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# Looked After Or Left Behind: The Effectiveness of Principal Preparation Programs as Perceived by Generation Y Principals

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

LOOKED AFTER OR LEFT BEHIND: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PRINCIPAL  
PREPARATION PROGRAMS AS PERCEIVED BY GENERATION Y PRINCIPALS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

PROGRAM IN ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION

BY

CHANDRA SLEDGE

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to give honor to Him, through whom I can do all things.

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To all of you, I am blessed to be standing on your shoulders, filled with gratitude.

## DEDICATION

*And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.*

*Numbers 13:30*

To my dad, Alvin Sledge, who cried at the airport when I moved to Chicago to begin this journey. I made it! It's been a bumpy road, but you've always taught me that there is no need to worry. Worrying solves nothing. You always say that I have incredible faith. Well, I have it because I have a great example to follow in you. Know that I listened to, believe in, and am applying everything you've taught me. I love you!

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## ABSTRACT

This research study intended to discover the perceptions of 10 Illinois Generation Y novice high school principals pertaining to the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs in terms of how well it prepared them to lead in the first three years of their principalship, and what subsequent professional development they deemed necessary for success in the first three years of their principalship.

Through a qualitative multi-case study, in which the researcher conducted open-ended interviews, which were triangulated with Arthur Levine's (2005b) Descriptors of Excellence, the Generation Y profile, the student achievement data from each participant's school, the course catalog information from each of the participant's university principal preparation program, and the review of literature, the researcher uncovered themes which described the principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs, their perceived impact on student achievement outcomes, and their subsequent professional development needs.

Themes emerged in the following areas concerning the participants' principal preparation programs: purpose, curricular coherence, curricular balance, faculty composition, admissions, degrees, research, and assessment. The following themes emerged concerning the participants' perceptions of their perceived impact on student achievement: data based decision-making and articulating student achievement. Finally, the following themes emerged concerning the participants' subsequent professional

development needs: collaboration and shared practice, and frequent feedback on effectiveness.

It is the hope of the researcher that these conclusions will inform and support the work of educational leadership programs as they are redesigning their principal preparation programs.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The role of a school principal is multifaceted and demanding; one can find himself or herself pulled in multiple directions at once. Principals must find their footing as they maneuver through instructional leadership, school culture, student and parental expectations, external and political demands, community norms, and their own private lives. Though these responsibilities are expected, for many principals, the pressures of the balancing act between these high need areas become overwhelming. In John C. Daresh's (2002), *What it Means to Be a Principal: Your Guide to Leadership*, a common finding is that administrators' first years on the job are best characterized as time filled with frustration, anxiety, and self-doubt. "The principalship (and administration of schools in general) presents a paradox: It is a job largely defined by constant interaction with people, but it is a lonely job as well" (p. 4). In 1998, evidence of a national shortage of qualified principals began to mount, encouraging increased research into the contributing factors of the shortage. In an investigation of the principal shortage, Sheryl Boris-Schacter and Sondra Langer (2006) identify three "principal tensions" or opposing pairs vying for the principals' limited time and attention: instruction and management, work and personal lives, and societal/community expectations and individual priorities (pp. 2-3).

However, the Bureau of Labor Statistics paints a promising picture of the job



outlook for educational administrators, including elementary and secondary school principals. Between 2008-2018, employment of education administrators is expected to grow by 9%, about as fast as the average for all occupations, and primarily due to a large number of expected retirements and fewer applicants for some positions (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010-11). With more individuals entering the profession, the ideas of principal sustainability and the capacity of individuals to demonstrate effective leadership are even more pertinent.

### **Focus of this Inquiry**

Naturally, the discussion of these topics encourages a closer examination of the quality of educational leadership programs. Historically, have principal preparation programs produced effective school leaders? Are principal preparation programs adequately preparing school leaders to effectively lead through the challenges of today's demanding school landscape? Have the foci of the programs shifted over time with the changing face of school leadership? In particular, this study explored how new principals perceived the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools. Additionally, this research investigated what types of professional development new principals—specifically those categorized as *Generation Y*, who are individuals between the ages of 28–38 years old and born between 1975-1985 – believed they needed in order to cope during the first three years of their principalship.

To better understand the current responsibilities of a school principal, and to determine what is needed in today's principal preparation program, it is important to

revisit historical trends to evaluate how the principal's role has evolved over time. It is also important to note historical trends of organizational theory as they apply to schools and educational leadership. Most importantly, one must consider the ways in which the preparation of principals has developed and shifted over time as the principal's role has evolved. The next section provides a brief description of eras of school administration and organizational theory, and school principal preparation.

### **The Principal's Role – Historical Trends**

The school principal's role can be traced back to the year 1642 with the enactment of the first Massachusetts School Law. Prior to 1642 the responsibility of educating children fell on parents and clergymen, providing home schooling or religious education. In 1642, the Massachusetts School Law mandated that selectmen should be given the responsibility of overseeing the education of children. The school principal derived from these selectmen. From that time until presently, as schools evolve with the changing times, so too has the principal's role. According to the leadership expectations of principals during a particular time period, the eras of the principalship can be categorized by the following approaches to leadership:

1. Administrative Inspection.
2. Scientific Management.
3. Administrative Management.
4. Human Relations.
5. Behavioral Science.
6. Current Perspectives. (Daresh, 2002, pp. 76-84; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2004, pp. 6-8; Pellicer, Allen, Tonnsen, & Surratt, 1981)

## **Administrative Inspection**

Between the year 1642 (marked as the beginning of educational administration and supervision) and 1865, administrators were primarily engaged in inspection. The leadership approach was based on the assumption that an educational administrator's job was to find out what teachers were doing wrong in their classrooms. Education administrators were typically not educators themselves but tended to be local civic and religious leaders who, because they were reasonably well educated, were given the social responsibility of taking care of the local public school. The Massachusetts Bay Company (Law of 1642) provides the earliest known description of educational administration:

This Court, taking into consideration the great neglect of many parents and masters in training of their children in learning and labor, and other implements which may be profitable to the common wealth, do hereupon order and decree, that in every town ye chosen men appointed for managing the prudential affairs of the same shall henceforth stand charged with the redress of this evil . . . and for this end, they, or the greatest number of them, shall have power to take into account from time to time of all parents and masters, and of their children, especially of their ability to read and understand the principles of religion and the capital laws of this country. (Shurtleff, 1853, p. 6)

## **Scientific Management**

Between 1865-1900, a heavy focus on organizational efficiency improvement dominated the culture. William Payne (1875), often recognized as one of the first scholars of educational administration, set the stage for employing scientific management principles. Payne defines the role of the school leader by the following terms, which reflected the notion of precision and certainty of performance in schools: "The superintendent works upon the school through teachers. He is to prepare plans of

instruction and discipline, which the teachers must carry into effect; but the successful working out of such a scheme requires constant oversights and constant readjustments” (p. 76). Payne’s view emphasized a top-down approach where the administrator identifies the “right way” to do things in education and teachers know and follow the directives.

Then, “like a bombshell, in the fall of 1910, the scientific management system of Frederick Taylor became social gospel, further squeezing schools to cut waste, improve managerial efficiency, and *be like business*” (Cooper & Boyd, 1987, p. 7).

Given the emphasis on increased organization and the desire to continue to professionalize the field of school administration, schools of education made changes to their curricula and course offerings in order to stay current with the evolving role of the principal.

Once the business model was adopted, universities began to establish courses and programs in administration stressing economy and efficiency . . . It is worth noting that the link between practice, and ‘science,’ and school management was made in the early 1900s, laying the groundwork for further attempts to quantify the administration of schools, whether through dollar amounts, IQ scores, achievement scores, or the most recent efforts to measure effectiveness. (Cooper & Boyd, 1987, p. 10)

### **Administrative Management**

The era of Administrative Management (which is similar to Administrative Inspection) is between 1900-1920 and concentrated on the management of an entire organization more so than the management of individuals within an organization. Henri Fayol (1949) and Max Weber (1947) were major contributors to this form of Administrative Management. In his text, *General and Industrial Management*, Fayol, an engineer and French industrialist, claims that all managers perform five basic functions:

planning, organization, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. Beyond these five functions, Fayol identifies 14 principles he felt should guide the management of organizations and that emphasize the chain of command, allocation of authority, order, efficiency, equity, and stability.

Weber (1947) is one of the most influential contributors to classical organizational theory. His concept of bureaucracy is based on a comprehensive set of rational guidelines where he believes:

An act is rational in so far as (a) it is oriented to a clearly formulated unambiguous goal, or to a set of values which are clearly formulated and logically consistent; (b) the means chosen are, according to the best available knowledge, adapted to the realization of the goal. (Weber, 1947, p. 16)

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) suggest that Weber's guidelines constitute an ideal structure for organizational effectiveness.

### **Human Relations**

In the Human Relations era (approximately between 1920-1960), an administrative philosophy took root that focused on the needs of individuals who worked in schools and emphasized satisfying their personal interests. The top-down emphasis of the past gave way to a much more democratic process. Assumptions were prevalent during this era. For example, Daresh (2002) said, "If people are happy, they will be productive... The improvement of the psychosocial climate of the school is a legitimate concern of administrators... The administrator was a facilitator, not a manager" (p. 82).

The Human Relations approach has its origins in a series of studies conducted by Elton Mayo in the Hawthorne Plant of Western Electric near Chicago. Based on his

research, Mayo (as cited in Bolman & Deal, 2008) concluded that a human-social element operated in the workplace:

Mayo questioned a century-old deeply held assumption—that workers had no rights beyond a paycheck. Their duty was to work hard and follow orders. Pioneers who laid the human resource frame's foundation criticized this view on two grounds: it was unfair, and it was bad psychology. They argued that people's skills, attitudes, energy, and commitment are vital resources that can make or break an enterprise. (pp. 121-122)

### **Behavioral Science Approach**

Roughly, between the years 1960-2000, a number of varied perspectives emerged regarding the principal's role and his or her ability to manage the relationships between the organizations and the individuals that work in them. According to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004):

Behavior scientists considered both the classicists' rational-economic model and the human relationists' social model to be incomplete representations of employees in the work setting. A number of authors attempted to reconcile or show points of conflict between classical and human relations theory; thus the behavioral science approach was born . . . fueling new interest in the individual and the way in which he relates to the organization. (p. 10)

Chester Barnard (1938), E. Wight Bakke (1955), and Chris Argyris (1993) discuss the importance of the executive's awareness of the needs of his or her employees. They assert that it is not only important to be aware of the needs and desires of employees, but also, it is important to know how to manage adult personalities and understand how individual motives impact the organization's success. Getzels and Guba (1957) describe behavior in any society as a function of the interaction between personal needs and organizational goals. Abraham Maslow (1954) developed a need hierarchy that suggests

that an administrator's job is to provide avenues for the satisfaction of employees' needs that also support organizational goals, and to remove impediments that block need satisfaction and cause frustration, negative attitudes, or dysfunctional behavior. In his book, *Motivation and Personality*, Maslow states (1954), "The physiological needs, when unsatisfied, dominate the organism, pressing all capacities into their service and organizing these capacities so that they may be most efficient in this service" (p. 59).

