turnbull et al., 2013). Lashway (2002b) suggests the school districts can

support leadership development by working with university programs to select promising candidates, host meaningful internship experiences, and use experienced administrators to serve as mentors and/or coaches for the leadership students. Experts agree there is a need for districts to grow leaders from within their own school districts (Duffett et al., 2001). The majority of superintendents are more inclined to hire from within their school district than hire competent and experienced leaders from other school districts (Duffett et al., 2001; Turnbull et al., 2013).

Collaboration with Universities

School systems and universities are encouraged to work together to recruit cohorts of highly competent future leaders (Hale & Moorman, 2003). Current research supports that school districts need to create partnerships with universities to identify and recruit highly effective principal candidates for their districts (SREB, 2006). In successful collaborations between the school district and university, the university professors provide a leadership curriculum while practicing administrators supervise and provide guidance during field work (Browne-Ferrigno & Barber, 2010). The First Ring Leadership Academy is an example of a leadership development program that was established through the collaborative efforts of Cleveland State University and thirteen school districts surrounding Cleveland (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The program is performance based and aspiring leaders get to work with an exemplary principal. The leadership preparation program developed by the partnership between University of North Texas and the Dallas Independent School District is another great example of a successful principal preparation program (Hale & Moorman, 2003). The school district identifies teachers who have demonstrated leadership and are interested in becoming

school administrators. The University of North Texas and the school district work together to develop curriculum and assigned performance tasks (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Hale and Moorman (2003) suggested public schools and universities should share the responsibility for preparing school leaders by partnering with universities and other programs of educational leaders. They believe the lack of partnerships between the colleges, universities and school districts greatly affects the quality of candidates being admitted into leadership preparation programs. Without the partnerships, there is no easy way to identify the candidates who show the most promise as future school leaders. Hale and Moorman report the lack of a strong working relationship between the school districts and universities also makes it difficult for promising leaders to have on-the-job, real world practice at administrative duties. Davis et al. (2005) also support leadership programs that originate from a partnership between the school districts and leadership programs and pointed out the strengths below:

Traditional preparation programs often fail to seek out or establish interdisciplinary links within the university or to fully utilize potential outside resources in schools and other organizations. Likewise, many district-based professional development efforts have failed to benefit from the intellectual resources available in their local universities. The need for stronger clinical training has encouraged a growing number of universities to collaborate with districts and schools as equal partners in the design, implementation and assessment of preservice principal preparation programs. Proponents maintain that close collaboration enhances program consistency and helps to develop a sense of shared purpose and a common vocabulary between districts and local colleges of education. In such collaborative programs, practicing administrators are commonly used to mentor administrative interns, assist university faculty in the assessment of candidates in the field, participate in university screening and admission processes, serve as members of the university's program advisory committee, and sometimes teach courses. The structuring of inservice professional development programs also reflects a trend toward closer collaborations between universities and districts. University faculty serve as advisors to districts developing inservice programs sometimes offer tailored

university courses on-site in local districts. Such collaborative efforts are thought to support and sustain both university-based programs and district initiatives (p.11).

Leadership Coaching and Mentoring

Leadership coaching for school administrators is a current concept that provides a structure for training (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005). The term “coach”, as used in educational leadership, is a role served by an experienced and competent administrator who provides support, feedback, and career advice (Kelsen, 2011). A leadership coach can provide a connection to practical knowledge and relevant learning through job embedded opportunities (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001; Fullan, 2008; Kelsen, 2011). Having exemplary administrators serve as coaches, guides, or resource leaders to new or aspiring school leaders is a key concept in many effective school leadership programs (Davis & Jazzar, 2005). The key elements of an effective administrative coaching program include: planning, structure, and purposeful relationship building (Bloom et al., 2005; Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001; Kelsen, 2011).

Much too often, school systems assume that new principals possess all of the skills and abilities to lead their schools successfully when in fact the new leader is overwhelmed and unprepared for the realities of the new position (Holloway, 2004). Rarely do aspiring school leaders feel they are ready for the challenges that await them, and there is a lot of evidence revealing a need for continued mentoring (Searby, 2010). Mentoring has become a widely adopted strategy for attracting, developing, and sustaining school leaders (Holloway, 2004; Robinson, Horan, & Nanvati, 2009). Mentoring programs have been found to accelerate learning, reduce isolation, and increase the confidence level and skills of new school leaders (Robinson, Horan, &

Nanvati, 2009). Mentoring programs provide the support that new principals need in order to deal with the unrelenting stress and need to master new skills during the first years of administration (Holloway, 2004). Researchers have stressed the importance of a mentoring in recruiting and retaining competent educational leaders (Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010). In addition, the mentoring process affords new administrators the opportunity to mesh theory learned during their preparation program to practice through their collaboration and sharing with a network of principals (Reyes, 2003).

Lashway (2002b) reported that the increase of mentoring programs in administrative careers has benefitted both the new administrator and the seasoned mentor. The mentors have gained insight and enthusiasm into their own profession. Additionally, mentoring programs encourages both new and veteran leaders to be more reflective and analytical about their own practice (Lashway, 2002b). Holloway (2004) reported that the mentoring process benefits the experienced school leader by stretching their thinking about teaching, learning and leading. New principals who participated in a mentoring program felt they had a more successful start to their careers when compared to other colleagues who did not have mentors (Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010). New leaders have reported that having someone to consult for advice on difficult issues is one of the greatest benefits of a mentoring program (Holloway, 2004). Another benefit of the mentoring program is that new principals develop a network of administrators that they can use as resources throughout their careers (Reyes, 2003).

Holloway (2004) proclaims professionals who serve as principal mentors should be instructional leaders who have strong interpersonal skills and organization skills.

They should also be able to communicate ideas and strategies to meet the administrative challenges faced by new leaders. Mentors share personal experiences relevant to the leadership role, show respect for the participant, and help the participant finish tasks on time (Holloway, 2004). Holloway (2004) found successful mentoring programs had the following characteristics: appropriate matching of mentor and mentee; clear expectations and guidelines; a confidential and trusting relationship; nonsupervisory relationship where mentors are not required to share performance information with the mentee's supervisor; and a participatory relationship where mentor and mentee work collaboratively on some tasks. Davis and Jazzar (2005) stress an important key to successful mentoring is to have the experienced administrators encourage the aspiring or new school leaders to be candid, critical, and reflective.

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement

The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) was developed in 2001 to improve the development of school leaders (GLISI, 2012). Differing from university leadership programs, GLISI programs focused on performance measuring, managing and monitoring results to achieve results. GLISI has established several successful programs in partnership with school districts in Georgia to enhance the quality of school leadership. The Rising Stars Program, now known as the Leadership Preparation Pipeline, was one of the most recognized programs. Rising Stars was launched in 2005 in partnership with a Georgia Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) as an effort to help school districts grow their own leaders. The program used performance-based modules to allow leaders to practice the real work of school leaders in actual schools with real teachers with the support of a leadership coach and a district

school sponsor. The architects of the Rising Stars Program stressed that the implementation of a successful university and school district partnership would provide a leadership preparation program that would focus on the needs of school districts and leadership candidates (GLISI, 2008). Additionally, the program would contain relevant curriculum connected to the real work of school leaders, stronger field experiences, and supportive cohorts of developing leaders.

The first Rising Stars Collaborative at the RESA in the study was formed in January of 2006, and thirteen candidates completed the program in December of 2007 (GLISI, 2008). Since all of the original thirteen candidates already held leadership certificates, university partnership was not needed at the time. Based on the data and performance of the candidates, the local superintendents in the RESA area decided to commit to a second year of the Rising Stars Program (GLISI, 2008). During the plans for a third year of the program, RESA and Valdosta State University formed a collaborative partnership to sponsor an Ed.S. Rising Stars program for candidates in this RESA area. This program served as a model for university and school district partnerships across Georgia while meeting all of the new Georgia leadership certification requirements and the leadership needs of the participating school districts (GLISI, 2008). Leadership candidates could get their Ed.S. in educational leadership while completing the Rising Stars Program. The local superintendents reported that the program met the leadership needs of their school districts, and the leadership candidates felt they received training that they could use on their current jobs as well as future administrative jobs (GLISI, 2008).

The leadership development modules that were used during the program focused on the Eight Roles of Leadership as identified by GLISI. Those roles include: Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader, Data Analysis Leader, Process Improvement Leader, Learning and Professional Development Leader, Relationship Leader, Performance Leader, Operations Leader, and Change Leader (GLISI, 2008). GLISI (2012) defines a Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction leader as one who monitors the implementation of a standards-based curriculum, engages teachers in collaborative planning of instructional units and assessments, and leads implementation of research-based instructional practices. The Data Analysis Leader leads teams of educators to analyze multiple sources of data to identify progress of student achievement goals and needed improvements. Literature supports the various tasks of GLISI's Data Analysis Leader and Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader as vital roles in instructional leadership (Jenkins, 2009; Kelsen, 2011; Lashway, 2002a).

The Process Improvement Leader is described by GLISI (2012) as one who demonstrates the ability to guide others in analysis and decision-making process to develop school-wide plans for improvement. GLISI (2012) states that a Learning and Performance Development Leader should model continuous learning, develop professional learning plans for staff, encourage educators to collaboratively share learning and best practices. Educational reformers agree that some of the major responsibilities of a school administrator include a vision and plan for improvement, professional learning that enhances best teaching practices and student achievement, and a collaborative learning environment among staff (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Lashway, 2002b). The Relationship Leader demonstrates the ability to develop positive

relationships among staff, parents, students and other stakeholders (GLISI, 2012). The Relationship Leader understands the importance of communicating school priorities, encouraging parent involvement, and administering perception surveys to identify needs for improvement. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2008) also encourages principals to actively engage parents and community members to build relationships that support the improved performance of schools.

GLISI (2012) suggests that the Performance Leader knows how to plan, organize, measure, monitor and manage school systems and processes that are needed for improved student achievement. The Performance Leader hires staff, creates employee assignments, and leads employees to developing student achievement goals. The Operations Leader develops a budget that aligns resources with school-wide instructional priorities, prepares a master schedule that allows for collaborative planning time, monitors the discipline, and ensures school safety. Levine (2005) agrees that principals must be able to recruit highly qualified staff, align professional development to school goals and employee needs, create schedules that maximize student learning, budget and purchase resources that lead to continued school improvement, and implement systems for monitoring discipline and school safety. Schools that demonstrate academic improvement are more likely to have principals with strong organizational skills like those of the Performance Leader and Operations Leader (Horng & Loeb, 2010). The Change Leader supports the school employees as they navigate through the change process of continuous instructional and student achievement improvements (GLISI, 2012) . Literature supports that being a change agent is an essential role of any successful principal and is also one of the most

complex tasks of school leadership (Fullan, 2001; Garfinkle, 2004; Kotter, 1996; Kouzes & Posner, 2002).

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

The Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) developed the Rising Stars Program for the purpose of preparing lead teachers and assistant principals in a school district to become school principals in their same school district. Though studies have been conducted on school leadership preparation programs and their various attributes, there has not been much research on the Rising Stars Program.

The purpose of this study was to measure the perceived effectiveness of GLISI's Rising Stars Program from leadership candidates. The information gained from this study could inform education by helping Georgia superintendents decide if they should consider other GLISI school leadership preparation programs such as the Leadership Preparation Pipeline, formerly known as Rising Stars. The beneficial components and flaws of the Rising Stars Program could be identified for consideration in selecting future principal preparation programs.

Research Questions

The study on the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program will be guided by the following research questions.

Research Question 1: To what degree do participants in the Rising Stars Program perceive the program to be an effective aspiring school administration training program?

Research Question 2: What is the Rising Stars Participants' perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles?

Research Question 3: Outside of the Eight Leadership Roles, what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses?

Research Question 4: To what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program as compared to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program?

Research Design

Boards of Education, Superintendents, RESA Directors, Principals, and other educational leaders often have to make difficult decisions and choices regarding implementation, retention, modification or termination of various programs. Research can aid educators in making such decisions regarding school administrative preparation programs. An explanatory sequential mixed methods research design was used to assess the perceived effectiveness of GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Preparation Program. A mixed-methods design allowed the researcher to get both exact quantitative comparison data as well as rich qualitative interview data. The explanatory sequential mixed methods approach required the researcher to gather and analyze the quantitative data first. The qualitative data was used to further explain the quantitative results (Creswell, 2009). A positive component of quantitative research is the ability to analyze reality in quantifiable variables (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996). Merriam (1988) suggested a strength of qualitative research is its focus on process and rich detail. A mixed-methods approach allows the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative research to be used together to provide more

in depth analysis and insight into the study (Creswell, 2009). An explanatory sequential mixed methods design uses descriptive qualitative data to further explain quantitative results (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The explanatory sequential mixed methods design was appropriate for this study because the survey answered research questions one, two and four and identified the former Rising Stars Candidates. After the survey results were analyzed and the former Rising Stars candidates were identified through the survey, follow-up interviews were conducted with selected former Rising Stars Candidates to further clarify research questions one and two and to answer research question number three.

The quantitative data was collected from a survey that included four demographic questions, 18 questions specific to the Rising Stars Program, and the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) by Kouzes and Posner which contained 30 questions. The LPI survey data was used to answer research question number four as it compares the leadership perspectives of current school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program to current school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program. The online web survey program, Qualtrics, was used to distribute the surveys and collect the data.

Qualitative data was collected through six open-ended questions on the survey and interviews. Individual interviews were held with selected school principals and assistant principals who completed the Rising Stars Program after they were identified through the survey. Purposeful sampling was used to select administrators who have high opinions of the program as well as those school administrators who did not. A total of six individual interviews were conducted. The interview data helped answer research questions one and three by gaining a better understanding of what areas of the program

the participants perceived as strengths and areas of concern and whether or not the participants perceived the program as an effective school leader training program. Additionally, the interview data provided the researcher with information to better understand research question number two by expanding on the administrators' perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles. More qualitative data was collected from six open-ended questions that are included in the survey that every administrator in the study who has completed the Rising Stars Program will be asked to answer.

Population

The population for this study included all 112 principals and assistant principals in a RESA School District in Georgia. The population of a study is the group in which the researcher intends to study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Since the researcher surveyed all 112 individuals in the population, a census was conducted. A census occurs when one attempts to gather data from every member of the population being studied rather than choosing a sample (Harding, 2006). The RESA District used in the study is made up of the eight school districts. The school systems included in the study have a total of nine high schools, nine middle schools, and 30 elementary schools. There are a total of 112 school building leaders in the RESA School District who are either serving as a principal or assistant principal. The RESA Schools fed a number of school leaders through the Rising Stars Program making the current administrators a purposeful population for the study.

Instrumentation

Participants in this study were administered a survey comprised of four demographic questions, 18 questions specific to the Rising Stars Program, and the

Leadership Practices Inventory-Self (LPI-Self) survey by Kouzes and Posner (2003) in order to obtain the quantitative data. The LPI-Self survey has an acceptable internal reliability of .75 level as measured by Cronbach's Alpha and is one of the most widely used leadership development instruments with more than 1.4 million respondents in the last four years (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The validity and reliability of the LPI-Self survey have been well documented in the literature reporting research studies that used the survey (Posner & Brodsky, 1994; Posner & Rosenberger, 1997; Posner, 2009). Kouzes and Posner (2014) report that as people improve their scores on the LPI, they are able to achieve higher, measurable leader outcomes. Data showing that principals from "Blue Ribbon" schools had higher LPI scores than principals from non-Blue Ribbon Schools indicated that the instrument does measure a school leader's capabilities (Kouzes & Posner, 2014). The five components of the LPI include: Model the Way; Inspire a Shared Vision; Challenge the Process; Enable Others to Act; and Encourage the Heart (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). The LPI-Self was selected as the survey instrument because the five components of the LPI have been identified as essential skills of successful school administrators (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). Permission for use of the LPI-Self in this research was granted (Appendix B).