Furthermore, during the behavioral science era researchers explored the impact of leadership style on the productivity of the organization and employees. Frederick Herzberg (1959) developed motivational theories, in which he distinguishes between factors that cause job dissatisfaction and those that prevent it. Rensis Likert's (1987) conception of the ideal management system, which he defines as a Participative Group, would operate by the principles of supportive relationships, group decision making in an overlapping group structure, which he calls linking-points, and high-performance goals of the leader. Robert Blake and Jane Mouton (1994) encourage leaders to identify their leadership styles and study the impact that their style has on their subordinates. They suggest that leaders shift their style based on the needs of their employees. Fred Fielder and Martin Chemers (1984) and Paul Hersey and Kenneth Blanchard (1997) discuss how leadership style may vary depending on the situation, as some situations call for different approaches to leadership. They discuss how the relationship between leaders and employees, and the leader's style in completing tasks, should determine which leadership style is more effective in a given situation.

Additionally, Lynn Beck and Joseph Murphy (1993) summarize the role of the

principal from the 1960s through the 1990s through the use of metaphors. They describe the principal of the 1960s as a bureaucratic executive, the principal of the 1970s as a humanistic facilitator, and the principal of the 1980s as an instructional leader. Peter Senge (1994) describes the 1990s as a time where the principal is seen as the learning organization catalyst.

Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) state:

The great diversity of perspectives in the behavioral science school makes it impossible to discuss all of its contributors in their chapter on Development of Administrative Theory . . . There are no motivation strategies, organizational structures, decision-making patterns, communication techniques, change approaches, or leadership styles that will fit all situations. Rather school administrators must find different ways that fit different situations. (p. 13)

### **Current Perspectives**

Deresh (2002) notes, “In recent years there has been a great interest in concepts associated with client-driven managerial behavior (giving a high priority to keeping the customer happy) and a commitment to quality” (p. 84). In a sense, there has been a return to administrative inspection as a result of “the increasing emphasis on statewide tests of student achievement, competency tests for teachers, and other similar practices now required in many states and local school districts” (p. 84).

Additionally, state policies increasingly draw attention to school improvement and accountability as mandated by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (Public Law 107-110). District leadership focuses on improving student outcomes through increased attention to teaching and learning, alignment of curriculum to standards, and data-driven decision making.



In the same turn, many educators continue to believe that educational practice may be understood according to predictable relationships among predictable variables returning to Scientific Management. “Educational administrators who agree with the assumptions of this approach would probably attempt to produce more signs of productiveness in their schools, possibly in the form of higher scores on standardized achievement tests” (Daresh, 2002, p. 85).

According to Lewis and Fusarelli (2010):

The adoption of performance-based accountability systems signaled a substantial shift in leadership, bringing the values and processes of the private sphere (measurement, commodification, merit pay, contracting out, school report cards, and high-stakes testing, among others) into the public sphere. Lubienski (2000) asserts that the ascendancy and expansion of free market ideology in education during the Reagan, Bush, Clinton, and Bush administrations were part of an overall “trend of elevating private goods over public goods” (p. 207). This movement, celebrated by conservatives who view the private sphere as ‘good’ and the public (or government) sphere as ‘bad,’ privileged the private over the public, resulting in school leaders’ performance being linked primarily to test scores. Accordingly, school personnel evaluation systems became more tightly linked to such accountability systems. (pp. 111-112)

Perhaps, the most apparent current perspective of the role of the principal is the reemergence of the Human Relations approach – which operates off the basic assumption that people in the organization hold the key to more effective performance. Bolman and Deal (2008) assert the importance of investing in employees and empowering employees:

As products, markets, and organizations become more complex, the value of people’s specialized knowledge and skills increases. Undertrained workers harm organizations in many ways: shoddy quality, poor service, higher costs, and costly mistakes . . . The human resource-oriented organization also recognizes that learning must occur on the job as well as in the classroom . . . Progressive organizations give power to employees as well as invest in their development. Empowerment includes keeping

employees informed, but it doesn't stop there. It also involves encouraging autonomy and participation, redesigning work, fostering teams, promoting egalitarianism, and infusing work with meaning. (pp. 148-149)

### **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Principal**

The role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century principal is marked by the shift from the principal as manager of adults, to the principal as instructional leader for the school community.

Today's principal is no longer focused on adult outcomes, but rather on student outcomes. DuFour and Marzano (2011) indicate that the principal's influence on student achievement is indirect, based on the principal's direct influence on the teachers and staff that work with students in classes. Daniel Cherry and Jeff Spiegel (2006) describe the role of the 21<sup>st</sup> century principal as (a) the touchstone: standard-bearer and institutional anchor, (b) the advocate: proponent of a cause beyond oneself, and (c) the parent: everyone's icon of moral leadership.

Characterized by Lunenburg and Ornstein (2004) as the Post-Behavioral Science Era, concepts of 21<sup>st</sup> century school leadership are:

1. Clarifying Purpose.
2. Encouraging Professional Learning Communities.
3. Making Data-Driven Decisions.

#### **Clarifying Purpose**

Keeping in line with the idea of continuous development for employees, Rick DuFour's (1991) book, *The Principal as Staff Developer*, speaks to the need for principals to establish the vision, mission, and plan of action for the staff. DuFour states that, "Schools seeking meaningful improvement must make a commitment to staff

development programs that are purposeful and goal-directed” (p. 10). Furthermore,

DuFour feels:

It should be evident that a principal who is unable to define that ‘end’ is also unable to develop the programs and policies to get there. There is simply no question that it is easier to move a school from Point A to Point B if the principal and staff know where Point B is located and how to recognize it once they arrive. Thus, the very first step that principals must take if they hope to fulfill their responsibilities as staff developers is to provide leadership in formulating and articulating a vision of the future for their schools. (p. 17)

Given the accountability-driven climate of 21<sup>st</sup> century public schools, where schools are rated, given report cards, and targeting goals based on student achievement, the principal has become the key individual responsible for the stewardship of student achievement. The principal is responsible for establishing and articulating the vision, developing goals, and creating an action plan for student achievement. The principal will ultimately be held accountable for improving student outcomes. Therefore, the 21<sup>st</sup> century principal must be process oriented and able to devise plans to guide the school community through the steps of a process and provide support for stakeholders, in order to meet student achievement goals.

### **Encouraging Professional Learning Communities**

Beyond establishing and articulating the vision of the school, Boudett, City, and Murname (2008) discuss the importance of the principal’s ability to establish a collaborative professional culture: “A good school is not a collection of good teachers working independently, but a team of skilled educators working together to implement a coherent instructional plan, to identify the learning needs of every student, and to meet

those needs” (p. 2). DuFour and Marzano (2011) describe an effective principal as one that effectively forms and utilizes the Professional Learning Community (PLC) process, as a means to have more meaningful interaction with teachers and as a mechanism for building leadership capacity within team members. The principal directly impacts the teams, while the teachers on the teams directly impact the students in classrooms.

DuFour and Marzano believe that the PLC process allows for principals to address the instructional leadership duties with more focus, and greater impact for staff and students.

Essentially, PLCs allow ownership of student achievement outcomes to extend beyond the principal. PLCs allow teachers, counselors, and other school specialists to work together to analyze student achievement data and strategize better methods to support students to meet intended outcomes. PLCs provide a structure for the 21st century principal and his or her staff to look at adult work and student work, and determine whether to continue or shift practices to reach student outcomes. PLCs create a space for increased collaboration and staff involvement in the development of school improvement action plans, and the decrease of the top-down approach. The result is a more informed staff and richer conversations between the 21<sup>st</sup> century principal and his or her team.

### **Making Data-Driven Decisions**

Boudett et al. (2008) suggest that principals create a culture in which schools go through a process that includes:

1. Preparation.

Organizing for collaborative work and building assessment literacy.

2. Inquiring.

Creating a data overview, digging into student data, and examining instruction.

3. Acting.

Developing an action plan, assessing progress, and repeating the process.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century principal is also responsible for creating democratic school communities, focusing on family and community involvement, and striving for equity through social justice practices. DuFour and Marzano (2011) describe effective 21<sup>st</sup> century principals as those who (a) love those they are attempting to lead, (b) lead by example: embracing responsibility, (c) articulate a clear, compelling, and focused vision and connect it to others' hopes and dreams, and (d) help those they lead feel more capable by helping them become more capable.

The charge to establish a culture where social justice practices are the norm can be challenging for the 21<sup>st</sup> century principal. Establishing goals for student achievement, outlining a clear process for accomplishing the goals, and gaining consensus present obvious challenges. Moreover, there are intangible challenges that the principal must overcome, as well as challenges that are not easily quantified, such as shifting the way of thinking in a community, exposing inequities, or confronting the issue of raising expectations for student performance. The 21<sup>st</sup> century principal must be the champion of school culture, voicing the values and beliefs of the school community around student achievement, and providing guidance for those that might experience difficulties realizing the vision. Perhaps, inherent in the principal's willingness to advocate for equity and his or her ability to implement social justice practices into the school

community, is the reengagement and empowerment of all students, school improvement in both the cultural and academic sense, and the restoration of broken communities.

As the principal's role has evolved, questions of how principals are prepared and the quality of preparations become extremely important. One might think of the animal kingdom where some animals nurture and train their young while others merely give birth and leave them. For example, a meerkat, a small animal in the mongoose family, begins by feeding its young, then slowly transitions to simulated hunting, training and guided hunting, and independent learning. Meerkats are known to monitor their young as they begin to hunt on their own, helping to adjust behaviors for improvement (World Science, 2006). A sea turtle, on the other hand, leaves its eggs in a hole dug deep into a beach's sand and returns to sea. After the hatchlings are born, it usually takes them three to seven days to dig their way to the surface and wait until nightfall (in an attempt to hide from predators) to return to the sea. The odds of a hatchling making it are very slim, and the outcome for a large percentage of the hatchlings is grim as most hatchlings fall prey on this dangerous trip to the sea (Sea Turtles, SeaWorld and Park Entertainment, SeaWorld/Busch Gardens ANIMALS, 2011). Comparing school leadership programs to the animal kingdom may seem far-fetched, but there are similarities in the way that principals have been prepared over the years. Elizabeth Morrison (2005) and Beverly Hall (2006) argue for the need for more practical applications in leadership preparation. They contend that preparation programs rely heavily on theory and current trends, and not enough on providing future principals with the skills to handle everyday challenges. In short, they call for principal preparation programs to take the meerkat approach to

preparing principals, instead of the sea turtle approach. This study hopes to discover if school leadership programs are effectively preparing their young, or simply sending them out to face their new leadership responsibilities ill-prepared.