The population of 112 principals and assistant principals in the RESA Schools were e-mailed the survey. The 18 questions specific to the Rising Stars Program assessed each leader's skill level on the Eight Roles of Leadership as well as the perceived level of preparation of the Eight Roles of Leadership through the Rising Stars Program. Some of these questions asked the respondent to rate themselves on the skill level of each leadership role by selecting either "low", "below average", "average", "above average",

or “high”. Additional questions on the survey asked the participants to what degree the Rising Stars Program improved their skill levels in the Eight Roles of Leadership by choosing “major negative effect”, “minor negative effect”, “no affect”, “minor positive affect”, or “major positive affect”. The LPI-Self survey contains 30 statements where the participants rate themselves on various leadership behaviors. The rating scale used with the LPI-Self goes from 1 to 10 with the following frequency levels: 1= “almost never”, 2= “rarely”, 3= “seldom”, 4= “once in a while”, 5= “occasionally”, 6= “sometimes”, 7= “fairly often”, 8= “usually”, 9= “very frequently” and 10= “almost always”. The survey takes approximately 30 minutes to complete.

A questionnaire with six open-ended questions was included to collect qualitative data on the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program from the participants’ perspectives. Suggestions from various qualitative research authors (Creswell, 2009; Jacob & Furgerson, 2012; Turner, 2010) were used to develop an interview protocol and write standardized open-ended interviews with expansive questions. An additional question was added to the open-ended questionnaire to determine what percentage of the current school administrators in the study are graduates of the Rising Stars Program. Another question was added to the instrument to determine if Rising Stars candidates have advanced in their fields after completing the program.

Purposeful sampling was used to select six interview participants who completed the Rising Stars Program and are now serving in either a principal or assistant principal role within one of the eight school systems in the RESA District. The interview guide included a script at the beginning and end of the interview. Interview questions were standardized, open-ended, and expansive so that the participants can share their perceived

experiences. The first goal of the interviews was to gain insight about the strengths and weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program from the people who graduated from the program and are now working as a school building administrator. The second goal of the interviews was to further elaborate on research questions one and two by identifying the school administrators' perceptions on the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program and their level of preparation for the Eight Roles of Leadership.

Data Collection

After the approval of Valdosta State University's IRB was obtained (Appendix D), permission was granted from the superintendents to survey principals and assistant principals within their school systems and to interview selected administrators who have completed the Rising Stars Program. Quantitative data for the study was collected using the survey. Included along with the survey was a question which determined if the participants had advanced in their fields since completing the Rising Stars Program. An online survey tool, Qualtrics, was used to input the survey and create a link for the survey. An informed consent letter (Appendix A) explaining the purpose of the mixed-methods study, requesting the participant's permission in the survey, and providing a link to the online survey was e-mailed to every principal and assistant principal in the eight school systems within the RESA district. The qualitative data was collected in two forms. First, six open-ended questions were added to the survey to understand what the Rising Stars Participants who are now serving as school building administrators perceived as strengths and weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program. Secondly, the researcher selected six administrators who have completed the Rising Stars Program to interview. Purposeful sampling was used to select the six administrators by identifying

four administrators who have high opinions of the program and two who did not. All six of these school building administrators also participated in the survey. The interviews were made up of five guiding interview questions and lasted from 10 to 25 minutes. All six of the interviews were face-to-face interviews which were conducted at the interviewee's school. Permission was gained from the interview participants to record the interview discussion in order to preserve accuracy of responses.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed by comparing the mean averages from the survey of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program to determine if there were any statistically meaningful or significant differences of the perceived leadership practices between the two groups of administrators. Independent-samples t-tests were used to determine if a statistical meaningful or significant difference existed between the two groups of school administrators, those who completed the Rising Stars Program and those who did not. The effect size and power were calculated to determine if the differences between these groups were meaningful. This data analysis was used to answer research question number four. Furthermore, additional researcher-developed questions were added to the survey to determine the number of sitting principals and assistant principals in the study schools who actually completed the Rising Stars Program and how many Rising Star Participants had advanced in their careers since completing the Rising Stars Program.

The qualitative data were analyzed by reviewing each of the six school administrators' interviews and the open-ended questions included in the survey. Each

interview was transcribed from the recording to provide a complete record of the interview discussion and aid in the analysis of the data. Creswell's (2009) guidelines were used to analyze and interpret the interview data. These guidelines suggest transcribing interviews and reading through all interview transcripts first to gain a general sense of the information. Creswell (2009) then advises the researcher to go back through the interview data looking for themes and ideas to code. He suggests looking for the following types of codes: codes that readers would expect to find based on past literature; codes that were unexpected; codes that are unique; and codes that address a larger theoretical perspective in the research (Creswell, 2009). The coded data was used to develop themes for making an interpretation of the interview data. The content of the interview discussions and open-ended questions were analyzed to answer research question number one by determining to what degree the Rising Stars Program is perceived as an effective leadership preparation program from the participants' perspective. Further analysis was conducted to identify strengths and weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program from the participants' perspectives. In an effort to guard against researcher bias, detailed notes were kept during data collection and analysis.

Summary

An explanatory sequential mixed-methods research study was conducted to determine the perceived effectiveness of GLISI's Rising Stars Program for leadership development. The mixed methods study involved the population of the principals and assistant principals in the selected RESA school district. Through the Qualtrics program, a survey was e-mailed to the population of 112 principals and assistant principals from the eight school districts involved in the study. The survey instrument that was used

included questions related to the Rising Stars Program and the Leadership Practices Inventory – Self (LPI-Self) developed by Kouzes and Posner to measure the frequency of leadership practices (2003). The primary usage of the LPI survey was to determine whether or not there is a statistically meaningful or significant difference in the perceived frequency of leadership practices among school building administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program and school building administrators who did not. Additional questions were added to the survey to determine how many sitting principals and assistant principals from the sample completed the Rising Stars Program. Open-ended questions were included in the survey to allow the participants to describe to what degree they perceive the Rising Stars Program as an effective leadership development program as well as describe perceived weaknesses and strengths of the program. Six individual interviews were conducted with sitting principals and assistant principals to gain more information about their perceptions and experiences of the Rising Stars Program.

The survey and interview data were reviewed and analyzed in order to answer each of the four research questions. The findings from the study are included in Chapter IV.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

This chapter opens with a brief overview of the study including the purpose, design, and data collection of the study. Participation rate for the survey, and the statistics used to analyze the data are described. The four research questions follow, and the results from the study begin with a discussion of the demographic data. Following, data analysis for each research question will be presented.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the Rising Stars Program was perceived as an effective leadership preparatory program by the participants. The findings from the study revealed the perceptions of practicing school administrators and reported whether or not the Rising Stars Program assisted in preparing them for their current positions.

A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was used to conduct the study. First, surveys were administered to school administrators to collect data about their leadership practices and to provide demographic data. Individual interviews and open-ended questions were used with former Rising Stars participants to obtain qualitative data concerning their perceived effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program.

The response rate for the survey was 83%. Descriptive statistics were calculated to determine percentage rates, mean averages, and standard deviations for survey questions. A T-test was used to determine if there were statistically significant

differences between the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program and school administrators who did not complete the program. Open-ended questions on the survey, as well as follow-up interviews with some of the Rising Stars Participants, provided insight about the research questions.

Research Questions:

1. To what degree do participants in the Rising Stars Program perceive the program to be an effective aspiring school administration training program?
2. What is the Rising Stars Participants' perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles?
3. Outside of the Eight Leadership Roles, what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses?
4. To what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program as compared to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program?

Demographic Data of Population

The first section discusses the demographic data obtained through the survey. All school-level administrators in the participating RESA school district were included in the census (N=112). Of the 112 online surveys e-mailed through Qualtrics to current administrators in these school systems, 93 (response rate of 83%) were successfully completed and analyzed. The 93 respondents consisted of 51 (55%) school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program and 42 (45%) who did not.

Of the 93 school administrators who responded, 37 (40%) were male and 56 (60%) were female. Fifty (54%) of the administrators were between 36 and 47 years old,

and thirty-three (35%) were between 48 and 59 years old. Thirty-one (33%) of the respondents had been in school administration for 0-5 years, and another thirty (32%) had been a school administrator for 6-10 years. In addition, nineteen (20%) had 11 to 15 years of experience as an administrator while thirteen (14%) had more than 16 years of administrative experience. Of the school-level administrators who responded to the survey, forty-eight (52%) worked at an elementary school, twenty-two (24%) worked at a middle school, and twenty-three (25%) were employed at a high school. Fifty-one (55%) of the survey respondents completed the Rising Stars Leadership Program. Table 1 represents demographic data gathered from the survey.

Table 1:

Participant Demographic Data

Demographic Category	Groups	Percentages	N
Gender	Female	60%	56
	Male	40%	37
Age	24-35 years	6%	6
	36-47 years	54%	50
	48-59 years	35%	33
	60 or Over	5%	4
Years of Administrative Experience	0-5 years	33%	31
	6-10 years	32%	30
	11-15 years	20%	19
	16-20 years	9%	8
	More than 20	5%	5
School Level	Elementary School	52%	48
	Middle School	24%	22
	High School	25%	23
Completed Rising Stars Training	Yes	55%	51
	No	45%	42

Organization of Data Analysis

The remainder of the findings are organized and presented by each research question. The survey data consisting of the LPI statements and questions specific to the Rising Stars Program are explained for each question. Open-ended questions were used to further expound on research questions one, two and three. Research question four was addressed with the LPI portion of the survey. The interview data revealed participant opinions and thoughts on questions related to the study and provided more in-depth perspective on all four research questions.

Research Question 1 Results. Research Question 1 asked to what degree do participants in the Rising Stars Program perceive the program to be an effective aspiring school administration training program. Results from the survey data addressing this research question are reported first in the narrative and also are included in Table 2. Four questions on the survey helped answer research question one; and the data for all of the Rising Stars candidates' responses to these four questions are presented followed by a breakdown of the data based on gender, years of administrative experience, and school level. Following the description of the quantitative data, the qualitative data from the open-ended statements supporting the Rising Stars Program as an effective leadership training program are expressed. These are followed by comments that are not as supportive. Finally, comments from the interviews addressing question number one are submitted.

Finding 1.1. Rising Stars Candidates' Leadership Skills Improved. Out of 51 school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program, 44 (86%) reported on the survey that their leadership skills had improved as a result of the leadership program.

The 51 Rising Stars completers consisted of 35 female participants and 16 male participants. Female Rising Stars participants responded more positively about improved leadership skills during the Rising Stars Program as 32 (91%) of the female participants and 13 (81%) of the male participants conveyed improved leadership skills. Among the 51 Rising Stars participants, 31 of them had less than 10 years of administrative experience while 16 of them had more than 10 years of administrative experience. Rising Stars administrators with 10 years or less of administrative experience and those with more than 10 years of administrative experience had similar responses to the question about improved leadership skills. Thirty-one (88%) of the administrators with less than 10 years of administrative experience and 13 (86%) of the administrators with more than 10 years of experience stated their leadership skills had improved as a result of the Rising Stars Program. The 51 Rising Stars candidates consisted of 29 educators working at an elementary school and 22 educators serving at the secondary school. Overall, more elementary administrators (n=27, 93%) than secondary administrators (n=16, 73%) perceived that their leadership skills improved after completing the Rising Stars Program.

Interpretation of Finding 1.1. From the data presented above, clearly the majority (86%) of the Rising Stars candidates perceive their leadership skills improved as a result of the Rising Stars Program. Consequently, a greater percentage of the female participants perceived their leadership skills improved after participating in Rising Stars. Both administrators with less than 10 years of experience and their seasoned colleagues with more than 10 years of administrative experience reported similarly that the majority of them possessed improved leadership skills as a result of the leadership training. While a large percentage of both elementary and secondary candidates reported improved

leadership skills, more elementary candidates attributed their improved leadership skills to the lessons learned during Rising Stars.

This finding suggests that aspiring leaders' participation in the Rising Stars Program improved the candidates' perceived leadership skills. This result is consistent with results of a similar study conducted in 2007 at Georgia Southern University where GLISI leadership training participants credited the leadership training for their overall improved leadership skills (Lockhart, 2007).

Finding 1.2. The Majority of the Rising Stars Candidates Benefitted from the Leadership Training Program. When asked to what degree the Rising Stars candidates felt they benefitted from the program, 47 of the 51 Rising Stars administrators rated their responses as “a great deal,” “a fair amount,” “somewhat,” or “not very much.” Four of the 51 Rising Stars administrators did not respond to these statements. Nineteen (40%) of these 47 administrators perceived they benefitted “a great deal” from the Rising Stars Program while another 18 (38%) responded “a fair amount”. Eight administrators (17%) felt they “somewhat” benefitted, and only two (4%) stated they did not benefit very much from the leadership training program. More female participants (87%) declared they had benefitted “a great deal” or “fair amount” from the Rising Stars Program compared to the male participants (63%). Out of the 47 Rising Stars administrators who reported their perceived benefits of the Rising Stars Program, 32 of them had 10 years or less of administrative experience, and 15 of them had more than 10 years of administrative experience. Twenty-six (81%) of the educators with 10 or less years of administrative experience reported benefitting from the leadership training “a great deal” or “a fair amount” while eleven (73%) of the educators with more than 10 years of administrative

experience expressed benefitting “a great deal” or “fair amount”. Of the 47 administrators who responded to this question, 29 of them were elementary administrators, and 18 of them were administrators at the secondary level. A considerably larger amount of elementary administrators expressed benefits of the Rising Stars program when compared to middle school and high school administrators. Twenty-six (90%) of the elementary administrators and only 11 (61%) of the secondary administrators felt they had benefitted from the program “a great deal” or “fair amount”.

Out of the 10 administrators who seemed least satisfied with the Rising Stars Program and reported only benefitting “somewhat” or “not very much” from the training, six (60%) are male while four (40%) are female. Six (60%) of the least satisfied respondents have 10 or less years of administrative experience and four (40%) have more than 10 years of administrative experience. Furthermore, three (30%) of the least satisfied Rising Stars candidates are elementary administrators and seven (70%) are secondary administrators.

Interpretation of Finding 1.2. The survey results revealed that only 4% of the Rising Stars candidates did not think they benefitted from the program. Therefore, the overwhelming majority (96%) of the people responding to that survey item reported benefitting from the Rising Stars Program. Similar to Finding 1.1, both female candidates and elementary candidates had a higher percentage reporting benefits for the Rising Stars Program when compared to male candidates and secondary candidates, respectively.

Finding 1.3. Many Rising Stars Candidates Received Job Promotions. The survey revealed 42 (82%) of the Rising Stars Candidates received a job promotion since

completing the leadership training. More of the male participants (86%) received promotions following the training as compared to the female participants (78%). Twenty-eight (78%) of the educators with 10 or less of years of administrative experience achieved job promotions since their completion of the Rising Stars Program. Similarly, twelve (80%) of the candidates with more than 10 years of administrative experience also received promotions. Twenty-two (76%) of the elementary participants and seventeen (77%) of the secondary participants have been promoted since the leadership training.

Interpretation of Finding 1.3. The finding indicates a large percentage (82%) of the Rising Stars candidates reported receiving job promotions since completion of the leadership training. There were not any significant differences among gender, experience, or school level with regards to job promotions.

Finding 1.4. Candidates Recommend Similar Leadership Training Program.

When the Rising Stars candidates were asked whether or not they would recommend a similar leadership training program to their superintendent for aspiring school leaders, forty-four (86%) of the respondents said “yes” while five (10%) said “not sure,” and only two (4%) said “probably not”. Fourteen (88%) of the male participants and thirty (85%) of the female participants stated that they would recommend a program similar to Rising Stars to their superintendents. A greater percentage of candidates with more than 10 years of administrative experience (93%) supported recommending a similar leadership program compared to the administrators with 10 years of less of administrative experience (82%). More of the elementary administrators (93%) compared to secondary administrators (71%) replied that they would recommend a leadership training program

like Rising Stars. Table 2 contains the Rising Stars candidates' responses to the perception questions on the effectiveness of the leadership training program.

Interpretation of Finding 1.4. This finding implies that the Rising Stars candidates perceived the program to be a positive experience from which they benefitted. Additionally, the finding reveals the majority of the Rising Stars Candidates (86%) felt the program worthy enough to recommend future aspiring leaders within their counties partake in the training.

Table 2

Rising Stars Candidates' Perceptions of Effectiveness of Leadership Training Program (n=51)

Perceptions of Candidates	Responses	Percentages
Have your leadership skills improved?	Yes	86%
	No	14%
To what degree did you benefit from the program?	A great deal	40%
	A fair amount	38%
	Somewhat	17%
	Not very much	4%
Rising Stars candidates who received a promotion	Yes	82%
	No	18%
Would candidates recommend a similar leadership program to their superintendent?	Yes	86%
	Not Sure	10%
	Probably Not	4%

Qualitative Data from Open Ended Questions

While responding to the open-ended questions on the survey, the school administrators listed various benefits of the Rising Stars Program. The Leadership Coach's support and feedback as well as the collaboration and networking with other

administrators were the most popular themes listed as benefits of the training program. The Rising Stars candidates wrote that the curriculum modules on the Eight Roles of Leadership were a benefit as they allowed the leadership candidates a chance to practice the real work of school leadership in a school setting. Statements to the open-ended questions are listed below and are arranged according to themes which emerged from the data analysis.

Finding 1.5. Rising Stars participants benefitted from having a leadership coach.

Every Rising Stars candidate had a leadership coach assigned to them during the training. The leadership coach supported the aspiring leader while working through the various curriculum modules. Additionally, the coach was able to encourage the participant, provide insight to questions concerning difficult school decisions, and share their own leadership experiences with the novice leader. When the Rising Stars participants were asked to describe how they benefitted from the program, many of them communicated that having a leadership coach was valuable. Statements supporting this finding are listed below.

“I got to practice the real work of an administrator while an experienced leader supported me and gave me feedback.”

“I also believe that working through the modules and having the feedback of a coach was a strength of the program.”

“The program was definitely a benefit. It afforded me the opportunity to solve mock situations with the benefit of immediate feedback from peers and facilitator [leadership coach]. Also, having a mentor [leadership coach] to assist with concerns was extremely valuable.”

“Learning from experienced leaders who have already been through the fight...”

“Having a leadership coach was a strength of the program.”

“Hands on learning in the school with leadership coaches to guide you through the process. The modules and feedback from the instructor [coach] was very helpful!”

“The collaboration and sharing among districts, as well as the input from the mentors [leadership coaches] as they share scenarios that they have been a part of during their leadership were beneficial for me.”

“Having a mentor [leadership coach], the expert panel of presenters, and the step by step modules were instrumental in guiding my progress and professional growth.”

Interpretation of Finding 1.5. This finding suggests the Rising Stars participants perceive the leadership coaches to be one of the major strengths of the program. This finding is consistent with similar research that proposes having exemplary administrators serve as coaches to new or aspiring school leaders is a key concept in effective leadership programs (Davis & Jazsar, 2005; Holloway, 2004).

Finding 1.6. The Rising Stars participants benefitted from networking with other administrators. Each month, the Rising Stars participants and the leadership coaches met at RESA and collaborated together on curriculum modules. The cohort and their coaches used problem-solving skills to address a mock school crisis, and listened to each other as both experienced and aspiring leaders shared questions, concerns and suggestions for school improvement. The statements below demonstrate evidence that candidates perceive networking with other administrators as a beneficial component of the Rising Stars Program.

“I believe that meeting with other administrators to collaborate was definitely a strength of the program.”

“I formed relationships that I still use today. Almost everyone in our group [cohort] has gone on to become a principal that I respect and look to for advice.”

“Rising Stars allowed me to network with colleagues to build a leadership network.”

“It [Rising Stars Program] also allows you to build a network of people to use as resources.”

“Collaborating with other administrators and having established administrators give presentations was a benefit.”

“A chance to network and share ideas with area administrators...”

“Networking with other leaders and hearing how they handled various situations - what they did to lead effectively through various changes or other challenging times...”

“Being able to network and learn from other leaders was a strength.”

Interpretation of Finding 1.6. This finding implies the Rising Stars participants felt networking with other administrators was an advantage of the Rising Stars cohort program. This beneficial component of the program is a finding similar to other literature advocating the value of networking with other administrators (Harris, 2006; Welch, 2010).

Finding 1.7. The Rising Stars candidates developed improved leadership skills as a result of the training. The responses to open-ended questions from former Rising Stars candidates indicated their leadership skills had changed because they grew professionally and enriched their leadership skills. One respondent wrote that his leadership skills improved “especially in the way of examining data and using it to make instructional decisions.” Other statements supporting improved leadership skills follow:

“Rising Stars Program enhanced my leadership skills, gave affirmation to my leadership philosophy, and inspired me to continue working towards career goals I had set for myself.”

“My leadership skills improved as a result form participating in the Rising Stars Program through completing performance-based modules, [leadership] coaching, and collaborating with others in action research to identify and address existing academic issues.”

“I definitely learned how to build leadership within my building and to empower others. I also learned how to analyze, utilize and share data with teams and use discussions of the data to improve instruction.”

“I am better at empowering others and building leadership among my staff”

“The components of the Rising Stars Program that most helped/guided my work as a school building administrator are learning how to be an effective Data Analysis Leader, Process Improvement Leader, and Performance Development Leader.”

“I think that learning to conduct constructive meetings (RTI, grade-level, data-analysis, analysis of student work, etc.) helped my work as an administrator.”

“My skills were enhanced with regards to analyzing data, building relationships, and being an effective change agent and lead learner.”

Interpretation of Finding 1.7. The Rising Stars candidates perceived that their leadership skills improved as a result of participating in the Rising Stars Leadership Training Program. Participants described specific areas in which their skills had improved such as empowering others to foster leadership among staff, leading effective meetings, building relationships, analyzing and sharing data for school improvement.

Finding 1.8. Rising Stars candidates benefitted from the program and perceived it to be effective professional development for aspiring leaders. During the open-ended questions and interviews, the leaders expressed how the program helped them become better leaders. Statements from the leadership training participants advocating support and various benefits of the Rising Stars Program include:

“I have often stated and firmly believe that the Rising Stars Program was the best professional development I have ever been through.”

“I realized that leadership is not just about being the boss. It also requires helping others get the resources and strategies they need... It involves making decisions that benefit all stakeholders involved, from parents to teachers, and especially students.”

“This was the first opportunity I had to be part of a good leadership training. I was not familiar with the eight roles of a leader but have found myself referencing back to this training on more than one occasion.”

“I believe I gained an understanding of the overall characteristics needed to be an effective leader starting with the personal relationships that must be established.”

“It was very helpful to hear other people discuss their [leadership] philosophy and approach to leading a school. I was exposed to new ideas throughout the program.”

“Rising Stars truly helped me develop my leadership style... helped me develop my story, my vision, my philosophy of education. It helped me understand how to lead a group through a shared vision and purpose.”

“The knowledge that I gained from Rising Stars Leadership Program is drawn upon consistently in all that I do.”

Another Rising Stars candidate reported, “I was in my first year as an administrator. I am positive that Rising Stars helped make me a better administrator.” Respondents reported they learned more about decision making and empowering others through their experience with the Rising Stars Program. The majority of the Rising Stars candidates (82%) have had promotions since completion of the Rising Stars Program.

Interpretation of Finding 1.8. Many of the Rising Stars participants reported experiencing various benefits as a result of their partaking in the leadership program. Many of the candidates described how the program aided them into becoming a better leader.

Finding 1.9. A few Rising Stars participants reported that they did not benefit from the leadership training program. Although the majority of the open-ended questions on the survey produced very positive and supportive statements about the Rising Stars Leadership Program, there were a few comments from Rising Stars candidates who explained why they did not feel the program was beneficial for them

personally. One administrator stated, “I believe on-the-job training prepared me more than Rising Stars.” Another school administrator being required to take the training and had already served as assistant principal at a high school for several years wrote, “I felt like many of the things we covered I already had experience with on the job or in my masters’ and doctoral courses in leadership. It [The Rising Stars Leadership Program] would be more beneficial to teacher leaders who have not had the opportunity to experience some of the leadership roles in their daily routine.” The third comment came from a candidate who had just been promoted to an assistant principal position the same year that she was beginning the Rising Stars Leadership Program. She stated, “I was learning a new school and a new job. The program was one more responsibility I had to fulfill. I believe that had I had more time in my new role before completing the [Rising Stars] program, I could have benefitted more.”

Interpretation of Finding 1.9. This finding reveals several Rising Stars participants did not find the leadership training program to be beneficial. Two of the three of those participants communicated that they believed on-the-job experiences produced better learning opportunities for them when compared to the training program. A third Rising Stars candidate stated that the program was just one more responsibility added to an already demanding workload. Although these three Rising Stars administrators had reasons for not benefitting personally from the program, the fact that there were only three (6%) of the 51 Rising Stars participants who felt they did not benefit from the program gives evidence to how much the majority of the participants did benefit from the program.

Qualitative Interview Data

Some of the descriptive accounts from interviews indicating support for the Rising Stars Program will follow. The first quote is from a female elementary school principal. She communicated that the Rising Stars Program gave her a broader perspective of school leadership and processes outside her familiar view as the classroom teacher.

“It was very beneficial for me because at the time I was still in the classroom teaching and part-time instructional coach. I was just starting leadership classes, and I had taken on more leadership roles and my principal recognized that and recommended me for the [Rising Stars] program. It was helpful to me because I was able to be around other leaders like me. Some of them were in the same boat I was in. Some of them were already assistant principals. Some were new principals. It was helpful for me to network and get ideas because I had not seen the big picture and the big view yet. I was still in the classroom and did not have that view point from up above [administrative view point]. Having the presenters come in and share strategies and different ways of looking at things really helped me view issues differently. As a teacher, you only see your little world. It [the program] really helped me gain a broader perspective.”

The next quote is from a female administrator who was a brand new assistant principal at an elementary school when she began the Rising Stars Leadership Program. She is now in her fifth year as a principal of a middle school. She described learning through the shared experiences of other administrators and leadership coaches as a benefit of the Rising Stars Program.

“I definitely benefitted from Rising Stars and I feel like ... not having any [administrative] experience really at that point... It gave me a foundation in many of those areas [Eight Leadership Roles], and some of the things that I just would not have known naturally to do and would have had to learn over years of experience in the leadership position. It actually helped me get a jumpstart on that.”

Below is a quote from a male elementary school principal who was able to complete his Specialist Degree in Ed Leadership by participating in the Rising Stars Program. He was still a classroom teacher when he participated in the program. This participant valued collaboration and feedback from experienced administrators. He also preferred the performance-based learning modules to traditional class lectures.

“I feel like I benefitted from Rising Stars because at that moment I was getting my Specialist Degree in Leadership and then I was able to do that in collaboration with the Rising Stars. I felt like I got to talk more with people that were already principals or who were already APs and get their feedback on certain things. We did a lot of interaction in our groups where we could look at a scenario and discuss what you would do if this happened... A lot of ours was performance based instead of just sitting in a class. So for me – that was a lot better.”

The last interview quote addressing research question one comes from a female assistant principal who was an instructional lead teacher when she began the Rising Stars Program. Since most of her instructional coach duties centered around curriculum and instruction, she expressed how her experiences through Rising Stars enabled her to participate in other realms of school leadership.

“I think that the Rising Stars Program gave me opportunities that I would not have been able to have at the time. I was going through the Rising Stars Program as an instructional lead teacher. It gave me those leadership opportunities that you don’t always have in the instructional lead position. I was able to learn a lot of stuff about principalship and administration that I would not have learned just in the curriculum aspect of my position.”

Summary for Research Question One

Research question one asks to what degree do Rising Stars candidates perceive the program to be an effective leadership training for aspiring school leaders. The

findings for research question one indicate the majority of the Rising Stars candidates described the program to be effective. More female participants reported having improved leadership skills (91%) and benefitting from the program (87%) than their male counterparts (81% improved leadership skills, 63% benefitting from program). Additionally, more of the elementary school administrators felt they had benefitted from the program (88%) and their leadership skills had improved (93%) when compared to the middle school and high school administrators (56% benefitted, 73% improved leadership skills). Administrators with 10 or less years of administrative experience responded very similarly to administrators with more than 10 years of experience when asked if their leadership skills had improved since Rising Stars (88%, 86% respectively). Slightly more administrators with ten or less years of administrative experience (80%) reported benefitting from the Rising Stars program as compared to those administrators with more than 10 years of administrative experience (73%).

Another indicator that the majority of the former Rising Stars candidates feel the leadership training was effective is 86% of the candidates would recommend a similar program to their superintendent to use with future school leaders. The majority of both male (88%) and female (85%) Rising Stars administrators would make this recommendation. The elementary administrators show more favor towards the program when compared to the secondary administrators. Only 71% of the secondary administrators reported that they would suggest the superintendent implement a program similar to Rising Stars while 93% of the elementary administrators would.

Data from the open-ended questions on the survey describe various benefits of the program confirming that many of the former Rising Stars candidates perceived the

leadership training to be effective and beneficial. Leadership coaches providing guidance, support, and feedback were appreciated by many of the Rising Stars participants and was a common theme in many of the responses. Another emerging theme was that administrators valued the opportunities provided through the training for networking and collaboration with other administrators and leadership coaches. Improved leadership skills was another theme described as a beneficial result of the Rising Stars Program. Some of the improved leadership skills mentioned by participants include conducting action research, performing data analysis, leading a meeting, empowering others, building relationships, being an effective change leader, becoming a lead learner, and developing process improvement plans.

The interview data also revealed how the program was advantageous for the candidates. Leadership Coaches sharing experiences and lessons learned through the years gave aspiring leaders opportunities to learn from competent administrators and a new perspective on leading a school.

Research Question 2 Results. Research question two asked what were the Rising Stars Participants' perceived levels of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles? The Eight Roles of Leadership as defined by GLISI include the following leadership roles: Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Leader; Data Analysis Leader; Process Improvement Leader; Performance Development Leader; Relationship Leader; Performance Leader; Operations Leader; and Change Leader. The survey contained two questions specific to each of the Eight Leadership Roles, and this data is described first. The survey responses for all candidates are reported first in the narrative and in Table 3 and Table 4. Additional data analysis provided a picture of the survey data for question

number two based on gender, administrative experience, and school level and is provided in the narrative. Following the survey data, responses to the open-ended questions are presented. Lastly, the interview statements provide a deeper investigation of the candidates' perspectives on how well the Rising Stars Program prepared them for the Eight Leadership Roles.