### **History of Principal Preparation**

While there is an abundance of historical information on the evolving role of the principal, the amount of historical documentation on the topic of principal preparation is significantly less. This section provides a brief description of the historical trends in principal preparation.

#### **The Rise of School Leadership Programs**

In the early history of American schools, little information is found about training for school administrators. “These early school leaders were practical men (concerned about finding enough teachers, books, classrooms, and pupils) as well as lofty, idealistic, noble philosophers seeking the inner meaning of education and pedagogy” (Cooper & Boyd, 1987, p. 7).

Since the 1600s, schools have existed in the colonies that would become the United States; public schools were established in this nation in the 1800s. However, the idea of principal preparation was a later development.

The formal training of school administrators is a recent development; superintendents and principals had been introduced in city school systems for fifty years or more before a semblance of training programs appeared. Although William H. Payne probably wrote the first book on administration in 1875 and taught the “first college-level course in school administration” in 1879. Professors of educational administration were unknown until the early 1900s, and the first two doctorates were awarded in 1905 at Teachers College, Columbia University, to Ellwood Cubberley and George Strayer. (Cooper & Boyd, 1987, p. 6)

According to Levine (2005b):

From 1890 to 1910, courses in administration were transformed into full-blown graduate degree programs in response to the enormous expansion of the public schools. Fueled by the success of the high school, where enrollments nearly quadrupled and teachers almost quintupled during this period, graduate education for school administrators took off. (p. 15)

Still, early literature rarely mentions the manner in which these early principals were trained. There is little to no mention of the types of courses offered by schools of education for principal preparation, nor mention of standards for the increasing number of degree programs, nor mention of how courses evolved as societal norms shifted.

However, once the demand for administrators increased, the credentialing process began, and the complexity of American schools grew, it seemed inevitable that the standard, state-sanctioned program would take hold . . . the forces affecting preparation programs also included the massive migration of populations to urban centers, the growth and increasing complexity of schools and school systems, advances in technical knowledge in business and industry, increasingly stringent certification requirements, and changing cultural values. (Cooper & Boyd, 1987, as cited in Murphy & Hallinger, 1987, pp. 6-7)

Eventually, educational scholars sparked a debate concerning principal preparation. In the early 1900s, three differing opinions emerged about the appropriate approach to training educational administrators. These approaches ranged from one favored by James Earl Ray, Dean of Teachers College, Columbia University, which was a practitioner-based approach where practicing school administrators would attend part-time and study a curriculum that enhanced their ability to do their jobs; to an approach favored by Henry Holmes, Dean of Harvard's education school, where young, promising students without experience would attend a program full-time for two years, much like the preparation of medical and law students. A third approach, favored by Charles Judd,



Director of the Department of Education at the University of Chicago, focused heavily on the science of educational research as a means of educating future leaders (Levine, 2005b, pp. 15-16).

As approaches to leadership developed, the focus remained on structure and practicality rather than the intellectual. Administrators during this time were focused on planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling; it appears that courses in school leadership programs were geared toward developing those skills rather than the philosophical aspects of educational leadership. Training for school administrators went through two phases:

1. The School Executive.
2. The Administrator as Social Agent.

Cooper and Boyd (1987) characterize the School Executive phase as:

Between 1915 and 1929 . . . the notion of formal graduate training for school administrators was increased and institutionalized. . . . These were the heady days of the powerful, almost superhuman school superintendent, the new professional armed with new knowledge, who gave direction to boards, teachers, and the public . . . the training was practical, applied, and direct. Still missing was a comfortable intellectual base with which to conceptualize, study, and instruct the budding, school administrators. (pp. 10-11)

However, as the Administrator as Social Agent phase emerged and society faced new challenges (World War I, The Great Depression, and World War II), the principal needed to be equipped with the ability to focus on the social needs of the school community, as well as the operational needs. During these years, principal preparation programs began to address the impact of societal issues on schools.

According to Cooper and Boyd (1987):

During the Great Depression and World War II, a time in which the optimism and undiluted worship of business declined; administrators were now forced to think about social and economic issues. . . . Training was still highly practical, a blend of plant management, scheduling, and budgeting interspersed with courses on schools and the social order. Missing still was academic respectability and a sense of full professionalism. (p. 11)

School administration programs soon gained prestige as they were beginning to be seen as meeting the needs of education schools, school leaders, school districts, and states. Courses in the principal preparation programs focused both on the practical and the philosophical – and the standards for licensure were reputable.

By the late 1950s and 1960s, more states began to require certification and to distinguish between the certification needed to be a principal and a teacher. State Departments of Education required attendance at a graduate school, while at the same time attempting to accredit the graduate schools and establish standards for educational leadership programs. Principal preparation programs began to train school leaders to be applied social scientists. Despite the lack of consensus around the use of research, methods, and implications of findings, the training of school administrators had evolved into a legitimate field, respected amongst scholars (Burke, 1934; Cooper & Boyd, 1987).

### **What is Necessary to Prepare Today's Principal?**

In summary, one might recognize that the number of details concerning the historical trends in education administration and supervision far outweigh the number of details concerning actual principal preparation. As different as the role of the administrator is from era to era, there is not a vast amount of information concerning the

leadership preparation necessary for principals to meet the requirements of the position. There also is little emphasis on the crucial pedagogical basis of an administrative and supervision program that authentically depicts the immense challenges that school administrators face daily (particularly new school administrators leading today's schools) or that equips these leaders with the vital tools to lead effectively. In "Preparing School Principals: A National Perspective on Policy and Program Innovations," Hale and Moorman (2003) state:

While the jobs of school leaders – superintendents, principals, teacher leaders and school board members – have changed dramatically, it appears that neither organized professional development programs nor formal preparation programs based in higher education institutions have adequately prepared those holding these jobs to meet the priority demands of the 21st century, namely, improved student achievement. All aspects of the school leadership issue – the art and science of principal leadership, as well as the policy and regulatory frameworks in support of a state's capacity to recruit, prepare, and retain its educational leadership workforce – are on the table and are being scrutinized. (p. 1)

In the *Handbook of Research on the Education of School Leaders*, Young, Crow, Murphy, and Ogawa (2009) state:

Over the last half of the 20th century, a good deal of attention was devoted to the topic of preparing leaders for schools. In the last quarter century, in particular, the volume of that work has increased substantially. Yet, somewhat surprisingly, only a small proportion of the scholarship on school leader preparation has been empirical in nature, limiting the field's ability to use research to inform understanding and subsequent improvement initiatives in preparation. (p. 2)

However, there has been increased engagement in the discussions surrounding the idea of leadership preparation. Efforts to increase the research base pertaining to this topic are continuously intensified. The dialogue surrounding school leadership

preparation includes a broad spectrum of topics – including but not limited to recruitment and selection, program evaluation, content, degree production, and program standards. Particularly concerning are the critiques of the preparation of future school leaders within the last 25 years. Principal preparation programs often receive a “dismal evaluation” by critics such as Shakeshaft (1999), who described universities as using principal preparation programs as “cash cows” with low standards for admission and little academic rigor.

The general consensus of critics was that principal preparation programs were in serious need of reform. According to Young et al. (2009):

Taken together, critics built an image of a system of preparing school leaders that was seriously flawed and that was found wanting in nearly every aspect, including (a) the ways students were selected and recruited into training programs, (b) the education received once there—including the content emphasized and the pedagogical strategies employed, (c) the methods used to assess academic fitness, and (d) the procedures developed to certify and select principals and superintendents. Moreover, critics have gone as far as characterizing these shortcomings as contributors to, and in some cases, ‘as a major cause of dysfunction in American public schools. (p. 2)

Hale and Moorman (2003) mention the influence of states on the preparation processes for principals:

The systems that produce our nation’s principals are complex and interrelated – and governed by the states. Each state establishes licensing, certification and recertification requirements for school leaders and, in most places, approves the college and university programs that prepare school leaders. (p. 1)

The Educational Leadership Policy Standards: ISLLC 2008 and the State Consortium on Educational Leadership (SCEL), a program operated by the Council of

Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), seek to make the quality of principal preparation consistent across states by providing standards for leadership, training, professional development, testing, and evaluation. SCEL has also developed a pool of resources that may be shared among states, in hopes that states will collaborate and learn from the trials, errors, and successes of one another concerning principal preparation (Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium Standards, 2008; The State Consortium on Education Leadership (SCEL), Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011).

It is evident that states are beginning to address the concerns surrounding school leadership preparation. For example, in Illinois, the *Commission on School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities* was established by the *Illinois Board of Higher Education* in August 2005 in response to mounting concerns about the need to improve higher education programs that prepare school leaders. Additionally, the *Illinois General Assembly's* creation of the *Illinois School Leader Task Force* is an example of states' efforts to be key players in the reform efforts around school leadership preparation (Hale & Moorman, 2003, p. 1; School Leadership Task Force, 2010).

In the midst of the federal government's efforts at school reform (such as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the *Race to the Top Fund of 2009*), school leaders must not only have an understanding of the fundamental elements of educational leadership and supervision (which are budgeting and finance, human resources, organizational theory, school law, and ethics), but also must be prepared for societal and political implications impacting student achievement outcomes (Race to the Top Executive Summary, 2009).

Once again, our nation is faced with the challenge of rethinking and revising the approach to educating school leaders in order to produce school leaders with the capacity to increase student achievement. Though many principal preparation programs are reevaluating their programs and reshaping their approach, in recent years, the challenge of training future school leaders has been acknowledged by institutions outside of the traditional schools of education. For example, in 1994, the North Carolina General Assembly partnered with 11 of the state's universities to implement the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program – a rigorous two-year principal preparation program (North Carolina Principal Fellows Program, 2011).

The nonprofit organization New Leaders (formerly New Leaders for New Schools) was also founded to address the challenge of preparing quality school leaders. According to New Leaders (2000-2010):

. . . founded in 2000 by a team of social entrepreneurs. It attracts, prepares, and supports outstanding individuals to become the next generation of school leaders in response to the immense need of exceptional principals in our nation's urban public schools.