Finding 2.1. Most Rising Stars participants rated their skill levels in the Eight Roles of Leadership as “very high” or “above average.” In the survey, Rising Stars candidates (n=51) were asked two questions on each of the Eight Leadership Roles. The first question asked each Rising Stars administrator what his current skill level is in that particular leadership role. Each respondent could rate the skill level in the leadership roles as “low”, “below average”, “average”, “above average” and “very high”. The “above average” response was selected more than any of the five choices for each of the Eight Leadership Roles. Rising Stars participants rated themselves high as a Performance Leader with 82% reporting their skills were either “very high” or “above average”. Respondents also rated themselves strongly in the Data Analysis Leadership Role with 34% reporting their skills were “very high” and 46% reporting “above average” in data analysis skills. Former Rising Stars candidates rated their skill levels similarly in the roles of Curriculum Assessment and Instruction Leader (72%), Process Improvement Leader (70%), Relationship Leader (72%), Operations Leader (72%), and Change Leader (71%) with about the same percentages responding “above average” or “very high”. Only 58% of the respondents rated their skill levels as “above average” or “very high” in the Performance Development Leadership Role.

The responses to the skill-level question based on gender revealed a greater percentage of male Rising Stars participants rated their skill levels as “very high” or “above average” when compared to female participants on four of the Eight Leadership Roles. A larger percentage of the male participants rated their skill levels as “above average” or “very high” compared to the female participants in the roles of Process Improvement Leader (M=56%, F = 47%), Relationship Leader (M=88%, F=65%), Performance Leader (M=88%, F=79%), and Operations Leader (M=81%, F=71%). More female participants rated themselves higher in the roles of Data Analysis Leader (M=69%, F=85%), Performance Development Leader (M=38%, F=68%) and Change Leader (M=56%, F=79%). Male and female Rising Stars participants responded similarly on their skill level as a Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader. The majority of male (77%) and female (76%) respondents felt their skill levels as a Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction leader were either “above average” or “very high.”

The Rising Stars candidates’ responses based on administrative experience revealed that the administrators with more than 10 years of experience and the administrators with 10 or less years of experience reported similar percentages of “above average” and “very high” skill levels for five of the Eight Roles of Leadership. The five roles in which they were similar include Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader (10 or less=74%, More than 10=73%), Data Analysis Leader (10 or less=79%, More than 10=80%), Process Improvement Leader (10 or less=71%, More than 10=73%), Relationship leader (10 or less=71%, More than 10=73%), and Operations Leader (10 or less=74%, More than 10=73%). A larger percentage of the respondents with 10 years or

more of administrative experience rated their skill levels as “above average” or “very high” for the other three leadership roles when compared to the respondents with 10 or less years of administrative experience. Those three leadership roles include Performance Development Leaders (10 or less=53%, More than 10=73%), Performance Leader (10 or less=79%, More than 10=87%), and Change Leader (10 or less=70%, More than 10=80%).

Data analysis on the school level of Rising Stars participants revealed about the same percentage of elementary school respondents rated themselves “above average” or “very high” as compared to their secondary counterparts in the three leadership roles of Relationship Leader (elementary=71%, secondary=71%), Performance Leader (elementary=79%, secondary=82%), and Operations Leader (elementary=71%, secondary=71%). More elementary Rising Stars administrators reported their skill levels as “above average” or “very high” in the other five leadership roles: Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader (elementary=79%, secondary=65%), Data Analysis Leader (elementary=89%, secondary=53%), Process Improvement Leader (elementary=75%, secondary=67%), Performance Development Leader (elementary=89%, secondary=58%), and Change Leader (elementary=81%, secondary=53%). The skill levels as reported by the Rising Stars candidates for all Eight Leadership Roles are listed in Table 3 below.

Interpretation of Finding 2.1. This finding implies that the Rising Stars candidates feel competent in the Eight Leadership Roles which were taught during the leadership training program. The Rising Stars candidates reported their skills were “very high” or “above average” in the Eight Leadership Roles which were the foundation skills

of the curriculum modules completed during the Rising Stars Leadership Program. The roles in which the participants perceived themselves as the absolute strongest were as Performance Leader and Data Analysis Leader. The Performance Development Leadership Role had the lowest number of participants rating themselves as “above average” or “very high.”

Table 3

What are the skill levels in the various Eight Roles of Leadership of each school leader who has completed the Rising Stars Program? (n=51)

Eight Leadership Roles	Very High	Above Average	Average	Below Average	Low
Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Leader	28%	44%	26%	2%	0%
Data Analysis Leader	34%	46%	18%	2%	0%
Process Improvement Leader	16%	54%	30%	0%	0%
Performance Development Leader	18%	40%	42%	0%	0%
Relationship Leader	34%	38%	28%	0%	0%
Performance Leader	20%	62%	18%	0%	0%
Operations Leader	26%	48%	24%	2%	0%
Change Leader	14%	57%	29%	0%	0%

Finding 2.2. Rising Stars participants experienced improved skill levels in the Eight Leadership Roles after participating in the Rising Stars Program. The second question on the survey about the Eight Leadership Roles asked the degree to which participation in the Rising Stars Program improved the candidate’s skill level in the specified leadership role. The survey respondents rated those questions for each

leadership role as “major negative affect”, “minor negative affect”, “no affect”, “minor positive affect”, and “major positive affect”. The data analysis revealed 94% of the administrators felt the Rising Stars Program had a positive effect on their skill levels in the Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Leader role and the Performance Development Leader role. Another 92% reported the program had a positive effect on the following leadership roles: Data Analysis Leader, Performance Leader, and Change Leader. The majority of the former Rising Stars candidates also felt the leadership training had a positive effect on their skill levels as a Process Improvement Leader (86%) and Operations Leader (84%).

The same percentage of male (94%) and female (94%) respondents reported the Rising Stars Program had a positive effect on their skill levels as a Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader. A greater percentage of female respondents reported the leadership training had a positive effect on skill levels in the other seven leadership roles: Data Analysis Leader (M=88%, F=94%), Process Improvement Leader (M=67%, F=94%), Performance Development Leader (M=75%, F=100%), Relationship Leader (M=69%, F=85%), Performance Leader (M=88%, F=94%), Operations Leader (M=69%, F=91%), and Change Leader (M=81%, F=97%).

The Rising Stars administrators with more than 10 years of administrative experience and the ones with 10 or less years of administrative experience reported similarly for perceived positive impact of the leadership training of the following leadership roles: Data Analysis Leader (more than 10 = 93%, 10 or less = 91%), Process Improvement Leader (more than 10 = 86%, 10 or less = 88%), Operations Leader (more than 10 = 87%, 10 or less = 84%), and Change Leader (more than 10 = 93%, 10 or less =

94%). The Rising Stars administrators with more than 10 years of experience perceived the leadership training to have a more positive impact on their improved skills in the leadership roles of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Leader (more than 10 = 100%, 10 or less = 91%), Performance Development Leader (more than 10 = 100%, 10 or less = 91%), and Relationship Leader (more than 10 = 86%, 10 or less = 79%). More of the Rising Stars administrators with 10 or less years of administrative experience rated that the leadership training program had a positive impact on their improved skills in the Performance Leader role (more than 10 = 87%, 10 or less = 94%),

High percentages of both elementary (93%) and secondary (94%) administrators reported their participation in the Rising Stars Program improved their skills as a Performance Development Leader. With regards to the other seven leadership roles, more of the elementary administrators indicated the training had a positive effect on their skills as a Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader (elementary=96%, secondary=88%), Data Analysis Leader (elementary=96%, secondary=82%), Process Improvement Leader (elementary=93%, secondary=75%), Relationship Leader (elementary=89%, secondary=65%), Performance Leader (elementary=96%, secondary=82%), Operations Leader (elementary=89%, secondary=71%), and Change Leader (elementary=96%, secondary=88%).

Interpretation of Finding 2.2. This finding implies that Rising Stars participants experienced improved skills in the Eight Leadership Roles after completing the Rising Stars Program. This finding is consistent with other research that found GLISI leadership training such as Rising Stars led to improved leadership skills (Lockhart, 2007).

The results to the second question on the survey about the Eight Leadership Roles are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

To what degree did participation in the GLISI Rising Stars Program improve skill levels in the Eight Leadership Roles? (n=51)

Eight Leadership Roles	Major Positive Affect	Minor Positive Affect	No Affect	Minor Negative Affect	Major Negative Affect
Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Leader	45%	49%	6%	0%	0%
Data Analysis Leader	48%	44%	8%	0%	0%
Process Improvement Leader	37%	49%	14%	0%	0%
Performance Development Leader	38%	56%	6%	0%	0%
Relationship Leader	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
Performance Leader	37%	55%	8%	0%	0%
Operations Leader	25%	59%	16%	0%	0%
Change Leader	38%	54%	8%	0%	0%

Qualitative Data

Some respondents' statements to the open-ended questions indicated the performance-based modules in the Rising Stars Program helped participants grow in their leadership skills. Many of the respondents listed how the program specifically improved their skills in data analysis.

“I have more confidence working with data and leading a group.”

“I look at data differently because of the program. I really focus on data-driven decisions and ask – ‘are we getting the results we want?’”

“... The performance-based modules helped me learn to assist my staff with data analysis and develop plans for improvement in student achievement.”

“The components of the Rising Stars Program that most helped guide my work as a school building administrator was learning how to be an effective Data Analysis Leader, Process Improvement Leader, and Performance Development Leader.”

“The modules on analyzing data, building relationships and being an effective change agent and lead learner have been very beneficial and help guide my work.”

“I learned how to lead teams of teachers through data analysis.”

The Rising Stars candidates worked through a series of modules on the Eight Roles of Leadership. Respondents communicated that these performance based modules on the Eight Roles of Leadership improved their work as a leader.

“I learned how to be a change agent and how to be more effective.”

“Completing the performance-based modules was a strength of the program.”

“The Rising Stars modules have provided a tremendous resource that we use often in our building.”

“My leadership skills improved as a result from participating in Rising Stars program through completing the performance-based modules...”

The interviews with Rising Stars candidates also revealed candidates felt the modules on the Eight Leadership Roles had improved their leadership skills. The interview data further described how each respondent benefitted from the curriculum modules on the Eight Leadership Roles. During the interview, the Rising Stars candidates were asked, “Why do you feel the program was or was not successful in improving participants’ skills in the Eight Leadership Roles?”

The first response comes from a male elementary principal who expressed an appreciation for the hands-on approach of the curriculum modules designed around the Eight Roles of Leadership. This administrator seemed confident that the modules provided him with guidance and strategies to be a proficient leader.

“I think that [modules on Eight Leadership Roles] were successful in that obviously you have to learn by doing. During that time, we did go over each of those leadership roles. We talked about those in depth and did more scenarios. When we talked about one leadership role, we would do a scenario to do with that. I really feel like it made me understand the roles better and helped me to grow in a lot of those leadership roles. The modules and scenarios helped me know what I would need to do to be proficient in the leadership role.”

The next response was obtained through an interview with a female administrator who was transitioning from a high school English teacher to an elementary assistant principal at the beginning of her Rising Stars training. Although the interviewee had a strong background in secondary curriculum, the elementary curriculum and state testing at that level was unfamiliar territory for her. She credited the learning modules for guiding her through the process of data analysis with the new data.

“I think the modules that they wrote were the biggest help and they are big and there is a lot of them. I felt pretty strongly about curriculum when I was going in [beginning my assistant principal job] but I was going into an elementary school and not having that basis there it [the modules] kind of helped guide me through... just looking at the data and getting into it and being able to talk about it knowledgeably with the teachers gave me a good standing in those schools where I don't think I would have had that if I had not had those guides [modules] to walk me through. And also just looking at the school data itself and what types of data to look at to make your school better and to work with your school improvement plan. It really helped in those particular areas.”

The performance-based modules on curriculum and instruction were the most useful resources for this assistant principal. She was able to take what she learned from

her hands-on work with the module directly back to her school and implement the new learning with teachers.

“Because my principal wanted me to focus on the curriculum when I was instructional lead teacher, my Rising Star Coach allowed me to work mostly on curriculum modules. I remember doing those instructional and curriculum modules like Teacher Commentary, and those were just great little lessons that I could go to my teachers with. They were just great little step-by-step guidelines that directly impacted classroom instruction.”

The administrator quoted below conveyed the learning modules on the Eight Roles of Leadership afforded her the skills she had been lacking and helped her become confident in the leadership roles.

“I think it was very positive. Again going back to my role as instructional coach and classroom teacher and the limitations that I had working with the data, I really had not had the opportunity or instruction to know about those eight roles. Those modules that went along with those roles and then the leadership coach guiding you and giving feedback, it really helped me to be confident in those leadership roles.”

Summary of Research Question Two

Research question two ask what is the Rising Stars participants’ perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles: Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Leader; Data Analysis Leader; Process Improvement Leader; Performance Development Leader; Relationship Leader; Performance Leader; Operations Leader; and Change Leader? Data from the survey, open-ended questions and the interviews were used to address research question number two.

The survey data is interpreted first in the narrative and in Table 3 and Table 4 for the responses of the Rising Stars candidates. Of the Eight Leadership Roles, former Rising Stars candidates rated their skill levels the highest as a Performance Leader and

Data Analysis Leader. They rated themselves the lowest as a Performance Development Leader with only 58% of the respondents declaring their skill level as “above average” or “very high” in this role. Upon further investigation, the data for the same question is analyzed according to gender, administrative experience and school level.

The second survey question utilized to answer research question two asked to what degree participation in the Rising Stars Program improved the administrator’s skill level in each of the Eight Leadership Roles. Overall, the candidates indicated that the Rising Stars Program had the greatest impact on their skill levels as a Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Leader, Performance Development Leader, Data Analysis Leader, Performance Leader and Change Leader. The data for this question was also disaggregated by gender, experience and school level. In seven of the eight leadership roles addressed, the female respondents identified a greater skill improvement when compared to the male respondents. Additionally, a larger percentage of the elementary administrators reported the Rising Stars Program had a positive impact on their skill levels associated with seven of the eight leadership roles when compared to the secondary administrators.

The qualitative data from the open-ended questions revealed the leadership candidates gave credit to the performance-based modules for preparing them for the Eight Roles of Leadership. Participants described how they felt better prepared to lead a group in data analysis. Other former Rising Stars communicated that the performance-based modules assisted them in improving various leadership skills. Interview data supporting research question two divulged the hands-on experiences gained through the module work enabled aspiring leaders to become proficient administrators. The modules allowed

the participants to become very familiar with roles which they had not been assigned before in their schools.

Research Question 3 Results. Research question three asked what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses? Rising Stars candidates were asked to describe strengths and weaknesses of the program on both the open-ended questions and during the interviews. The strengths of the Rising Stars program will be provided first through the open-ended responses and then with the informative interview data following. Similarly, the candidates' opinions on the weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program will be conveyed through open-ended questions and interview recounts.

Strengths of Rising Stars Program. The most popular strengths of the program as reported in the responses to open-ended questions include guidance and feedback from leadership coaches, collaboration with other administrators, and real administrative work with performance-based activities.

Finding 3.1. Rising Stars participants expressed that Leadership Coaches were a strength of the leadership training program. Every Rising Stars candidate was assigned a leadership coach to guide them through the leadership modules, offer support, give feedback on performance, share administrative experiences, and provide career advice. Some of the responses to open-ended questions supporting leadership coaches as a strength of the program are below.

“I learned so much information from just listening to these experts [the leadership coaches] and how they have dealt with situations.”

“Having a leadership coach to guide you and give feedback. Also – getting to hear from all of the leadership coaches each month talk about their experiences...”

“The presenters were actively engaged in leadership positions and shared real-world practices.”

“Highly effective, enthusiastic, motivated individuals leading the program as instructors and mentors [leadership coaches]...”

“Having a mentor, the expert panel of presenters, and the step-by-step modules were instrumental in guiding the progress and professional growth.

Interpretation of Finding 3.1. This finding implies that the Leadership Coaches

are a valuable strength to the Rising Stars Leadership Program. The finding is consistent with other literature supporting the positive impact of leadership coaches on the skill levels and success of new school administrators (Davis & Jazzar, 2005; Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010).

Finding 3.2. The Rising Stars participants perceived networking with other administrators as a strength of the leadership training program. The cohort-based program allowed participants to form professional bonds and work together with other novice leaders in similar positions. In addition, the Rising Stars candidates were also afforded the opportunity to collaborate with experienced administrators who served as leadership coaches. Many of the Rising Stars participants expressed how they valued the networking opportunities with other leaders and the relationships formed among participants and coaches during the program. Some of the candidates’ responses that endorsed networking with other administrators as an important strength of the Rising Stars Program are listed below.

“Collaborating with other administrators”

“Program allows you to build a network of people to use as resources.”

“Collaborating and working with others to see what was working in their schools... I really enjoyed the different speakers from the different districts [counties] coming in and sharing successes in their schools.”

“Networking and discussions with other leaders during this professional growth experience was a tremendous strength of the program...”

“Continuous support from other administrators...”

“A chance to network and share ideas with area administrators...”

“I believe that meeting with other administrators to collaborate was a definitely a strength of the program.”

Interpretation of Finding 3.2. The opportunity to network with other

administrators was a valued component of the Rising Stars Program. This finding is similar to other research supporting cohort-based leadership training programs which afford aspiring leaders the opportunity to participate in worthy networking experiences with other school leaders (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Harris, 2006; Welch, 2010).

Finding 3.3. The former Rising Stars candidates also perceived the curriculum performance-based modules on the Eight Roles of Leadership an important strength to the Rising Stars Program. Each of the Eight Roles of Leadership have curriculum modules aligned to the leadership standards. Having opportunities to work through the modules and practice leadership skills with a leadership coach’s support and guidance was advantageous for many of the participants.

“Giving aspiring leaders the opportunity to put their skills to work... The program gives them skills that they are able to go back and use in their school on many different levels.”

“I also believe that working through the modules and having the feedback of a coach was a strength to the program.”

“Hands on learning in the school [using the learning modules] with coaches to guide you through the process... The modules and feedback were very helpful.”

“The strength was definitely performance-based activities [of the learning modules].”

Interpretation of Finding 3.3. This finding implies that the performance-based leadership modules were a worthy component of the Rising Stars leadership training program. The modules allowed students to practice the real work of a school administrator in a school setting. This finding is consistent with other literature advocating for school leadership programs to include a rigorous curriculum aligned to standards and clinical work in the schools (Hall, 2008; Levine, 2005).

Finding 3.4. Rising Stars candidates' data analysis skills improved as a result of the leadership training. Participants expressed that they became more competent with regards to data analysis during the program. The data analysis modules provided the steps for analyzing data and using the results to make informed decisions.

“Using data to identify an academic weakness... doing a root cause analysis to look deeper into the problem and identify what is happening...”

“For me the strengths were in data analysis which in turn helped with performance.”

“I benefitted from the focus on data analysis.”

“Analyzing data, building relationships, and being an effective change agent and lead learner are the most important things I learned that have guided my work the most.”

Interpretation of Finding 3.4. This finding confirms that the focus on data analysis was a valuable aspect of the Rising Stars Program. Similar research confirms that school administrators should be competent in data analysis (Lashway, 2002a).

Strengths of Rising Stars Program. During the interview process, the candidates were asked to describe the strengths of the Rising Stars Program. The interviews provided more in-depth information as to what the respondents' perspectives were towards the specific strengths of the Rising Stars Program. The first interviewee

expressed networking and relationships developed among the cohort as strengths of the program. She still collaborates with some of the other administrators from the cohort.

“I think the interaction with the other colleagues at the RESA meetings. That was an opportunity that we don’t always get – we get busy in our jobs and don’t make time to network. I developed some administrator friendships and networks that I can call and get advice from to this day. The classes were great because I could hear from these other veteran administrators and learn how they handled certain situations. That was important for me.”

Another administrator described in her interview that she profited from the collaboration with other administrators as well.

“For me, the biggest strength was being able to collaborate with other leaders – people who were already in that position, people who were just like me getting ready to go into that position, people who wanted to be in that position later. I believe that was the biggest strength [of the program] – being able to collaborate with all those people in different positions.

The administrator below expressed having an experienced leadership coach to give feedback as he completed the real work of an administrator was a valuable component of the Rising Stars Program.

“You had someone [leadership coach] there with things like conducting meetings or presenting data to a group of teachers – an experienced administrator that had done that before. You actually got to practice those things like conducting meetings, analyzing student data... presenting information to staff, [and] how to lead staff through analyzing data. That person [leadership coach] observed you and gave you feedback after the fact. It was just hands-on practice.”

The administrator quoted below also felt the leadership coach’s support was an important attribute of the program. He also referenced the “on-the-job learning” that occurs when working through the performance modules as a strength of the program.

“Probably just the support that they [leadership coaches] give you and the confidence they instill in you every single time you meet. On-the-job learning was one of the benefits of the program. There was always somebody there to say – you are doing ok. You might need to improve in this area; so, let’s look at this module or let’s look at this experience that I [leadership coach] had.”

Improvement Areas for Future Leadership Training Programs. The Rising Stars participants were asked to describe weaknesses or areas for improvement in the leadership training program. Some of the responses to the open-ended question are reported below. Although there were not any commonalities in the weaknesses mentioned, interesting perspectives and suggestions were discovered.

“I would like to see a yearly refresher course.”

“Cohorts two and three did not have the leadership coaches at every meeting. Cohort one was at an advantage being able to hear all of the experience stories.”

“More time for presenters to work through modules with participants.”

“I think the program should allow more classroom teacher leaders the opportunity to participate. Even if they do not aspire to be a principal, it is my contention that teacher leaders often have as many or more opportunities to positively influence a school culture than building level administrators.”

“I would have liked to learn more about action research and the process for utilizing in your school.”

Interview data also provided rich insight into the Rising Stars participants’ perspectives on weaknesses of the program or areas where the program could be improved. Statements from the interview data are recounted below.

“I would say time. As an administrator now with the pressure of GA Milestones and TKES, I don’t know that I would want my teachers to be gone out of the classroom that much. Yet I know that those meetings [Rising Stars training meetings] are the most valuable part of the program. But the [release] time for the teacher leaders would be a constraint.”

“I think the biggest thing [weakness] for us, for small systems, would be the cost of it. It was hard to send people to Atlanta, Stone Mountain, and different things but it was very, very beneficial. I wish there could be more things down here that we could have sent our people to and continue the program. It is very worth the money but when you are in a small system, you just don’t get to benefit from that because right now we don’t even have the program Rising Stars. That would be the one thing if we could find a way to fund it in the smaller systems.”

“I would have liked even more discussions with the presenters and leadership coaches. It was really helpful when they shared the tips of the trade. More of that would have been helpful.”

“They need to add more of the operational leadership scenarios to the program. The instructional focus was good, but we also need to see more study on the everyday fires that administrators have to put out.”

Summary of Research Question Three

Research question three asks what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses. The researcher included open-ended questions on the survey and during the interviews to explore the former Rising Stars candidates’ views that would address this question. The qualitative data providing evidence of the strengths of the program are presented first and include seasoned leadership coaches, collaboration with other administrators, and the relevant work related to the performance-based modules. Common themes did not emerge from the qualitative data for the weaknesses of the Rising Stars Program. However, the participants did offer various suggestions for improvement.

Research Question 4 Results. Research question four asks to what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program as compared to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program? The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) Survey by Kouzes and Posner was used to investigate research question four. The results from this survey will

be presented first. The scrutiny of the data from each LPI statement directed the development of an interview question to further inform research question four. The commentary from the interviews will follow the survey data.

Quantitative Survey Data for Research Question 4

The LPI was taken by both groups of administrators, those who completed the Rising Stars Program and those administrators who did not go through the Rising Stars Program. The LPI consists of 30 statements where the participants rate themselves on various leadership behaviors. The rating scale used with the LPI-Self goes from 1 to 10 with the following frequency levels: 1= “almost never”, 2= “rarely”, 3= “seldom”, 4= “once in a while”, 5= “occasionally”, 6= “sometimes”, 7= “fairly often”, 8= “usually”, 9= “very frequently” and 10= “almost always”. The responses of the school leaders who had successfully completed the Rising Stars Program (n=51) were compared to the responses of the school leaders who did not complete the Rising Stars Program (n=42). The mean average and standard deviation were calculated for both groups on each of the 30 leadership practice statements. An independent T-test was calculated for each of the LPI statements to determine if there were any statistically significant or meaningful differences in the responses from the two groups of administrators.

Finding 4.1. There were few significant differences found among the leadership behaviors of the administrators who participated in the Rising Stars program and the administrators who did not. On 26 of the 30 leadership practice statements, there were no statistically significant differences in how the Rising Stars administrators rated themselves on the LPI survey compared to the group of administrators who did not

participate in the Rising Stars Program. The two groups of administrators rated themselves similarly on the leadership behaviors measured on the LPI.

A sample of the survey data responses to the LPI statements are listed in Table 5. The complete list of all 30 LPI survey data responses are included in Appendix C.

Table 5

Responses to Leadership Practices Inventory by Kouzes and Posner

Statement on Survey	Completed Rising Stars Program N=51		Did not complete Rising Stars Program N=42		T-Test
	M	SD	M	SD	
I set personal example of what I expect of others.	9.47	0.67	9.55	0.63	.57
I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.	8.33	1.32	8.40	1.27	.79
I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.	9.39	0.78	9.67	0.61	.06
I praise people for a job well done.	9.20	0.85	9.43	0.89	.20
I spend time and energy making certain people I work with adhere to the principles/standards we have agreed on.	8.80	1.17	9.33	0.82	.01
I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.	8.39	1.28	8.56	1.03	.48
I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	8.41	1.15	8.71	1.04	.19
I actively listen to diverse points of view.	8.82	0.77	8.86	0.90	.85
I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	8.08	1.53	8.62	1.27	.07
I treat others with dignity and respect.	9.84	0.37	9.86	0.35	.85

Interpretation of Finding 4.1. This finding suggests the majority of the leadership behaviors of administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program are similar to the administrators who did not participate in Rising Stars. There was not a statistically

significant difference in how the two groups of administrators answered the other 26 leadership practice statements on the LPI. Therefore, there was very little difference in the perceived leadership practices of the Rising Stars administrators compared to the administrators who did not receive the Rising Stars training on 87% of the LPI questions.

Finding 4.2. The Rising Stars administrators and the administrators who did not participate in the Rising Stars program rated themselves differently on four of the leadership behaviors measured by the LPI. While not statistically significant, three of the four statements on the LPI which two groups of administrators answered differently were statistically meaningful and are listed below.

“I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.”

“I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.”

“I search outside the formal boundaries for innovative way to improve.”

One of the four statements which the two groups of administrators scored differently was statistically significant. That statement is listed below.

“I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.”

On all four of these LPI statements, the Rising Stars administrators scored lower than the group of administrators who did not participate in Rising Stars. Further data analysis on these 4 LPI statements revealed that males and females had statistically different responses on two of the statements. On both of the statements, the females had the higher averages. These two statements are listed below.

“I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.”

“I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.”

The researcher also investigated the data from these four statements to see if there were any significant differences in how administrators with 10 or less years of administrative experience rated themselves on the LPI survey compared to administrators with more than 10 years of administrative experience. T-test results did not reveal statistically significant differences between these two groups.

The responses of elementary principals and secondary principals were also analyzed with a T-test. Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences in how the elementary and secondary principals responded to the four LPI statements that produced different results among the Rising Stars administrators and those administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program.

Interpretation of Finding 4.2. This finding implies that the administrators who did not participate in the Rising Stars Program have higher rates of practicing the following four leadership behaviors:

“I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.”

“I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.”

“I search outside the formal boundaries for innovative ways to improve.”

“I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.”

The two groups of administrators rated themselves similarly on the other 26 (87%) leadership behaviors measured on the LPI. One possible reason for the difference in scores on these four statements is that the administrators who did not participate in the leadership training program have been in their administrative roles longer. Consequently, these seasoned administrators' experiences may have caused them to be more confident

and successful at these leadership behaviors. Another possible explanation for the non-Rising Stars administrators having statistically higher scores on these four leadership behaviors could be that the Rising Stars administrators were taught to critically evaluate their leadership skills in order to find areas for improvement. Therefore, the Rising Stars administrators could have been more critical of themselves while completing the LPI than the administrators who did not participate in the program.

Qualitative Interview Data for Research Question 4

During the interviews, the administrators were asked if they had any speculation as to why the group of administrators who did not participate in the Rising Stars Program may have rated themselves higher on the three statements above. The first response listed is from an administrator who felt that the administrators who participated in the Rising Stars Program were more accustomed to self-evaluating themselves critically; and therefore, rated themselves more strictly on the LPI statements. .

“During Rising Stars we had to self-reflect a lot on our skills and then talk to our leadership coach about what he thought of our skill level. This constant practice of rating ourselves helped us to be more critical. Maybe principals that have not had to rate themselves a lot and then be scored on those same skills tend to rate themselves higher.”

Another former Rising Stars candidate suggested in her interview that an administrator who has not had thorough training on the Eight Leadership Roles may not recognize his/her own deficiencies in those roles which could lead to inflated self-reporting scores.

“We did go through each of those Eight Leadership Roles, and we talked about them in depth and how to be proficient at those. I feel like I didn’t have a good understanding of those [Eight Leadership Roles] before we did that. And so to me, I felt like I had a lot more room to grow. Maybe someone who has not been

through all of that [leadership modules] would not really feel like they had a lot of room to grow because they do not understand those roles as well.”

Similarly, another administrator proposed during her interview that the group of administrators who did not go through the Rising Stars Training may not have understood completely what all is involved in the various roles and consequently rated themselves higher on these three LPI statements.

“Honestly, I think sometimes it’s what you don’t know can’t hurt you kind of thing. If I had just started and had been oblivious to some of the things Rising Stars taught me, you do think you’re doing ok and you do think you’re headed in the right path. And then whenever you find out wait a minute, I can do it this way and raise my scores and can help my teachers and keep pushing the standards-based practices and things that we really learned in there. If you are going in blindly, you are going to miss that you don’t know that...”

Another former Rising Stars candidate expressed in her interview that the more seasoned administrators in the group of administrators who did not participate in the Rising Stars Program may have had more confidence in their leadership skills because they had been in leadership positions longer and had developed those leadership skills through experience.

“They may have been more confident because of their experiences as an administrator and have learned it as a trick of the trade. Whereas new administrators [those that went through Rising Stars] may not have been as confident on that [the leadership practices] because we are handling the change ourselves where they [more experienced administrators] have been through changes. Maybe as veterans, they were just better at those practices than the new administrators.”