Likewise, privately funded programs like the Massachusetts-based Building Excellent Schools Fellowship, developed in 2001, seeks to “prepare leaders to design, found, and lead urban charter schools of uncompromising excellence” serving as another example of an alternative approach to school leadership preparation (The BES Fellowship, 2010).

Universities have begun to transform their principal preparation programs to enhance the preparation of principals by preparing them to meet the challenges of today's

educational landscape. The Harvard Graduate School of Education (HGSE) reorganized its principal preparation program:

The innovative, three-year, practice-based Doctor of Education Leadership (Ed.L.D.) Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education is inspired by the recent endeavors and initiatives of some of the world's best education practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and scholars. This new, multidimensional doctoral program is the very first of its kind. It integrates the fields of education, business, and public policy in visionary ways, offering students access to the vast intellectual and professional resources of HGSE, the Harvard Business School, the Harvard Kennedy School, and the other schools at Harvard. Its groundbreaking curriculum will harness students' passion for education with the sophisticated professional, organizational, and political skills and experiences necessary to achieve systemic, transformational change. (Harvard Graduate School of Education, Doctor of Education, December 2010)

*The Learning From Leadership Project: Investigating the Links to Improved*

*Student Learning*, commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, asserts the following about school leaders' use of data-based decision making for student learning:

Teachers and administrators have been making 'evidence-based' decisions since teaching became professionalized. But the evidence typically available to teachers and school leaders has often been anecdotal, based on impressions they acquire in their workplace, grounded in collective but tacit assumptions about the professional expertise and judgments of school personnel . . . A positive link between district data use initiatives and student achievement occurs only when data use is linked with higher collective efficacy—in other words, when principals believe that they have the capacities for meeting district improvement goals. . . . Improved effectiveness depends upon the appropriateness and implementation of actions taken based on data-informed decisions; much 'data-use' in schools does not currently lead to the kind of changes that increase student learning. (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood, & Anderson, 2010, p. 23)

Therefore, it is imperative that new school leaders are prepared not only with an understanding of varied types of student achievement data, but the capacity to use the data in a way that addresses the needs of students and teachers, resulting in increased

student performance on academic outcomes. In, *It's Being Done: Academic Success in Unexpected Schools*, Chenoweth (2007) states the key indicators of successful principals:

1. Principals are a constant presence.
2. Although principals are important leaders, they are not the only leaders.
3. Principals pay careful attention to the quality of the teaching staff.
4. Principals provide teachers with the time to meet to plan and work collaboratively.
5. Principals provide teachers time to observe each other.
6. Principals think seriously about professional development.
7. Principals assume they will have to train new teachers, more or less from scratch, and carefully acculturate all newly hired teachers.
8. Principals have high quality, dedicated, and competent office and building staff who feel themselves part of the educational mission of the school.
9. The adults in successful schools expect their students to learn, and they work hard to master the skills and knowledge necessary to teach those students. (pp. 222-227)

It is evident that there is a need for school leadership preparation programs to evaluate their curricula to ensure that school leaders are provided a well-rounded, relevant, and practical preparation experience that prepares them for the realities that they will face in schools. Hale and Moorman (2003) assert that the following is essential for effective leadership:

Our nation is now confronted by a profound disconnect between pre- and in-service training, the current realities and demands of the job and the capacity of school leaders to be instructional leaders. . . . The clarion call today is for adept instructional leaders, not mere building managers. . . . Principals must serve as leaders for student learning. They must know academic content and pedagogical techniques. They must work with teachers to strengthen skills. They must collect, analyze and use data in ways that fuel excellence. Principals must also be able to permit and encourage teachers to exercise leadership outside the classroom. . . . Schools of the 21st century require a new kind of principal, one who fulfills a variety of roles: Instructional leader, Community leader, and Visionary leader. . . . To be sure, all three types of leadership are



important, but the priority must be instructional leadership—leadership for learning. Principals of today’s schools must be able to (1) lead instruction, (2) shape an organization that demands and supports excellent instruction and dedicated learning by students and staff and (3) connect the outside world and its resources to the school and its work. (p. 8)

Moreover, Jo Blasé, Joseph Blasé, and Dana Yon Phillips (2010) define a high-performing principal as one who “exhibits behaviors (also called best practices) that yield statistically greater student learning than if the leader did not engage in those behaviors” (p. 2). They state that high-performing principals continuously ask the following questions in their schools, and structure the entire school context to facilitate instruction:

- How do we enhance our commitment to improving student learning?
- Are we engaged in ongoing study of the teaching and learning process?
- How effective are our assessment procedures and our use of data for school improvement?
- What decision-making structures enable teachers, parents, and others to be meaningfully involved in decision-making?
- Is teacher leadership emerging?
- What opportunities exist for collaboration and professional growth?
- Do teachers engage in creative problem solving? (p. 4)

### **Purpose**

In *School Leadership That Works: From Research to Results*, Robert J. Marzano, Timothy Waters, and Brian A. McNulty (2005), discuss the impact of school leadership on student achievement:

Given the perceived importance of leadership, it is no wonder that an effective principal is thought to be a necessary precondition for an effective school. To illustrate, a 1977 U.S. Senate Committee Report on Equal Educational Opportunity (U.S. Congress, 1970) identified the principal as the single most influential person in a school:

In many ways the school principal is the most important and influential individual in any school. He or she is the person responsible for all activities that occurred in and around the school building. It is the principal's leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate for teaching, the level of professionalism and morale of teachers, and the degree of concern for what students may or may not become. The principal is that main link between the community and the school, and the way he or she performs in this capacity largely determines the attitudes of parents and students about the school. If a school is a vibrant, innovative, child-centered place, if it has a reputation for excellence in teaching, if students are performing to the best of their ability, one can almost always point to the principal's leadership as the key to success. (pp. 5-6)

With the perceived importance of leadership in schools, the criticism surrounding educational leadership programs is particularly alarming. Arthur Levine, former President of Teachers College at Columbia University, contributed his insight concerning the decade of reports condemning the state of school leadership programs. In his 2005 report, Levine concludes:

Educational administration is the weakest program that schools of education offer. It found that few strong programs exist; most vary in quality from inadequate to appalling. Their shortcomings include irrelevant and incoherent curricula, low admission and graduation standards, inadequate clinical instruction, weak faculties, degrees that are irrelevant to the jobs students eventually hold, insufficient financial support, and poor research. (Levine, 2005b, p. B16)

These claims not only come from educational leadership scholars and university professors, but also principals in the field—practitioners, support these claims as well.

Hale and Moorman (2005) state:

Principals across the nation agree that administrator training programs deserve an 'F.' In a survey of educational leaders conducted by the Public Agenda, 69% of the principals responding indicated that traditional leadership preparation programs were 'out of touch with the realities of what it takes to run today's schools. (p. 5)

Barnett and Shoho (2005) observe that new principals spend a great deal of time during their first year as principal conducting a diagnostic: assessing what's working and what needs improvement, determining strengths and weaknesses of staff and structures, learning the dynamics of the school community, and developing a plan to address various issues. They assert that it is not until the new principal's second year in the position that he or she begins to implement action plans for improvement. They suggest that the second year is the year that will determine whether or not the principal has the capacity to be a change agent. Germaine and Quinn (2005) discuss the role of maturity in how novice principals handle the challenges of the role. They state that novice principals attain many of the skills that they need to succeed in the role of principal while performing the duties of the job. They describe new principals as being reactive rather than proactive, and state that they spend considerable time trying to figure out how to successfully interact with colleagues and employees.

One may wonder how new principals perceive their leadership preparation experience and their capacity to effectively lead their schools. Therefore, this research was driven by concerns surrounding the preparation of and support for new school leaders. Young et al. (2009) offer the following report based on the amount of empirical scholarship in the area of school leadership preparation:

1. *There is not an overabundance of scholarship in the area of administrator preparation . . . Only 8% of the 2,000-plus articles in the leading journals in school leadership from 1975-2002 dealt with pre-service training programs . . .*
2. *Work in entire domains of administrator preparation is conspicuous by its absence . . . On some topics, an initial body of literature is developing . . . Specifically, very little is known about issues ranging*

from how programs recruit and select students, instruct them in programs, and monitor and assess their progress. Organizational life inside programs is hardly touched upon in research literature... In particular, there is almost no empirical evidence on the education of those who educate prospective school leaders.

3. *The contours of school leadership are only weakly shaped by empirical evidence on preparation programs.* Slightly less than 3% (56) of the 2,000 plus articles published between 1975 and 2002 in the leading journals in our field are empirically anchored investigations on administrator preparation . . .
4. *The amount of scholarship devoted to administrator preparation is expanding.* Between 1975 and 1990, approximately 3% of the articles in the leading journals addressed administration preservice training. Since that time, over 11% of the articles have attended to training issues. During the earlier time period, less than 1% of the journal space was devoted to empirical work on preparation programs. Since 1990, nearly 4% of the articles in the four leading journals in our field have been given over to empirical studies of administrator preservice training . . .
5. *The methodological scaffolding supporting empirical studies has been expanded, yet it is not clear that quality has been greatly enhanced . . .* The terrain is populated not only more densely, but also by a greater variety of studies than has been the case in the field of school leadership in general in the past . . . Incipient efforts into blended methods and the mushrooming use of naturalistic designs have significantly expanded the assortment of studies in the preparation area . . . Although . . . it has not made a large dent in overcoming many of the deficiencies that characterize research in school administration in general . . .
6. *Dissertation work comprises a small but not insignificant proportion of published research . . .* Of the 56 empirical studies published in the leading journals over the last quarter century, only three can be traced directly to a dissertation . . .
7. *There is almost no evidence of external support for empirical research on preparation programs.* For the 56 empirical studies, only 3 have either direct or indirect reference to external funding, and 2 of these represent very limited support . . . (pp. 16-18)

Effective principal preparation programs are essential to student achievement in that new school leaders have to have a solid understanding of the challenges that they will face pertaining to meeting standards for student performance and building and

sustaining a professional learning community and community of high expectations. In the state of Illinois, the *School Leader Reform Act* (Public Act 096-0903, Section 99, July 1, 2010), was signed into law by Governor Pat Quinn to reform the way Illinois selects, trains, and certifies educational leaders to be principals in the state's schools. The law demands that the Illinois State Board of Education in partnership with Illinois Higher Education Institutions:

1. Create a new and separate principal endorsement that emphasizes the unique preparation necessary to become an instructional leader of schools.
2. Require colleges and universities to redesign their principal preparation programs to strengthen recruitment, raise rigor and standards for training, and emphasize the role of the principal as instructional leader, not just building manager.
3. Recognize an alternative pathway to the principal endorsement through nonprofit entities such as the successful *New Leaders* in Chicago, but requires such nonprofit organizations to meet the same standards and rigors as traditional higher education programs. The nonprofit is also required to get approval from the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois Board of Higher Education, in consultation with the state Teachers Certification Board.
4. Permit sitting principals with a general administration certificate (Type 75) to retain their positions and earn the new endorsement if they choose. (Catalyst Chicago, 2010, Public Act 096-0903, Section 99, July 1, 2010)

But, is this enough? Are laws such as the 2010 *Illinois School Leader Reform Act* enough to develop efficient school leaders? Will new principals leave their “nests” with the tools and capacity to improve student outcomes?

### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the efficacy of principal preparation programs and continuing development for principals new to the position. The research questions were:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?
2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975–1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

### **Research Design**

To address the research questions posed by this study, a qualitative case study design was employed. The study featured 10 active principals working in schools with grades 9-12, from districts among 30 counties in the state of Illinois, including: Lake, suburban Cook, DuPage, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Kendall, Kane, McHenry, DeKalb,

Boone, Livingston, Iriquois, Ford, LaSalle, Champaign, Ogle, Peoria, Winnebago, Stephenson, Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside, Madison, St. Clair, Lee, Bureau, Sangamon, Henry, and Rock Island. Of the 30 counties, nine represent the most heavily populated counties in the state. These 10 principals (nine men and one woman), have obtained Illinois principal certification (Type 75), and belong to Generation Y (which means they are aged 28-38 and born between 1975-1985). The researcher hoped to gain insight into the Generation Y principals' understandings of their preparedness to lead, and their perception of their leadership programs' effectiveness in addressing the real challenges of a new principal.

The researcher chose principals belonging to Generation Y not only to control for age, but also to determine if this group of principals, challenged with leading schools in an era in which the nation's schools are being labeled as "failing," feel their principal preparation programs were organized in a manner that prepared them to adequately address the complexities of their jobs, and contribute to the healing of a broken educational system through school improvement. The researcher hoped to learn if these novice principals intend to remain in the profession long-term—given that committed and capable leaders are necessary for school improvement.

At the time the research was conducted, each study participant had five years or fewer of professional experience as a school leader, which meant they entered the leadership profession no earlier than 2007. The ten school leaders, (9 men and 1 woman), were employed in high schools (grades 9-12) in DuPage, Kane, Boone, Kendall, suburban Cook, Champaign, Ogle, and Peoria counties in Illinois. The researcher

attempted to control for socioeconomic status and community dynamics, selecting counties with similar demographics. The researcher attempted to select principals that had students with similar academic performance, as determined by the Prairie State Achievement Examination—which is a state assessment given to students in grade 11 that, “measures achievement of grade 11 students in reading, math, science, and writing” (Student Assessment, 2011). To locate principals that fit the participant profile, the researcher contacted high school districts in the Lake, suburban Cook, DuPage, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Kendall, Kane, McHenry, DeKalb, Boone, Livingston, Iriquois, Ford, LaSalle, Champaign, Ogle, Peoria, Winnebago, Stephenson, Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside, Madison, St. Clair, Lee, Bureau, Sangamon, Henry, and Rock Island areas via email. The researcher began by reading the principals’ profiles provided by school districts in order to find principals who were eligible to participate. Principals that met the requirements were invited to participate. The researcher conducted interviews with each of the school leaders to gain insight into the perceptions of novice school leaders pertaining to their principal preparation experiences, the program’s effectiveness, and the program’s influence on their ability to positively impact student achievement. The researcher asked participants open-ended questions that allowed each participant to speak on his or her experiences with principal preparation programs and in the principalship.

Interview data was triangulated with the literature and the course catalog offerings from each participant’s university principal preparation program. Additionally, the interview data was compared to the student achievement data from each participant’s school. When looking at student achievement data, the researcher sought to identify the



relationship between the participants' perception of their effectiveness in impacting student achievement in comparison to the actual student achievement data. The researcher hoped to learn from this information how closely the participants' perceptions of their impact on student achievement are linked to the actual achievement results. Additionally, the researcher compared the statements of the participants to the conceptual framework based on Levine's (2005b) proposal of an excellent principal preparation program to identify commonalities, and in the same turn, areas that lack cohesion between the experiences of the participant and Levine's description of a well-executed program. The researcher also looked for commonalities within the participants' responses to draw conclusions concerning the quality of principal preparation programs and the relevance of the programs' curriculum to the needs of practitioners. Finally, the researcher compared the participants' responses to the Generation Y profile to determine if the principals in the study reflected the general characteristics of Generation Y. The researcher connected participants' feedback to current practices in educational leadership programs, as well as to what scholars consider to be best practices in the field. The researcher's purpose in doing this was to:

1. Identify connections or disconnections between the teaching and learning in educational leadership programs and what practicing school leaders experience daily.
2. Offer alternatives to current practices in educational leadership programs.
3. Add to the current body of empirical research on the topic of school leader preparation.

4. Contribute to the discourse surrounding the education of school leaders.
5. Suggest improvements to school leadership preparation programs so that school leaders are better equipped to improve student achievement.

### **Conceptual Framework**

To provide context to the discussion about principal preparation program effectiveness, one must consider what an exemplary school leadership preparation program looks like. In his 2005 policy report, *Educating School Leaders*, Levine (2005b), current president of the *Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation*, offered a “. . . nine-point template for judging the quality of school leadership programs” (p. 12). This template was used as a framework for creating interview questions and analyzing responses from the participant interviews. The researcher used the nine-point template as the standard of an excellent principal preparation program as the participants assess their own programs’ effectiveness. The nine-point template entails:

1. Purpose.  
The program’s purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school leaders. Goals reflect the needs of today’s leaders, schools, and children. The definition of success is tied to student learning in the schools administered by the graduates of the program.
2. Curricular coherence.  
The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals. The curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by leaders at specific types of schools and at various stages of their careers.
3. Curricular balance.  
The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration, balancing study in university classrooms and work in schools with successful practitioners.

4. Faculty composition.  
The faculty includes academics and practitioners—ideally, the same individuals who are expert in school leadership, up-to-date in their field, intellectually productive, and firmly rooted in both the academy and the schools. Taken as a whole, the faculty’s size and fields of expertise are aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment.
5. Admissions.  
Admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders.
6. Degrees.  
Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.
7. Research.  
Program research is of the highest quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers.
8. Finances.  
Resources are adequate to support the program.
9. Assessment.  
The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance. (Levine, 2005b, pp. 12-13)

Levine (2005b) provides a description of what he considers to be, “a promising model” (p. 53). Having no luck in finding an exemplary program—one that substantially met all nine criteria in the United States—Levine recommends that “England’s National College for School Leadership (NCSL), be looked to as an example of good practice and what educational administration programs might seek to emulate” (p. 54). NCSL generally satisfies criterion in each of the nine areas except one—degrees—because NCSL does not award degrees. The college seeks partnerships with universities so that their students can earn degrees and credits for their NCSL work. The researcher used elements of this promising model in the interview protocol. In analyzing the responses

from the participants, the researcher looked for evidence that the quality of the participants' principal preparation experiences mirrors that of what Levine defines as a promising model. This evidence may suggest whether or not the recently revised approaches to leadership preparation are benefitting new leaders.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this study sought to gather rich data on the experiences and perceptions of novice school leaders pertaining to their educational leadership preparation programs, there were limitations.

The first limitation stemmed from the fact that the researcher attempted to include 10 school leaders from a small pool of Illinois counties: Lake, suburban Cook, DuPage, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Kendall, Kane, McHenry, DeKalb, Boone, Livingston, Iriquois, Ford, LaSalle, Champaign, Ogle, Peoria, Winnebago, Stephenson, Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside, Madison, St. Clair, Lee, Bureau, Sangamon, Henry, and Rock Island. This proved to be difficult based on the size of the districts in the state of Illinois and the number of schools per district. The researcher did not include District 299 in the study, which is in the City of Chicago, due to the difficulty of getting timely approval to conduct research. This exclusion significantly limited the amount of available novice principals.

Secondly, because the sample size was limited to 10 school leaders, born between the years 1975-1985, and the location of the principals was restricted (Lake, suburban Cook, DuPage, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Kendall, Kane, McHenry, DeKalb, Boone, Livingston, Iriquois, Ford, LaSalle, Champaign, Ogle, Peoria, Winnebago, Stephenson,

Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside, Madison, St. Clair, Lee, Bureau, Sangamon, Henry, and Rock Island), these variables inevitably limited the amount of available novice principals.

A third limitation involved the researcher herself who was in fact a novice school principal (prior to conducting the research), belonging to Generation Y, and was completing an educational leadership program. The fact that the researcher met the qualifications of the sample group, and shared experiences with the sample group, which resulted in an increased amount of biases experienced by the researcher. The researcher attempted to eliminate all biases from the research by keeping an anonymous journal labeled as, “Dancing with My Dissertation.” Reflections, thoughts, and biases were notated throughout the research process.

The last limitation involved the duration of this study. This was a short-term study so it eliminated long-term observation from the research design due to the limited time to collect data.

Despite these limitations, this study was meaningful and the researcher hopes that the insight provided from the novice school leaders will contribute to the body of knowledge that currently exists on the topic of school leadership preparation.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Baby Boomers* - Individuals born between the years of 1946–1964.

*Democratic School Community/Democratic Leadership Approach/Bottom-Up Approach* - A leadership design in which decisions are made collaboratively by a group of individuals at various levels on a hierarchal structure within an organization; a grassroots approach to decision-making.

*Generation X* - Individuals born between 1965-1975.

*Generation Y* - Individuals born between the years of 1975-1985.

*Illinois Interactive School Report Card* - A premier web site for test results and other school improvement information for Illinois schools such as educator statistics, demographic information, and financial information.

*Illinois School Leader Task Force* - An organization created by the General Assembly through HJR66 and SJR56, to develop an implementation plan to guide statewide initiatives in increasing the quality and effectiveness of school leader preparation.

*Prairie State Achievement Examination* - An Illinois state assessment given to students in grade 11 that measures achievement of grade 11 students in reading, math, science, and writing.

*Race to the Top* - A 4.35 billion dollar United States Department of Education contest to spur innovations and reforms in the state and local district k-12 education.

*The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* - A United States Act of Congress originally proposed by the administration of President George W. Bush, which focuses on improving student outcomes through standards-based education reform. The Act requires states to assess students on basic skills at certain grade levels.