Summary of Research Question Four

Research question four asks to what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program compared to school administrators who did not complete the program. The 30 statements

on the LPI survey by Kouzes and Posner was used to measure the leadership practices of both groups of administrators. An independent T-test was used on each statement to evaluate whether there were any statements significantly different between the two groups of respondents. On 26 of the 30 statements, the two groups of administrators rated themselves similarly. However, there were statistically meaningful differences on three statements where the group of administrators who did not participate in the Rising Stars Program rated themselves higher than the group of Rising Stars administrators. Similarly, there was one statement which there was a statistically significant difference. Further quantitative analysis revealed the female respondents scored significantly higher than the males on two of the three statements. With regards to administrative experience and school level, there were no statistically significant differences in how the different groups rated themselves on the leadership behavior statements. The Rising Stars administrators were more critical of their skills on these four leadership statements when compared to the administrators who did not participate in the training.

After the analysis of the quantitative data is presented, the qualitative data from the follow-up interviews is portrayed for research question four. The researcher asked the candidates if they had any notions as to why the different responses might have occurred on the three LPI statements. The former Rising Stars candidates' responses conclude the section on research question number four.

Summary

This chapter commenced with background information on the study. The demographic data for the respondents was included in chapter four. The findings for the four research questions were presented in four different sections.

Analyses of both the quantitative and qualitative data were used to examine the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Leadership Program as perceived by the candidates who participated in the program. Quantitative data obtained from the LPI survey and the questions specific to the Rising Stars Program provided information for research questions one, two and four. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions supported research questions one, two and three. The interview data allowed the researcher to probe deeper into Rising Stars candidates' perspectives for research questions one, two and three. Interview data for research question number four offered possibilities for the three leadership practice statements which produced statistically significant different results between the administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program and the group of administrators who did not. For 90% of the LPI statements, the two groups of administrators responded similarly. Chapter five provides a discussion of the findings and recommendations of the study.

Chapter V

DISCUSSION

Overview of the study

The Rising Stars Program was developed by the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) and was first implemented in 2006 (GLISI, 2008). A Regional Educational Services Agency (RESA) partnered with GLISI and became one of the first agencies to implement the Rising Stars Program. Teachers, instructional coaches, and assistant principals who desired to be school leaders were selected by the eight RESA school districts to participate in the Rising Stars Program. The purpose of the program was to prepare future school leaders for the demands of school administration. Candidates met monthly for leadership meetings focusing on school leadership topics such as data analysis, performance development, change agents, and curriculum and instruction. The Rising Stars Program afforded candidates the opportunity to practice essential leadership skills while working with the support and feedback from a leadership coach. Participation in the Rising Stars Program led to these educators being selected as principals throughout the school districts in the RESA area.

While a considerable amount of money, time, and human resources were devoted to the Rising Stars Program in the RESA district, there has not been a previous study to evaluate the perceived effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program. The purpose of this study was to determine if Rising Stars Program was perceived by participants as an effective leadership preparatory program.

Literature Review Summary

Effective leadership is crucial for the success of a school, and various studies support the principal as the main influence in addressing school challenges (Davis et al., 2005; Herrinton & Willis, 2005; Lashway, 2002b). As continued endeavors to raise academic standards and improve teacher performance have been goals of education, the emphasis is now on the important role that administrators play in school improvement (Duffett et al., 2001). Behind every great school is a great principal who focuses on improved student achievement (Duffett et al., 2001). Hale and Moorman (2003) agree that the principal's leadership abilities greatly determine school accomplishments and assert that principals are under pressure to improve teaching and learning.

The responsibilities of today's principals embrace numerous roles including instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment gurus, disciplinarians, community builders, public relations specialists, finance managers, and facility managers (Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Kelsen, 2011). Additional school leader duties involve implementing new programs, enforcing laws and policies, and executing change initiatives for school improvement (Davis et al., 2005). These demanding responsibilities assigned to the principal consequently create a need for closer examination of the way leadership programs are preparing future school administrators (Davis et al., 2005). Roberts (2009) asserts that the emphasis on school improvement has reinforced the necessity for highly competent principals and the training programs that prepare these leaders.

Among the various demands of the principalship, being a competent instructional leader is a top priority for successful school leadership (Brookover & Lezotte, 1982;

Kelsen, 2011). Effective instructional leadership occurs when student learning is recognized as the most important responsibility of the school (Jenkins, 2009). Instructional leadership requires setting measurable goals, providing resources, implementing the curriculum, examining lesson plans, observing teachers and providing effective feedback for improvement, analyzing student achievement data, and utilizing the data to make informed decisions for increased student achievement (DeBevoise, 1984; Jenkins, 2009; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008). Additionally, the principal should be capable of identifying and providing appropriate professional learning opportunities leading to improved instructional practices and gains in student achievement (Davis et al., 2005; Lashway, 2002a). Educational research supports instructional leadership as a significant indicator to the success of schools (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Lashway, 2002a; National Association of Elementary School Principals, 2008).

Formerly, principals were deemed efficient school leaders if they secured a safe learning environment, managed the budget, handled the discipline, ordered the instructional supplies, and ensured state laws and system policies were enforced (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). With changes in federal mandates and accountability, administrative duties have expanded to include serving as instructional leader, data analysis specialist, director of public relations, budget analyst, problem solver, and change leader (Davis et al., 2005; Hickey-Gramke & Whaley, 2007; Roedel, 2008). Traditional school leadership programs exposed leadership candidates to the latest concepts and philosophies in educational leadership; however, aspiring leaders were not afforded opportunities to apply their new learning in school settings and were not

adequately prepared for the numerous obligations of the principalship (Buckner, Evans, Peel, Wallace, & Wrenn, 1998; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). Hale and Moorman (2003) announced that school leadership preparation programs need to change to support administrators with their new roles.

Levine (2005) identified various reasons for the breakdown in leadership training programs. He declared that the curriculum lacked rigor and was not relevant to the new principalship demands. Additionally, Levine proclaimed low admission standards to leadership programs, professors with no school administrative experiences, and inadequate field experiences as weaknesses of existing leadership training programs. The increased expectations for school administrators requires a transformation in how educational leaders are trained (Levine, 2005). Educational reformers revealed characteristics of new and improved leadership programs to include strict entrance requirements, higher expectations for leadership students, real world curriculum with performance-based standards, cohort models field based activities in schools, leadership mentors, and collaboration with school districts (Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Lauder, 2000).

Hale and Moorman (2003) proposed that newer principalship training programs implementing cohort models were more successful in preparing future administrators for the many roles of school leadership. Cohorts of students who begin the program together form a community of learners who benefit from shared discussions, problem-solving, learning from each other, and a support system (Evans & Coutts, 2010; Harris, 2006). Harris (2006) suggested that cohort models contribute to increased academic performance of leadership candidates through collaboration and feedback from peers. In addition,

Krueger and Milstein (1997) indicated that cohorts endorse professional networking during the training and administrator's career. Cohorts allow students to learn new knowledge, use creative thinking, view various perspectives, practice collaboration, and experience peer support (Brown-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001).

Educational leadership programs which prepare candidates to become administrators in their current school system are commonly referred to as grow-your-own leadership programs (Joseph, 2009; Morrison, 2005; Potter, 2001). School districts can support leadership development by collaborating with universities and investing this leadership model to select promising leadership candidates, afford applicable internship experiences, and use seasoned administrative experts to serve as leadership coaches (Lashway, 2002a). Since the majority of superintendents are prone to hire administrators from within their school system, experts concur there is a need for school districts to groom future leaders (Duffet et al., 2001; Turnbull et al., 2013).

Hale and Moorman (2003) indicate that college universities and school districts should work together to recruit cohorts of competent leadership candidates and share the responsibility for their leadership training. These authors propose that the lack of collaboration between universities and school systems impacts the quality of leadership students being admitted to educational administrative programs because there is no simple method for universities alone to identify applicants who show potential as future administrators. The absence of a working relationship between the universities and school districts also makes it difficult for universities to provide in-field experiences within a school system (Hale & Moorman, 2003).

Davis et al. (2005) assert that the need for stronger field experiences encouraged universities to work in partnership with school districts to implement leadership preparation programs. These collaborative programs allow the school system administrators to serve as leadership coaches, assist university faculty with the assessment of leadership students during field experiences, participate in the university screening and admission practices, and serve as valuable members on the university's program advisory committee. Effective partnerships between the university and school system support and sustain the goals of both the university leadership programs and the school district initiatives (Davis et al., 2005).

Leadership coaching for aspiring school administrators provides a supportive relationship between a leadership graduate student and an experienced and highly competent administrator (Bloom, Castagna, Moir, & Warren, 2005). The coach provides guidance, effective feedback, support, and practical knowledge through relevant learning experiences (Browne-Ferrigno & Muth, 2001; Fullan, 2008; Kelsen, 2011). As leadership coaching has become more popular among leadership development programs, educators have found that the practice accelerates learning, reduces isolation, increases confidence levels, and leadership skills. It also affords opportunities for future leaders to seek guidance and receive valuable feedback that aids them in dealing with the stress and demands that come with the principalship (Holloway, 2004; Robinson, Horan, & Nanvati, 2009). Additionally, new principals who had a leadership coach reported having a more successful start to their administrative careers when compared to principals who did not collaborate with a leadership coach (Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010). Holloway (2004) declared having a leadership coach to consult

with on difficult issues was one of the most significant benefits reported by new school leaders when reflecting on their leadership program. Among other successful strategies, the Rising Stars Program, used in this study, based its leadership training on the research-based practices of leadership coaches and cohorts.

Population

The population for this research study consisted of all 112 principals and assistant principals in a Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) District. The selected RESA District is comprised of eight school systems. These school systems are composed of nine high schools, nine middle schools, and 30 elementary schools. A census was conducted as the survey was sent to the entire population, not just a sample of the population.

Methodology

A mixed methods explanatory sequential design was employed to conduct the research for this study in two phases. During the first phase of the research, surveys were administered to the 112 school administrators from the eight school districts in the RESA area to collect quantitative data about their leadership practices and the Rising Stars Program. The survey included four demographic questions, 18 questions specific to the Rising Stars Program, and the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) by Kouzes and Posner, which contained 30 questions. The response rate for completed surveys was 83%. The second phase of the study included individual interviews as well as written open-ended questions with former Rising Stars participants to obtain qualitative data concerning their perceived effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program.

The research questions that guided this mixed-methods study are:

Research Question 1: To what degree do participants in the Rising Stars Program perceive the program to be an effective aspiring school administration training program?

Research Question 2: What is the Rising Stars Participants' perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles?

Research Question 3: Outside of the Eight Leadership Roles, what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses?

Research Question 4: To what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program as compared to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program?

Quantitative and qualitative data were examined to determine if the Rising Stars administrators perceived the Rising Stars Program as an effective leadership training. Data analysis on the survey questions specific to the Rising Stars Program provided information for research questions one, two and three. The LPI survey results were analyzed and a mean score and standard deviation for each leadership practice statement on the survey were calculated to compare the leadership practices of administrators who participated in the Rising Stars Program to the administrators who did not. This comparison data informed research question four. The data from open-ended questions and interview data were coded and interpreted to gain rich information on the impact of the Rising Stars Program from the candidates' perspectives. The triangulation of the survey data, open-ended questions, and interview data allowed the researcher to answer

the four research questions and gain a better understanding of the overall perceived effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program.

Summary of the Findings

The findings for research questions one, two, three and four will be discussed in separate sections.

Research Question 1. To what degree do participants in the Rising Stars Program perceive the program to be an effective aspiring school administration training program? The quantitative data from the survey questions related to the Rising Stars Program were examined to determine the participants' opinions on the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program. The majority (86%) of the school administrators who completed the Rising Stars program indicated that their leadership skills had improved as a result of the training. In addition, 40% of the administrators responded that they benefitted a "great deal" from the Rising Stars Program while an additional 38% benefitted "a fair amount" and 17% "somewhat" benefitted. Survey results showed that 86% of the administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program would recommend a similar leadership training program to their superintendent for aspiring school leaders.

Qualitative data from the open-ended questions on the survey and the interview transcripts revealed various reasons Rising Stars participants felt they benefitted from the program. The Leadership Coach's support and feedback as well as the collaboration and networking with other administrators were the two most popular facets depicted as benefits of the training program. Moreover, Rising Stars candidates indicated the Eight Roles of Leadership modules were valuable because they offered opportunities for the aspiring leaders to practice the real work of school administrators. Additional data from

the open-ended questions and interviews confirmed the respondents felt their leadership skills had improved, and they had grown professionally as a result of the Rising Stars Program. While the bulk of the qualitative data supported the effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program being an effective leadership training program, a few statements from the qualitative data expressed why the program was not perceived as beneficial for several candidates. Among these explanations were the following reasons: one candidate had already been an administrator for a couple of years and felt on-the-job experience better prepared him for the real work of an administrator; another candidate also already had administrative experience and stated that the program would be more beneficial for teacher leaders; a third candidate was a brand new assistant principal who described being overwhelmed in her new role and felt the program just added to her list of responsibilities to fulfill.

In contrast to the few negative responses, results from the study show that a majority of the Rising Stars candidates benefitted from the Rising Stars Program and considered it an effective leadership training program. Qualitative data suggested that the Rising Stars Program is more suitable for aspiring or new leaders due to experienced leaders already having mastered the skills covered in the modules.

Research Question 2. What is the Rising Stars Participants' perceived level of preparation for the Eight Leadership Roles? The survey data specific to the Eight Leadership Roles was used to inform research question two. For each of the eight roles taught in the Rising Stars Program, the participants rated their skill levels as either "low", "below average", "average", "above average", or "very high". Rising Stars candidates chose "above average" more than any of the five choices for each of the Eight

Leadership Roles indicating that most of them were confident in their capabilities related to the Eight Roles of Leadership. In fact, only one Rising Stars administrator rated himself as “below average” on three of the leadership roles. The other Rising Stars administrators rated themselves as “average”, “above average”, or “very high” in all Eight Roles of Leadership.

Rising Stars candidates were also asked on the survey what influence the Rising Stars Program had on their skill levels in the Eight Leadership Roles. Administrators rated those questions for each leadership role as “major negative affect”, “minor negative affect”, “no affect”, “minor positive affect”, and “major positive affect”. Scrutiny of the data revealed that 94% of the administrators believe the Rising Stars Program positively affected their skill levels in the Curriculum, Assessment, and Instructional Leader role and the Performance Development Leader role. Likewise, 92% reported the training had a positive effect on the following leadership roles: Data Analysis Leader, Performance Leader, and Change Leader. The majority of the Rising Stars candidates also conveyed that the program positively influenced their leadership skills as a Process Improvement Leader (86%), Operations Leader (84%) and Relationship Leader (80%).

Qualitative data from open-ended questions on survey and individual interviews validated the notion the Rising Stars Program prepared future leaders for the Eight Roles of Leadership. Participants stressed that the performance-based modules granted them opportunities to grow in those skills; and as a result, they are more confident in these leadership roles.

Research Question 3. Outside of the Eight Leadership Roles, what areas of the Rising Stars Program did participants perceive as strengths and weaknesses? Rising Stars

candidates were asked to depict strengths and weaknesses of the program on both the open-ended questions and during the interviews. The most prevalent strengths reported include guidance and feedback from leadership coaches, collaboration with other administrators, and the hands-on experiences through performance-based modules.

Participants reported that leadership coaches were one of the most significant strengths of the Rising Stars Program. All of the Rising Stars candidates were assigned a leadership coach who was an experienced, competent and successful school administrator. The leadership coach and aspiring school leader worked collaboratively through problem-based school scenarios related to the Eight Roles of Leadership. The leadership coach observed the candidate leading meetings with teachers and completing the module work in the candidate's actual school setting. Afterwards, the leadership coach provided verbal and written feedback on the candidate's performance. In addition to the supportive guidance and encouragement from the candidate's assigned leadership coach, Rising Stars candidates described how they benefitted from hearing multiple leadership coaches share their experiences at each monthly meeting.

Another significant strength of the Rising Stars Program discovered through open-ended questions and interviews was the opportunities afforded to the candidates to collaborate with other aspiring school administrators. Participants described their cohort relationships as supportive, encouraging, and a resource they still use today. They commented that the program allowed them to share ideas with each other and learn how other schools in their area addressed certain goals and limitations.

The hands-on experiences of real administrative work through performance-based modules were another notable strength of the Rising Stars Program. Candidates

completed the Eight Roles of Leadership modules with the guidance and feedback of their leadership coach. These modules were often described as the real work of an administrator. They were able to perform the required tasks in their school setting, and became more confident in their leadership skills.

Several weaknesses or areas of improvement for the Rising Stars Program were also conveyed during the qualitative phase of the study. One candidate stated that cohorts two and three were at a disadvantage because they did not have as many leadership coaches as cohort one. Another participant suggested allowing more time for working through the modules with the leadership coach. Time was also a constraint when describing how much time the Rising Stars candidates spent away from school to attend the monthly meetings. The same candidate said these monthly meetings are extremely valuable; therefore, she did not have a suggestion to resolve the limitation of time missed from school during the program. Money was also considered a hindrance to the program for smaller systems who struggled to pay for participant registration and substitute teachers when teachers were at meetings.

Research Question 4. To what degree is there a difference in the perceived leadership practices of school administrators who completed the Rising Stars Program as compared to school administrators who did not complete the Rising Stars Program? Findings from the study indicate that for 87% of the leadership practices listed on the survey there was not a statistically significant difference in the perceived leadership practices of the school administrators who participated in the Rising Stars Program and those administrators who did not. For the 13% of leadership practices that were rated differently between the two groups of school leaders, the administrators who did not go

through the Rising Stars Program scored higher than the group who did complete the training. Some of the possibilities for this anomaly were discussed during the interview process. One explanation was that Rising Stars candidates were perhaps more critical of themselves when rating their leadership practices because of all the essential skills and practices they had learned during the program. Consequently, an administrator who did not participate in Rising Stars may not realize the potential for professional growth because they don't completely understand these leadership skills. Another candidate proposed that the administrators not participating may have been veteran leaders who had earned their mastery on the job. Maybe these seasoned administrators' work experiences contributed to their perceived leadership skills being higher on four of the leadership practice statements.

Implications

The information obtained through this research could be significant in deciding whether or not to bring a similar leadership development program back to the same RESA area now that it has been five years since the last cohort completed the program in December of 2009. Moreover, the results of this study could inform educational leaders of alternatives to traditional school administrator preparation programs at the system, RESA, and college level. The findings may aid universities and leadership program directors to improve the quality of their school leadership programs by considering the strengths and suggestions for improvement of the Rising Stars Program. Additionally, results from this study could assist future aspiring school leaders in the selection of a leadership preparation program.

Limitations

This study was limited to the Rising Stars Program cohorts that were implemented in a RESA District between 2006-2009. The small size of the population (N=112) is an additional limitation. A larger study involving Rising Stars candidates from other RESA districts would impart valuable information regarding the overall effectiveness of the Rising Stars Program. The Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) is not directly aligned to GLISI's Eight Roles of Leadership. Therefore, the instrument used to conduct the study is a limitation. Furthermore, the Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) discontinued the Rising Stars Program in May of 2011. GLISI's new leadership development program is called Aspiring Leaders and has many of the same components as the Rising Stars Program including cohorts, leadership coaches, performance-based modules, and partnerships between school districts and universities.

Discussion

This research study was conducted to measure the effectiveness of a leadership preparation program that incorporated some of the newer administrative training components such as participant cohorts, leadership coaches, practicum experiences in schools, and partnerships between universities and school systems (Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe & Myerson, 2005; Jackson & Kelley, 2002; Lauder, 2000). As more and more administrators approach the age of retirement and fewer competent leaders are available to fill their void, it is of utmost importance that school systems and universities implement successful leadership training experiences that prepare aspiring leaders for the vast demands of the school administrator (Hall, 2008; Peterson, 2002; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

Previously, administrators expressed that their leadership training did not adequately prepare them for the role of principal and they felt unprepared for the extreme transformation that had taken place in educational leadership (Hale & Moorman, 2003; Levine, 2005). Therefore, it is essential for the preparation of future school leaders to change in order to address the new dynamics of school leadership (Levine, 2005). Since the principal is a significant influence to improved student achievement and the overall success of a school, it stands to reason that superintendents and universities should make it a priority to evaluate and implement effective leadership preparation experiences (Davis et al., 2005; Hale & Moorman, 2003; Herrington & Willis, 2005). Improved leadership training programs for future school administrators will ultimately lead to enhanced school leadership and school success (Duffett et al., 2001). This research study was conducted to provide information to school systems and universities as to whether a leadership training program similar to GLISI's Rising Stars Program should be implemented in the future. In essence, the researcher wanted to know if the Rising Stars Program was successful in preparing future leaders for the challenges and demands of school administrators. The information gleaned from this study will aid the researcher and other principals and superintendents as they advise aspiring leaders towards successful leadership preparation programs and make decisions as to what leadership programs to implement in their school system.

The findings from this research support that Rising Stars was an effective leadership training program from the candidates' perspective. Rising Stars administrators reported they benefitted from the training and that their leadership skills improved during the program. Furthermore, they reported strengths of the program including leadership

coaches, networking experiences with other administrators, and performance-based modules which provided opportunities to practice the real work of an administrator in a school setting. Literature supports these program components that participants perceived as strengths. New principals who had a leadership coach during their training felt they had a more successful start to their careers when compared to other colleagues who did not have a leadership coach (Simieou, Decman, Grigsby, & Schumacher, 2010).

Exemplary administrators who serve as leadership coaches to new or aspiring school leaders is a key concept in many effective school leadership programs (Davis & Jazsar, 2005). Leadership program cohorts have become an important part of the partnership between colleges and school districts to train highly qualified principal candidates (Evans & Coutts, 2010). These cohorts promote professional networking and collaboration among school leaders both during program and long term during the rest of the administrator's career (Krueger & Milstein, 1997). Effective leadership preparation programs include relevant and challenging practicum experiences where the aspiring leader can practice their skills in a school setting (Levine, 2005; Milstein, 1992; Welch, 2010). The researcher recommends that superintendents and universities strongly consider implementing leadership preparation programs which include leadership coaches, cohorts, and opportunities to practice the real work of a school administrator.

Recommendations for Further Research

Further research should be expanded to other school districts and include more Rising Stars participants or administrators from a similar leadership program with the same attributes of cohorts, leadership coaches and performance-based curriculum modules. A larger population would likely yield more generalizable results. Another

consideration for future research is to see if there is a difference in how the teachers who work for Rising Stars administrators rate their administrators' leadership behaviors compared to teachers who work for administrators that did not have the Rising Stars leadership training. Lastly, additional research on this or similar leadership programs would benefit from having the Superintendents' perceptions of the training program.

REFERENCES

- Alsbury, T., & Hackmann, D. (2006). Learning from experience: Initial findings of a mentoring/induction program for novice principals and superintendents. *Planning and Changing*, 37, 169-189. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ756222.pdf>
- Blasé, J., & Blasé, J. (2000). Effective instructional leadership: Teachers' perspectives on how principals promote teaching and learning in schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38(2), 130-141.
- Bloom, G., Castagna, C., Moir, E., & Warren, B. (2005). *Blended coaching: Skills and strategies to support principal development*. Thousand Oak33s, CA: Corwin.
- Brookover, W., & Lezotte, L. (1982). *Creating effective schools*. Holmes Beach, FL: Learning Publication.
- Brown, C. (2011). *Learning communities of support groups: The use of student cohorts in doctoral educational leadership programs*. (Doctoral dissertation, Commonwealth University) Retrieved from <http://udini.proquest.com/view/learning-communities-or-support-llpqid:2349675811/>
- Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Barber, M. (2010). *Successful principal-making collaborations: From perspective of a university partner*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Educational Leadership at Leigh University. Retrieved from http://illinois-schoolleader.org/useful_resources/documents/SuccessfulPrincipal-MakingCollaborationsTBF4-24-10FINAL.pdf

- Browne-Ferrigno, T., & Muth, R. (2001, November). *Issues related to the effects of cohorts on learners*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration .
- Buckner, K., Evans, R., Peel, H., Wallace, C., & Wrenn, S. (1998). Improving leadership preparation programs through a school, university, and professional organization partnership. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 82(602), 26-34.
- Corcoran, A., Casserly, M., Price-Baugh, R., Walston, D., Hall, R., & Simon, C. (2013, October). *Rethinking leadership: The changing role of principal supervisors*. Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/district-policy-and-practice/Documents/Rethinking-Leadership-The-Changing-Role-of-Principal-Supervisors.pdf>
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Creswell, J., & Plano-Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Darling-Hammond, L., Meyerson, D., LaPointe, M., and Orr, M., & Cohen, C. (2007). *Preparing principals for a changing world: Lessons from effective school leadership programs*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University.
- Davis, J., & Jazsar, M. (2005). Seven habits of effective principal preparation program. *National Association of Elementary School Principals*, 84(5), 18-21. Retrieved from <http://www.naesp.org/principal-archives>

- Davis, S., Darling-Hammond, L., LaPointe, M., & Myerson, D. (2005). *School leadership study: developing successful principals*. Manuscript submitted for publication, Stanford University, Stanford, CA, Retrieved from http://seli.stanford.edu/research/documents/SELI_sls_research_review.pdf
- DeBevoise, W. (1984, February). Synthesis of research on the principal as instructional leader. *Educational Leadership*, 41(5), 14-20.
- DiPaola, M., & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). The principalship at a crossroads: A study of the conditions and concerns of principals. *National Association of Secondary School Principals*, 87(634), 43-66.
- Duffett, A., Farkas, S., Foleno, F., & Johnson, J. (2001). *Trying to stay ahead of the game: Superintendents and principals talk about the school leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.publicagenda.org/files/pdf/ahead_of_the_game.pdf
- Evans, C., & Coutts, P. (2010). *Graduate candidates' perceptions of cohort groups in educational leadership programs*. *National Social Science Proceedings* (55-65). Retrieved from http://www.nssa.us/journals/pdf/NSS_Proceedings_2010_Las_Vegas_1.pdf
- Farkas, S., Johnson, J., Duffett, A., Foleno, T., & Foley, P. (2001). *Trying to stay ahead of the game: Superintendents and principals talk about school leadership*. New York, NY: Public Agenda. Retrieved from <http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/eadership/leadership.htm>.
- Fraenkel, J., & Wallen, N. (2009). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. (7th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Fullan, M. (2001). *The new meaning of educational change*. New York, NY: Teachers

College Press.

Fullan, M. (2008). *What's worth fighting for in the principalship* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Teacher's College Press.

Gall, M., Bog, W., & Gall, J. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.

Garfinkle, J. (2004). *Become a change leader*. Garfield executive coaching. Retrieved from <http://www.garfinkleexecutivecoaching.com/articles/chage-leader.html>

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. (2008). *Engagement for success: Developing a university-resa partnership using glisi's rising stars model*. Retrieved from http://www.glisi.org/site/results/UnivRESA_Partnership_RS_Model_SuccessCase.pdf

Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement. (2012). *Georgia leadership institute for school improvement: Our mission and history*. Retrieved from <http://www.glisi.org/?q=aboutus/ourhistory>

Griffiths, D., Stout, R., & Forsyth, P. (1988). *Leaders for America's schools: The report and papers of the national commission on excellence in educational administration*. Berkley, CA: McCutchan Publishing Corporation.

Hale, E., & Moorman, H. (2003). *Preparing school principals: A national perspective on policy and program innovations*. Institute for Educational Leadership, Washington, DC and Illinois Education Research Council, Edwardsville, IL. Retrieved from website: [http://ierc.siue.edu/documents/Preparing Principals-All Parts.pdf](http://ierc.siue.edu/documents/Preparing_Principals-All_Parts.pdf)

- Hall, P. (2008). Building bridges: Strengthening the principal induction process through intentional mentoring. *Phi delta kappan*, 89(6), 449-452. Retrieved from <http://intl.kappanmagazine.org/content/89/6/449.short>
- Harding, J. (2006). *The sage dictionary of social research methods*. Retrieved from <http://srmo.sagepub.com/view/the-sage-dictionary-of-social-research-methods/n18.xml>
- Harris, K. (2006). *A utilization-focused evaluation of the job-embedded component of the collaborative principal preparation program*. (Doctoral dissertation) Retrieved from <https://mospace.umsystem.edu/smlui/handle/10355/4342>
- Herrington, C., & Willis, B. (2005). Decertifying the principalship: The politics of administrator preparation in Florida. *Educational Policy*, 19(1), 181-200. Retrieved from <http://epx.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/>
- Hickey-Gramke, M., & Whaley, D. (2007). Essential elements and emergent issues for alternative principal licensing: Recommendations for policy design and implementation. *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 4(3), 20-25.
- Holloway, J. (2004). Leading in tough times: Mentoring new leaders. *Educational leadership*, 61(7), 87-88. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr04/vol61/num07/-Mentoring-New-Leaders.aspx>
- Hornig, E. & Loeb, S. (2010, November). New thinking about instructional leadership. *Kappan*, 92(N3), 66-69. Retrieved from http://cepa.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/Kappan_leadership.pdf
- Jackson, B. & Kelley, C. (2002). Exceptional and innovative programs in educational

- leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(2), 192-212.
- Jacob, S., & Furgerson, S. (2012). Writing interview protocols and conducting interviews: Tips for students new to the field of qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 17, 1-10. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ990034.pdf>
- Jenkins, B. (2009). What it takes to be an instructional leader. *Principal*, (January), 34-37. Retrieved from http://www.naesp.org/resources/2/Principal/2009/J-F_p34.pdf
- Joseph, S. (2009). *A comprehensive evaluation of a school system's grow your own principal preparation program*. (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://media.proquest.com/media/pq/classic/doc/1679687401/fmt/ai/rep/NPDF?_s=PW/C/xYR4RDe5hbbcRFHAXamrHQ
- Kelsen, V. (2011). *School principals, leadership coaches, and student achievement: enhancing self-efficacy through the coaching relationship*. (Doctoral dissertation, Claremont Graduate University), ERIC. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=ED528032&ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no&accno=ED528032
- Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2002). *The leadership challenge*. (3rd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2003). *Leadership Practices Inventory – Self* (3rd ed). San Francisco, CA: Pfeiffer.
- Kouzes, J., & Posner, B. (2014). *The leadership challenge*. Retrieved from <http://www.leadershipchallenge.com>
- Kotter, J. (1996). *Leading Change*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