*Top-Down Approach* - A leadership design in which decisions are made by an executive decision maker or other person of authority within an organization, and then disseminated down throughout the hierarchy and carried out by subordinates.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Glesne (2006) defines the literature review in the following way, “A literature review is not a summary of various studies, but rather an integration of reviewed sources around particular trends and themes” (p. 26). Glesne offers the researcher the following guidelines to consider when developing a sound review of literature:

1. First, collect, scan, and read literature to verify that the chosen topic is a justifiable topic...
2. Second, use the literature to help find focus for the topic...
3. Third, the literature can help to inform the research design and interview questions...
4. Fourth, in qualitative inquiry reviewing the literature is an ongoing process that cannot be completed before data collection and analysis, and reviewing literature should be regarded in interactive terms. . . .
5. Fifth, in conducting literature searches, cast a wide net, being careful not to confine oneself too narrowly, but balancing, as not to widen the applicable literature beyond what is necessary. (pp. 24-25)

In composing a review of literature, the researcher’s goal should be to understand and synthesize the existing body of literature on a given topic, and then posit his or her study within this review, thereby continuing the field of study.

This chapter summarizes literature germane to the topics of:

1. The state of school leadership preparation resulting in Arthur Levine’s 2005 report.
2. The state of school leadership preparation in the state of Illinois.

3. The demands of the principalship in today's schools, specifically, the high school principal.
4. The characteristics of Generation Y.

The review of literature will provide insight into the existing body of knowledge around the primary research questions of this study, which are:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?
2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

### **The State of Leadership Preparation**

Levine's 2005 report, *Educating School Leaders*, painted a dreary picture of the state of school leadership preparation. This report was the first in a series of policy reports based on a four-year study of American schools.



This subject was selected for the initial report because the quality of leadership in our schools has seldom mattered more. Today, principals and superintendents have the job not only of managing our schools, but also of leading them through an era of profound social change that has required fundamental rethinking of what schools do and how they do it. This is an assignment few sitting school administrators have been prepared to undertake . . . Our nation faces the challenge of retooling current principals and superintendents while preparing a new generation of school leaders to take their places. (Levine, 2005b, p. 5)

Levine's report concluded with a nine-point template for measuring a principal-preparation program's quality. The template entitled, Levine's Descriptors of Excellence, includes:

1. **Purpose.**

The program's purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school leaders; the goals reflect the needs of today's leaders, schools, and children; and the definition of success is tied to student learning in the schools administered by the graduates of the program.

2. **Curricular coherence.**

The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals. The curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by leaders at specific types of schools and at the various stages of their careers.

3. **Curricular balance.**

The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration, balancing study in university classrooms and work in schools with successful practitioners.

4. **Faculty composition.**

The faculty includes academics and practitioners, ideally the same individuals, who are experts in school leadership, up to date in their field, intellectually productive, and firmly rooted in both the academy and the schools. Taken as a whole, the faculty's size and fields of expertise are aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment.

5. **Admissions.**

Admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders.

6. **Degrees.**  
Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.
7. **Research.**  
Research carried out in the program is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers.
8. **Finances.**  
Resources are adequate to support the program.
9. **Assessment.**  
The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance. (Levine, 2005b, pp. 12-13)

Prior to Levine's report, some states had already begun efforts to improve leadership preparation, such as the investments in school leadership preparation made by the state of North Carolina with its Principal Fellows Program, a program developed in 1993 to recruit, train, and certify aspiring principals, and then to place them in schools. According to Linda Darling-Hammond (2010), "This program has supplied the state with 800 highly trained principals, and half of all current candidates for the masters' in school administration" (p. 144). However, conversations about and efforts toward school leadership preparation reform dramatically increased after the release of Levine's report. Since 2005, a number of scholars of educational leadership, as well as practitioners, have vocalized the need to approach principal preparation differently as the capacity of the principal to effectively lead has a direct impact on school improvement and student achievement (Chaney, Davis, Garrett, & Holleran, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, LaPointe, & Orr, 2010a; Hess & Kelly, 2007; Marzano et al., 2005).

Scholars like Darling Hammond (2010) and Hess and Kelly (2005), discuss the urgent need for refinement of the approaches to principal preparation. They offer suggestions ranging from using models of other countries like Singapore—in which state and local agencies create leadership pipelines for expert teachers to receive leadership preparation—to federal funding opportunities to states, such as the Race to the Top initiative announced by President Obama and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, in support of recruiting talented leadership for high-needs communities. Other suggestions for reform approaches include redefining the role of the principal and the requirements for the credentialing process (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hess & Kelly, 2005).

In addition to the call for action on the part of the federal government in addressing the issue of principal preparation reform, many graduate schools of education have made significant changes to their approach of leadership preparation. The faculty at Western Carolina University, for example,

. . . might have been willing to continue the status quo, but they were moved by the stories and feedback of the program's students. Some students found themselves emulating poor leadership, consciously or unconsciously. The faculty saw three types of leadership problems: ethical failings in which leaders took harmful or illegal shortcuts to address needs or respond to accountability pressures; the tendency of leaders to try to 'sell' personal projects rather than to work collaboratively to address school problems; leaders' failure to see and address issues of social injustice. As such the faculty began to discuss how to prepare a generation of leaders skilled in these areas. (Buskey & Topolka-Jorissen, 2010, pp. 114-115)

In the fall of 2007, various faculty members in Western Carolina University's Graduate School of Education went through a process of redesigning its principal preparation program. They worked with four objectives in mind:

1. Improving the leadership capacity of the program's students to positively change schools.
2. Including current research on administration preparation programs in its model.
3. Addressing North Carolina's 21st Century Standards for School executives.
4. Complying with the terms of House Bill 536, which outlines standards for redesign. (Buskey & Topolka-Jorissen, 2010)

Other scholars have considered the role of graduate schools of education and the types of courses offered to prepare school leaders. In *Learning to Lead: What Gets Taught in Principal-Preparation Programs*, Hess and Kelly (2007), discuss the seven areas of principal responsibility and types of courses that students in principal preparation programs are exposed to in regards to these areas. Hess and Kelly state these areas are, “. . . managing for results, managing personnel, technical knowledge, external leadership, norms and values, managing classroom instruction, and leadership and school culture” (p. 4). These areas are significant in that principals are accountable in each of these domains; a principal's day-to-day interactions are centered on these domains. Depending on the challenges presented to a principal leading a particular school community, he or she may have to build, change, or sustain systems in each of these areas of leadership.

Without a doubt, principals will be expected to be instructional leaders, and will be held accountable for how well students perform on indicators of student achievement (in most cases, state standardized tests). A great deal of literature exists that outlines the expectations of the principal as an instructional leader and leader of professional development (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008; Kowalski, Lasley, & Mahoney, 2008; Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2003). Yet, the question remains of how deeply preparation programs actually impact the principal's ability to effect student achievement. Some

studies suggest very little (Hess & Kelly, 2005). Scholars interested in this aspect of principal preparation are focused on how well principal preparation programs impact the principal's capacity to improve student achievement outcomes. Young and Baker's (2011) study, *Do Principal Preparation Programs Influence Student Achievement Through the Building of Teacher-Team Qualifications by the Principal? An Exploratory Analysis*, suggests "a way principal preparation programs can more directly influence student achievement is by preparing principals to recruit, select, and retain well-qualified teachers to increase the overall qualifications of the team of teachers on campus" (p. 205). The study also suggests that "principals prepared by programs housed at research and doctoral institutions are more effective than principals prepared by programs housed at regional institutions in improving the overall qualifications of the team of teachers on a campus" (p. 206).

A criticism of principal preparation programs is that the programs are not in touch with the realities and challenges that practicing principals must face each day. Therefore, the programs are not adequately preparing principals. A number of scholars support the notion that the best approach to principal preparation lies in intense collaboration between higher education institutions and pre-K-12 school districts. A number of programs, initiatives, and partnerships attempt to bridge the gap between university principal preparation programs and the daily responsibilities of the school principal. These partnerships also seek to improve the ability of the principals to actualize these daily responsibilities through increased support from district employees as well as university professors (Browne-Ferrigno & Barber, 2010; *Principal Preparation Programs*

at the University of Denver, 2011; The Highly Qualified Leaders Project, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2006; The Wallace Foundation, 2011). Browne-Ferrigno and Barber (2010) state that such collaborations are essential to “assure that new principals have requisite knowledge, skills, and proficiencies for leading contemporary schools” (p. 1). Browne-Ferrigno and Barber express that such partnerships are beneficial in that through the shared commitment across institutional boundaries, the theory-practice integration of school leadership is strengthened, the quality and relevance of program content is enhanced, the support for a leadership pipeline is reinforced, and the collaboration between professors and practitioners intensified.

Finally, in *Preparing School Leaders for a Changing World: Lessons from Exemplary Leadership Development Programs*, a study conducted by the Stanford Educational Leadership Institute, commissioned by the Wallace Foundation, researchers studied seven institutions’ approaches to principal preparation. The report’s key findings point out that exemplary programs share common traits in that the principals they produce are effective and engage in similar types of preservice and in-service development. Exemplary program designs intentionally address state and district policies, and they successfully utilize partnerships from various institutions in support of their work (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010b, pp. 179-192).

### **The Rainwater Leadership Alliance Continuum of Principal Preparation**

Similarly, the Rainwater Leadership Alliance (RLA) sponsored by the Rainwater Charitable Foundation released a report entitled *A New Approach to Principal Preparation*, outlining the components of successful and innovative principal preparation

programs. The RLA, founded in 2008, is a partnership comprised of school districts, universities, foundations, and nonprofits with the mission of further proclaiming the importance of quality school leadership, providing models of quality school leadership preparation, and linking the role of the school leader to improvements in student achievement outcomes. The Foundation's benefactor, Richard Rainwater, charged the Foundation to "explore the most ground-breaking leadership training and preparation programs in the country and to learn from them in order to better invest in principal training and development to meet the needs of our nation's toughest and neediest schools" (Chaney et al., 2010, p. 5).

Based on the practices of its member organizations, the RLA proposed a Continuum of Principal Preparation. The RLA points out that:

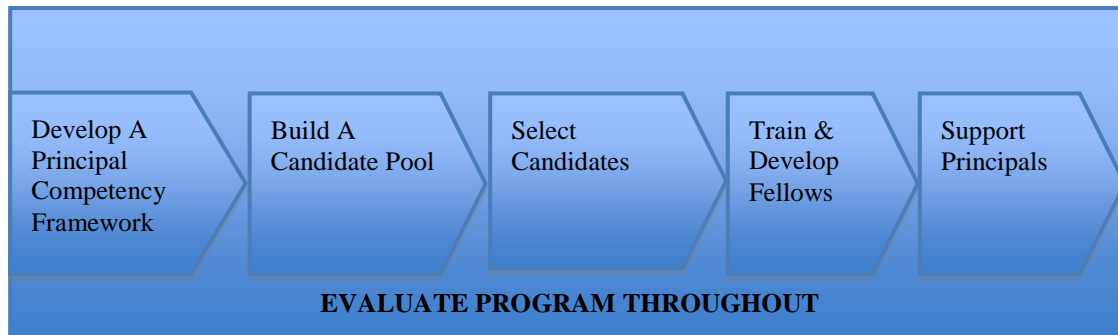
What makes these school leader preparation programs unique is that they are committed to tracking data on their graduates and continually improving their models to ensure that every graduate is driving dramatic student achievement in schools, especially in low-income communities. (Chaney et al., 2010, p. 7)

As depicted in Figure 1, the Continuum expresses the necessary components for a quality principal preparation program, as identified by the RLA. Described next are the various components of the principal preparation process, according to the RLA.

### **Develop a Principal Competency Framework**

The Principal Competency Framework are the guiding goals and structure that link all of the elements of the principal preparation programs—providing a sense of cohesion throughout the entire process from recruitment to supporting principals in practice. Instead of focusing on the skills that an aspiring school leader might need to

enter a preparation program, the Competency Framework concentrates on the standards necessary for a principal entering a school. Although each member organization within the RLA tailors the Competency Framework to its own organizational culture, there are concepts that are constant from group to group, such as: belief and high expectations, resiliency, adult leadership, instructional leadership, self-awareness, openness to learning, and the ability to use data to drive instructional improvement. Participating members expect principals to master each competency. As an attempt to ensure that fellows master competencies, they recruit for candidates with strengths in competency areas and build competency development into the program. Additionally, the RLA uses the Competency Framework as both an evaluative tool for fellows and as a program evaluation tool (Chaney et al., 2010).



From: Chaney et al., 2010, p. 13.

*Figure 1.* Continuum of Principal Preparation

### **Build a Candidate Pool**

The RLA strategically recruits candidates by articulating the mission, vision, culture, and expectations of the preparation program early on. The hope is that candidates will self-select into the program, coming in with a clear understanding of the level of



intensity and dedication required. Additionally, the RLA seeks to recruit candidates that have the ability to lead adults and remain resilient in the face of obstacles and challenges.

The RLA's recruiting strategy has multiple steps including:

1. Projecting needs.
2. Preparing recruiters to promote the program.
3. Establishing an identity.
4. Attracting and identifying candidates.
5. Determining those with highest potential.
6. Cultivating and converting high-potential candidates into applicants.

The RLA deliberately recruits amongst a variety of professional pools to reach a diverse, qualified group of candidates. Candidates are recruited from multiple sources. For example, from within districts or Charter Management Organizations, from teacher leader networks, from professionals who are not presently in education, and from underrepresented groups (which is an effort to recruit more candidates of color). RLA members purposefully collect, analyze, and use data in an effort to improve the recruitment strategy over time (Chaney et al., 2010).

### **Select Candidates**

The RLA seeks to go beyond the typical candidate selection process of reviewing past experiences and educational credentials. The member groups deem this method insufficient and instead attempt to assess whether or not candidates have what it takes to succeed as a school principal by involving them in a multistep process that allows candidates to express their knowledge and skills, and demonstrate their capacity to

effectively lead through experiential events. The experiential activities allow the selection committee to see a complete picture of the candidate and determine whether or not he or she is ready for the program and the principalship. The selection criteria are based on the Principal Competency Framework. Each candidate must demonstrate the following four characteristics:

1. The belief that every child can achieve at a high level, even if they enter school significantly behind grade level.
2. Urgency and insistent focus on getting results quickly.
3. Results orientation for achieving goals and outcomes for students.
4. Resiliency to recover from setbacks and to keep moving forward.

In addition to the experiential events, the RLA selection processes also include application screens and written essays, interviews, and thorough reference checks before an offer to join a program is presented to a candidate (Chaney et al., 2010).

### **Train and Develop Fellows**

The RLA believes that school leader training should be experiential. Each school leader in training or leadership fellow develops an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that takes into account the fellow's strengths and weaknesses. The ILP's are developed at the beginning of the program, based on the Competency Framework and data collected through the recruitment process about each fellow's strengths and weaknesses.

Throughout the training, fellows are provided with a coach that provides regular, constructive, and critical feedback. This method allows fellows to demonstrate growth in the skill sets necessary to be a successful principal. The courses offered in the RLA

programs are individualized for the fellows based on the ILP's. Following the coursework (which varies in delivery from program to program), the fellows in the RLA programs participate in a residency period where they are placed in schools and gain real school leadership experiences alongside a mentor—usually a practicing school leader. Throughout the training process, RLA members intentionally plan cohort support and foster a culture of continuous improvement (Chaney et al., 2010).

### **Support Principals**

The final step in the RLA Continuum of Principal Preparation is to support principals. Once fellows complete the RLA programs, the programs support them in finding job placements in schools that best fit their strengths. They also provide ongoing coaching and professional development to principals to help them grow on the job. The RLA also provides school-wide professional development and school evaluations in the fellows' schools in order to contribute to overall school improvement. Because school leaders do not always have autonomy in decision-making, the RLA also seeks to impact reform at the school district or Charter Management Organization levels.

Therefore, the RLA member organizations' Continuum of Principal Preparation has attempted to build a coalition where the best candidates are selected for principal training through a highly rigorous and intentional process, trained by real-world school experience, coached by practitioners, and supported throughout the principalship. The RLA's approach seeks to create a systemic approach to address the criticisms of school leadership preparation proposed by Levine in his 2005 report.

In summary, the federal government, states, graduate schools of education, local

school districts, nonprofit organizations, and foundations are employing a number of strategies to improve principal preparation. Institutions seem to share consensus around the belief that the school leader has an immense impact on student achievement outcomes, and that the preparation of principals must be intentionally designed to fashion new principals in a way that they may meet their demanding new roles with the assurance that they can lead and that they can achieve results. The educational leadership programs must sufficiently prepare new principals, and districts must design meaningful in-service programs.

### **Principal Preparation in the State of Illinois**

Given that the participants for this study were Illinois high school principals, it is important to consider how the state has approached principal preparation since the release of Levine's 2005 report. Prior to its release, the state had already begun measures to improve principal preparation due to mounting concerns that higher education programs that prepared school leaders needed to be reevaluated and improved. In 2001, the Illinois' State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) was created with a grant from the Wallace Foundation and support from the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO). In 2002, the University of Illinois-Chicago received a grant of \$100,000 to propose a new leadership program to the Illinois State Board of Education. And in 2003, the Office of Principal Preparation and Development was created in Chicago Public Schools (Brown & White, 2010).

The Illinois School Leader Task Force was created by the General Assembly to develop an implementation plan to guide statewide initiatives in increasing the quality

and effectiveness of school leadership programs. From October 2007 to January 2008, Task Force members examined Illinois data from various resources, such as research on the impact of school leadership on student learning and the state of leadership preparation, and federal, state, and district policies on shaping leadership preparation (Illinois School Leader Task Force, Report to the General Assembly, 2008). In 2008, the Taskforce presented a report to the Illinois General Assembly listing three recommendations and a number of action steps and implementation considerations. The three recommendations were:

1. State policies must set high standards for school leader certification that align principal preparation, early career mentoring, ongoing professional development, and master principal recognition with those standards so that by 2013, all new principal preparation is taking place through programs approved under these new standards.
2. Formal partnerships must be established between school districts and principal preparation programs affiliated with state-accredited institutions to support principal preparation and development.
3. Refocused principal preparation programs must demonstrate that they develop and rigorously assess in aspiring principals the capacities that are most likely to improve student learning in pre-K–12 schools. These capacities should (a) form the heart of the new Illinois School Leadership Standards previously recommended, and (b) reflect the vision of school leadership identified in the Illinois Distinguished Principal Program (Illinois School Leader Taskforce, Report to the Illinois General Assembly, 2008).

### **Mentoring New Principals in Illinois**

Above that, per Public Act 94-1039, Illinois instituted the mandatory New Principal Mentoring Program in order for new principals to be coached by experienced principals and benefit from their expertise. The mentors must have at least three years' experience as a principal in an Illinois school, and must spend no less than 50 hours with

mentees. A number of resources are made available to new principals and mentors online. However, as of budget cuts in 2012, the program is no longer mandatory. School districts have the option to continue offering mentors to new principals in lieu of the state program (Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program, 2007-2008; Principal Mentoring Program, 2011). The New Principal Mentoring Program is comprehensive and seeks to achieve three goals:

1. The leadership mentor will provide direct mentoring support to new principals by encouraging and advocating a high level of performance to achieve targeted and observable progress towards becoming an effective instructional leader.
2. The mentor and new principal will connect leadership development efforts to the improvement needs of the school, resulting in a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
3. The relationship between the mentor and new principal will be an integral component for assessing the complex learning needs of the new principal. The mentor will use multiple mentoring strategies to provide targeted, appropriate, and timely learning and development opportunities to the new principals. (Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program 2007-2008)

Effective May, 21, 2010, mentors of new Illinois principals are trained according to the following guidelines, “The training program shall address areas of expertise including but not limited to:

1. the Illinois Professional School Leader Standards;
2. ethics;
3. principles of adult learning;
4. establishing a mentoring relationship; and
5. mentoring skills and techniques. (IL Administrative Code, Subtitle A, Subchapter B, Section 35.50)

On June 1, 2010, Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed the *Principal Preparation Act*, which was crafted to create higher standards for principal training and certification in Illinois. The act:

1. Requires the elimination of the Type 75 (Illinois' general endorsement for administrators), and the creation of a new and separate endorsement for principals—with an increased emphasis on quality preparation for instructional leaders.
2. Calls for colleges and universities to redesign their programs, improving the preparation process from the recruitment of candidates to the quality of coursework.
3. Requires colleges and universities to prepare principals for instructional leadership rather than building management.
4. Encourages alternative pathways to principal endorsement that must be approved by Illinois State Board of Education and meet the same rigorous requirements as colleges and universities. No candidates will be admitted to approved general administrative programs after September 1, 2012. After June 30, 2014, approved programs may no longer entitle principals with a general endorsement.
5. Allows for acting principals that already have the Type 75 certification to be able to obtain the new endorsement in a given amount of time if they so choose (Illinois Principal Preparation, 2010).

The state's timeline for implementation of the principal preparation redesign began in Fall 2009. As of October 21, 2011, the "General Administrative certificates with a General Administrative endorsement are available only until August 31, 2014.