- Krueger, J., & Milstein, M. (1997). Improving educational administration preparation programs: What we have learned over the past decade. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 72(2), 100-116.
- Lashway, L. (2002a). *Developing instructional leaders*. Retrieved from <http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-2/leaders.html>
- Lashway, L. (2002b). *Trends in school leadership*. Retrieved from <http://www.ericdigests.org/2003-4/school-leadership.html>
- Lauder, A. (2000). The new look in principal preparation programs. *NASSP Bulletin*, 84(617), 23-28.
- Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(1), 27-42. Retrieved from <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ786158>
- Leithwood, K., Seashore-Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). *How leadership influences student learning*. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation.
- Levine, A. (2005). *Educating school leaders: Report of the education schools project*. Retrieved from <http://www.edschools.org/pdf/final313.pdf>
- Lockhart, S. (2007). *The impact of Georgia's leadership institute for school improvement training on the change leadership behaviors of selected principals*. (Doctoral dissertation, Georgia Southern University) Retrieved from <http://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/etd/227>
- Lovely, S. (2004). Scaffolding for new leaders. *School Administrator*, 61(6), 10-13. Retrieved from <http://www.aasa.org/SchoolAdministratorArticle.aspx?id=14056>
- Merriam, S. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San

Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Milstein, M. (1992). *The Danforth program for the preparation of school principals six years later: What we have learned*. Retrieved from http://illinoisschoolleader.org/research_compendium/documents/Danforth.pdf
- Morrison, H. (2005). *A critical evaluation of a school system's effort to develop and implement a grow your own principal preparation program*. Retrieved from www.drum.lib.umd.edu/handle
- Murphy, J. (2002). How the ISLLC standards are reshaping the principalship. *Principal*, 82(1), 22-26.
- National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). (2008). *Standards for what principals should know and be able to do*. Retrieved from <http://www.naesp.org/resources/1/Pdfs/LLC2-ES.pdf>
- Painter, S. (2003). *High admissions standards for principal preparation*. Paper presented at the annual conference for the University Council of Educational Administration in Portland, Oregon, November, 2003.
- Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Peterson, K.D. (2002). The professional development of principals: Innovations and opportunities. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 38(2), 213-232.
- Petzko, V. (2008). The perceptions of new principals regarding the knowledge and skills important to their initial success. *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*, 92(3), 224-250.
- Posner, B., & Brodsky, B. (1997). The leadership practices of effective student leaders:

- Gender makes no difference. *NASPA Journal*, 31(2), 113-120.
- Posner, B., & Rosenberger, B. (1994). Orientation advisors are leaders too. *NASAP Journal*, 35(1), 45-56.
- Posner, B. (2009). A longitudinal study examining changes in students' leadership behavior. *Journal of College Student Development*, 50(5), 551-563.
- Potter, L. (2001). Solving the principal shortage. *Principal*, 80(4), 34-37.
- Reyes, A. (2003). The relationship of mentoring to job placement in school administration. *NASSP Bulletin*. 87(635), 45-64.
- Roberts, B. (2009). School leadership preparation: A national view. *Delta kappa gamma bulletin*, 75(2), 5-7,19. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/pqrl/docprintview/218792105/fulltext>
- Robinson, J., Horan, L., & Nanvati, M. (2009). Creating a mentoring coaching culture for Ontario school leaders. *Adult Learning*, 20(1-2), 35-38. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_nfpb=true&_&ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ867325&ERICExtSearch
- Roekel, D. (2008). *Changing role of school leadership*. Retrieved from http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB09_Leadership08.pdf
- Schaefer, B. (2013). *Custom learning solutions: Leadership practices inventory*. Retrieved from <http://www.customlearningsolutions.com/programs/the-leadership-challenge/lpi-leadership-practices-inventory/>

- Searby, L. (2010). Preparing future principals: Facilitating the development of a mentoring mindset through graduate work. *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, 18(1), 5- 22. Retrieved from http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/search/detailmini.jsp?_& ERICExtSearch_SearchValue_0=EJ880538& ERICExtSearch_SearchType_0=no& accno=EJ880538
- Simieou, F., Decman, J., Grigsby, B., & Schumacher, G. (2010, March 2nd). *Lean on me: Peer mentoring for novice principals*. Retrieved from <http://cnx.org/content/m33854/latest/>
- SREB, (2006). *Schools can't wait: Accelerating the redesign of university principal preparation programs*. Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.
- Teitel, L. (1997). Understanding and harnessing the power of the cohort model in the preparing educational leaders. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 72(2), 66-85.
- Turnbull, B., Riley, D., Arcaira, E., Anderson, L., & MacFarlene, J. (2013). Six districts begin the principal pipeline initiative. *Building a Stronger Principalship*, Retrieved from <http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/school-leadership/principal-training/Documents/Six-Districts-Begin-the-Principal-Pipeline-Initiative.pdf>
- Turner, D. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The Qualitative Report*, 15(3), 754-760. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR15-3/qid.pdf>

Welch, S.H. (2010). *Building on successes in principal preparation: a program evaluation of the university of Washington's Danforth educational leadership program*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Washington) Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/pqdtft/docview/807723136/fulltextPDF/1334D15600BE6D77CA/1?accountid=14800>

APPENDIX A

Survey Consent Form and Questionnaire

Consent Statement for the Voluntary Participation of Survey

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project entitled “*A Mixed Methods Study of the Perceived Effectiveness of the Rising Stars Leadership Development Program for Principals and Assistant Principals in the RESA District,*” which is being conducted by *KIM MORGAN*, a *doctoral student* at Valdosta State University. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.

Survey:

Q1 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

Q2 What is your age?

- 23 and Under
- 24 - 35
- 36 - 47
- 48 - 59
- 60 or Older

Q3 How many years have you been an administrator?

- 0 - 5 years
- 6 - 10 years
- 11 - 15 years
- 16 - 20 years
- More than 20 years

Q4 What is your current position?

- Elementary Principal
- Elementary Assistant Principal
- Middle School Principal
- Middle School Assistant Principal
- High School Principal
- High School Assistant Principal
- District Administrator
- Instructional Coach
- Other

Rate to what extent you typically engage in the following behaviors.

Q6 I set a personal example of what I expect of others.</p>

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q7 I talk about future trends that will influence how our work gets done.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q8 I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q9 I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q10 I praise people for a job well done.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q11 I spend time and energy making certain that the people I work with adhere to the principles and standards we have agreed on.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q12 I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q13 I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q14 I actively listen to diverse points of view.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q15 I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q16 I follow through on the promises and commitments that I make.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q17 I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q18 I search outside the formal boundaries of my organization for innovative ways to improve what we do.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q19 I treat others with dignity and respect.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q20 I make sure that people are creatively rewarded for their contributions to the success of our projects.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q21 I ask for feedback on how my actions affect other people's performance.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q22 I show others how their long-term interests can be realized by enlisting in a common vision.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q23 I ask "What can we learn?" when things don't go as expected?

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q24 I support the decisions that people make on their own.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q25 I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q26 I build consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q27 I paint the "big picture" of what we aspire to accomplish.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q28 I make certain that we set achievable goals, make concrete plans, and establish measurable milestones for the projects and programs that we work on.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q29 I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q30 I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q31 I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q32 I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q33 I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q34 I ensure that people grow in their jobs by learning new skills and developing themselves.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q35 I give the members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.

- Almost Never
- Rarely
- Seldom
- Once in a While
- Occasionally
- Sometimes
- Fairly Often
- Usually
- Very Frequently
- Almost Always

Q5 Did you complete GLIST's Rising Stars Program that was offered at RESA between 2005 and 2010?

- Yes
- No

[Questions 36-60 were only presented to the survey participants that marked "Yes" to the above question, Did you complete Glisi's Rising Stars Program that was offered at RESA between 2005 and 2010.]

Q36 Has your career position changed since your completion of GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program (what was your position before, what is it now)?

Q37 Did your leadership skills change as a result of GLISI's Rising Stars Program? Please explain.

Q38 A Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction Leader leads the implementation of a standards-based curriculum, monitors the implementation of the curriculum, leads the development of balanced assessments, and leads the implementation of research-based instructional practices. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

Q39 To what degree did participation in the GLISI's Rising Stars Program improve your skill level in your role as a Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

Q40 The Data analysis leader leads teams to analyze multiple sources of data to identify improvement needs, symptoms and root causes. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Data Analysis Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

Q41 To what degree did participation in GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program improve your skill level in your role as a Data Analysis Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

Q42 A Process Improvement Leader develops school wide plans for improvement of student achievement. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Process Improvement Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

Q43 To what degree did participation in GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program improve your skill level in your role as a Process Improvement Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

Q44 A Learning and Performance Development Leader: leads development of professional learning plans for staff; models continuous learning; and leads development of professional learning communities throughout the school. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Learning and Performance Development Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High
- Major Negative Affect

- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

Q46 A Relationship Leader identifies and develops relationships among stakeholder groups and communicates school goals and priorities to students, staff, parents, community members and other stakeholders. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Relationship Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

Q47 To what degree did participation in GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program improve your skill level in your role as a Relationship Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

Q48 A Performance Leader: assists teachers in development of student achievement goals; collaborates with teams in teacher selection/hiring; monitors implementation of curriculum through observations; and links individual and organizational goals, performance and results. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Performance Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

49 To what degree did participation in GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program improve your skill level in your role as a Performance Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

50 The Operations Leader demonstrates the ability to effectively and efficiently organize resources, processes, and systems to support teaching and learning. What do you feel is your current skill level as an Operations Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

51 To what degree did participation in GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program improve your skill level in your role as an Operations Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

52 The Change Leader drives and sustains change in a collegial environment focused on continuous improvement in student achievement. What do you feel is your current skill level as a Change Leader?

- Low
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very High

53 To what degree did participation in GLISI's Rising Stars Leadership Program improve your skill level in your role as a Change Leader?

- Major Negative Affect
- Minor Negative Affect
- No Affect
- Minor Positive Affect
- Major Positive Affect

54 Outside of the Eight Leadership Roles, what do you consider to be the strengths of the Rising Stars Program?

55 What components, if any, of the Rising Stars Program would you say have helped/guided your work the most as a school building administrator?

56 What do you consider to be areas for improvement or weaknesses in the Rising Stars Program?

57 To what degree do you feel you have benefitted from the Rising Stars Program?

- None
- Not Very Much
- Somewhat
- A Fair Amount
- A Great Deal

58 Explain why you feel you "did" or "did not" benefit from the Rising Stars Program.

59 Would you recommend to Superintendents to consider implementing a GLISI program similar to Rising Stars for aspiring school leaders?

- Definitely Not
- Probably Not
- Not Sure
- Probably Yes
- Definitely Yes

60 If you would be willing to participate in an interview to provide more information about the participants' perceptions of the Rising Stars Program, please enter your e-mail address in the field below.

APPENDIX B

Author's Permission to Use Survey

February 12, 2014

Kim Morgan
2385 Buffalo Creek Drive
Nahunta, GA 31553

Dear Kim:

Thank you for your request to use the LPI®: Leadership Practices Inventory® in your dissertation. This letter grants you permission to use either the print or electronic LPI [Self/Observer/Self and Observer] instrument[s] in your research. You may *reproduce* the instrument in printed form at no charge beyond the discounted one-time cost of purchasing a single copy; however, you may not distribute any photocopies except for specific research purposes. If you prefer to use the electronic distribution of the LPI you will need to separately contact Ryan Noll (rnoll@wiley.com) directly for further details regarding product access and payment. Please be sure to review the product information resources before reaching out with pricing questions.

Permission to use either the written or electronic versions is contingent upon the following:

- (1) The LPI may be used only for research purposes and may not be sold or used in conjunction with any compensated activities;
- (2) Copyright in the LPI, and all derivative works based on the LPI, is retained by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. The following copyright statement must be included on all reproduced copies of the instrument(s); "Copyright © 2013 James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved. Used with permission";
- (3) One (1) **electronic** copy of your dissertation and one (1) copy of all papers, reports, articles, and the like which make use of the LPI data must be sent **promptly** to my attention at the address below; and,
- (4) We have the right to include the results of your research in publication, promotion, distribution and sale of the LPI and all related products.

Permission is limited to the rights granted in this letter and does not include the right to grant others permission to reproduce the instrument(s) except for versions made by nonprofit organizations for visually or physically handicapped persons. No additions or changes may be made without our prior written consent. You understand that your use of the LPI shall in no way place the LPI in the public domain or in any way compromise our

copyright in the LPI. This license is nontransferable. We reserve the right to revoke this permission at any time, effective upon written notice to you, in the event we conclude, in our reasonable judgment, that your use of the LPI is compromising our proprietary rights in the LPI.

Best wishes for every success with your research project.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Ellen Peterson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ellen Peterson

Permissions Editor

Epeter4@gmail.com

APPENDIX C

Complete list of Responses to Leadership Practices Inventory

Table 5: Responses to Leadership Practices Inventory by Kouzes and Posner

Statement on Survey	Completed Rising Stars Program N=51		Did not complete Rising Stars Program N=42		T-Test
	M	SD	M	SD	
I set personal example of what I expect of others.	9.47	0.67	9.55	0.63	.57
I talk about future trends that influence how our work gets done.	8.76	0.99	8.79	0.87	.91
I seek out challenging opportunities that test my own skills and abilities.	8.33	1.32	8.40	1.27	.79
I develop cooperative relationships among the people I work with.	9.39	0.78	9.67	0.61	.06
I praise people for a job well done.	9.20	0.85	9.43	0.89	.20
I spend time and energy making certain people I work with adhere to the principles/standards we have agreed on.	8.80	1.17	9.33	0.82	.01
I describe a compelling image of what our future could be like.	8.39	1.28	8.56	1.03	.48
I challenge people to try out new and innovative ways to do their work.	8.41	1.15	8.71	1.04	.19
I actively listen to diverse points of view.	8.82	0.77	8.86	0.90	.85
I make it a point to let people know about my confidence in their abilities.	8.84	1.22	9.02	0.90	.41
I follow through on the commitments and promises that I make.	9.43	0.81	9.60	0.70	.30
I appeal to others to share an exciting dream of the future.	8.08	1.53	8.62	1.27	.07

I search outside the formal boundaries for innovative ways to improve.	8.22	1.43	8.64	1.08	.10
I treat others with dignity and respect.	9.84	0.37	9.86	0.35	.85
I make sure people are creatively rewarded for contributions to success.	8.27	1.36	8.71	1.24	.11
I ask for feedback on how my actions affect the performance of others.	7.70	1.58	8.12	1.52	.20
I show others how long-term interests can be realized by a common vision.	7.76	1.46	8.07	1.64	.34
I ask “What can we learn?” when things do not go as expected.	8.41	1.21	8.62	1.13	.39
I support the decisions that people make on their own.	8.45	1.25	8.67	0.85	.33
I publicly recognize people who exemplify commitment to shared values.	8.49	1.33	8.83	1.12	.18
I build a consensus around a common set of values for running our organization.	8.86	.89	9.00	0.86	.45
I paint the “big picture” of what we aspire to accomplish.	8.88	1.16	8.95	1.03	.76
I make certain we set goals, make plans, and establish milestones for projects.	8.73	1.30	8.93	0.97	.39
I give people a great deal of freedom and choice in deciding how to do their work.	8.73	1.22	8.69	1.16	.89
I find ways to celebrate accomplishments.	8.71	1.12	8.83	1.15	.59
I am clear about my philosophy of leadership.	9.00	1.34	9.10	0.93	.69
I speak with genuine conviction about the higher meaning and purpose of our work.	9.06	1.12	9.31	0.84	.22
I experiment and take risks, even when there is a chance of failure.	8.18	1.47	8.26	1.40	.77
I ensure people grow by learning new skills and developing themselves.	8.61	1.18	8.90	0.93	.18
I give members of the team lots of appreciation and support for their contributions.	9.12	0.92	9.31	0.90	.32