Effective February 1, 2012, all professional education and content-area coursework required for the issuance of a certificate, endorsement or approval must have been passed with a grade of no lower than "C" or the equivalent" (Educator Certification, ISBE, 2011). The state is also considering changes to the certification test for school leaders

and other educators based on recommendations from the Illinois School Leader Task Force. Currently, “this exam, to be designed and available before July 2013 may incorporate elements of performance-based and portfolio assessments such as are currently in use in Chicago Public Schools, the Illinois Master Principal assessments and some existing state certification systems” (Principal Preparation Certification Exam, [illinoisschoolleader.org](http://illinoisschoolleader.org)). The state is currently considering models from other states and the School Leader Licensure Assessment, which is currently offered in 16 states.

Principal preparation programs must meet the requirements of a rigorous process as a result of the new legislation. University representatives must provide evidence that their program meets the requirements according to the rubric presented at the Illinois Principal Preparation Summit in June 2011. The rubric addresses general program requirements, internship requirements, guidelines for assessment of the internship, coursework requirements, and staffing requirements. The rubric also ensures that preparation programs’ redesign efforts are thoughtful and that the outcome is a high quality program that is aligned with the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC Standards, 2008; IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011).

One approach to principal preparation used in Illinois is the District-University Partnership. An example of this type of preparation program would be the relationship between Springfield School District 186 and Illinois State University. Students in the program are grouped into cohorts and span six semesters with “embedded professional practice” throughout and weekly evening classes in the district that are supported by



online learning activities (Browne-Ferrigno & Barber, 2010, p. 10). According to

Browne-Ferrigno and Barber:

The program aligns with the regular Illinois State University program with three exceptions (a) Some courses are taught by District 186 personnel, (b) candidates must complete a capstone course developed and assessed by district personnel, and (c) professional practice is integrated throughout the program through a practicum each semester. (p. 10)

This program was originally funded by grants and continued even after funding expired. Ideally, the program creates a strong applicant pool for District 186, provided there are positions available in the small district.

### **Standards for the Illinois Principal Preparation Program**

The State of Illinois is now using the framework developed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), entitled *The 13 Critical Success Factors for Effective Principals* (CSF), as a basis for the redesign of its principal preparation programs. The CSF was designed as a result of studying the practices of principals that achieved significant gains in student achievement at schools that serve high-risk populations. One of SREB's goals is to promote learning-centered leaders. As part of the principal preparation redesign initiative, Illinois created an outline of the internship phase of preparation, using both the CSF and the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards as guiding documents. Like the RLA experiential model, the Illinois internship phase provides for varied activities that will allow principal candidates to gain hands-on experiences and deepen their capacity to impact student achievement. The evidence-based systems allows for increased accountability and data collection (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011).

The 13 Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are:

1. The school leader is able to create a focused mission to improve student achievement and a vision of the elements of school, curriculum and instructional practices that make higher achievement possible.
2. The school leader is able to set high expectations for all students to learn high-level content.
3. The school leader is able to recognize and encourage implementation of good instructional practices that motivate and increase student achievement.
4. The school leader is able to create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult.
5. The school leader is able to use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement.
6. The school leader is able to keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement.
7. The school leader is able to make parents partners in their student's education and create a structure for parent educator collaboration.
8. The school leader is able to understand the change process and has the leadership and facilitations skills to manage it effectively.
9. The school leader is able to understand how adults learn and knows how to advance meaningful change through quality sustained professional development that benefits students.
10. The school leader is able to organize and use time in innovative ways to meet the goals and objectives of school improvement.
11. The school leader is able to acquire and use resources wisely.
12. The school leader is able to obtain support from the central office and from community and parent leaders for their school improvement agenda.
13. The school leader is able to continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices. (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011)

According to the new Illinois Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, the expectation is for Illinois principals to develop and demonstrate the CSFs as explained by SREB through participation in a rigorous preparation process. The preparation process must now include partnerships between universities and districts, meeting the ISLLC standards, courses that address student learning and school improvement, participation in the internship program, and mentorship. There are

activities associated with each CSF, and principals are required to complete these activities as evidence that they have mastered the CSF. In order for preparation programs to be approved, they must provide evidence that demonstrates that they have structured their programs in a manner in which sufficient time is devoted to each of the components. Furthermore, Illinois Principal Preparation Programs are reviewed according to a Scoring Guide that provides useful feedback to preparation programs in order to help them achieve the goal of producing high quality school leaders. The scoring guide assesses the general program requirements, internship requirements, internship, coursework requirements, staffing requirements, and candidate selection requirements. The scoring guide addresses specific expectations of each area of the principal preparation program, and program evaluators determine whether or not the programs adequately provided evidence of the component. The scoring guide allows for a narrative explanation of the score as well.

In short, Illinois has joined other states in the effort to reform school leader preparation. Districts must now partner with universities and are encouraged to develop and support internal leadership preparation and continued development. Illinois is aggressively reshaping its approach to principal preparation and continued professional development.

### **The Demands of the Principalship in Today's Schools**

The responsibilities of the principal are countless; and no comprehensive list of every single situation a principal might encounter in a given day or a list of each specific duty the principal may perform each day exists. The beauty and challenges of the principalship is not unlike the classroom—every day is a new adventure. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) describe leadership as “providing a language for elusive but central qualities like harmony, resolution, timing, improvisation, creativity, and inspiration” (p. 4). However, when considering how effective principals approach school leadership and management, a number of common practices, roles, and duties emerge. In the, *Handbook of School Improvement: How High-Performing Principals Create High-Performing Schools*, Blase, Blasé, and Phillips (2010) refer to a quote from Warren Bennis: “Leaders are people who do the right thing; managers are people who do things right. Both roles are crucial but they differ profoundly. I often observe people in top positions doing the wrong things well” (p. xxix). The authors go on to discuss the dual sides of a principal’s responsibilities: those dealing with leadership and management (such as instructional leadership, culture, and professional development), and those dealing with compliance. Kowalski et al. (2008) discuss the principal’s need to be a skilled problem solver as he or she will be faced with a number of situations each day ranging from day-to-day problems that arise, to problems of school improvement and student achievement that require a deeper investigation, data collection and analysis, and perhaps even some risk-taking.

### **Instructional Leadership Responsibilities**

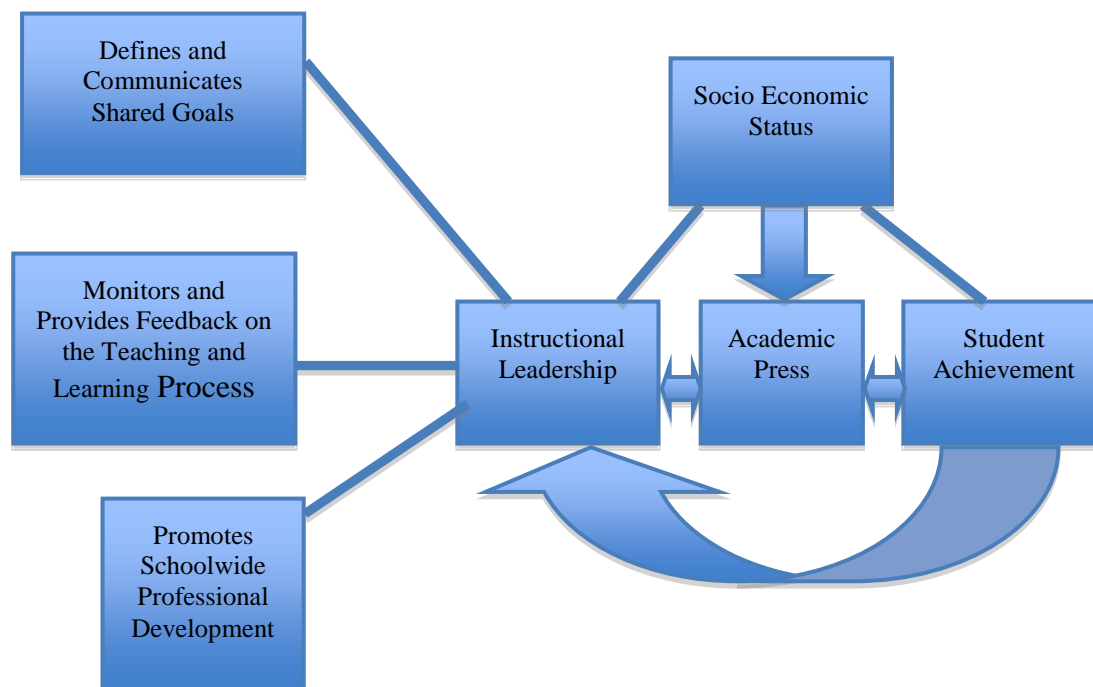
More and more, principals are referred to as the instructional leaders responsible for creating and sustaining professional learning communities, and carrying the weight of student learning on their shoulders. In *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, instructional leadership is defined as, “the degree to which teachers viewed their principal as setting high standards and exercising leadership for instructional reform” (Bryk, Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Luppescu, & Easton, 2010, p. 82). Beyond this definition, instructional leadership is also defined as having knowledge about curriculum development, teaching and instruction, clinical supervision, staff development, teacher evaluation, and collaboration leading to improved student achievement (DiPaola & Hoy, 2008).

### **Hiring Practices**

Scholars offer a number of responsibilities in the category of instructional leadership. Many scholars emphasize the need for principals to be people focused rather than program focused. They argue that in order for a principal to experience success and successfully reach academic outcomes, he or she must make wise hiring decisions, build a team of teachers and other individuals capable of getting the job done, and support those individuals through professional development. As instructional leaders, principals are people focused in their articulation of high academic expectations, classroom visits, and other areas closely associated with instruction (Bryk et al., 2010; Papa, Frank, Hamilton Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2003; Whitaker, 2003).

Whitaker (2003) and Hebert (2006) note that principals should hire for talent and

leadership potential, and should intentionally create cultures where teachers are continuously learning. Hebert advises principals to hire as if their professional lives depended on it. In Figure 2, DiPaola and Hoy (2008) present the synthesized model of instructional leadership.



From: DiPaola & Hoy, 2008, p. 5.

*Figure 2.* The Synthesized Model of Instructional Leadership

DiPaola and Hoy's (2008) model factors in the multiple roles of the principal as instructional leader, while also identifying the impact of an external factor—the socioeconomic status of the students. They also recognize that the level of intensity in the focus on academics also impacts student achievement, which is ultimately tied back to the principal.

## **Professional Development Programs**

Beyond hiring a team of qualified and capable faculty, an essential role of the principal as instructional leader is to provide a solid professional development program for teachers and staff. Scholars suggest that a principal must be skilled in developing a professional learning community in which there is a shared mission, vision, and value system. Teachers and staff are more likely to thrive in a collaborative culture that employs a team-based problem solving approach. Strong professional communities are those in which faculty and staff members stay abreast of current research, develop comfort in data analysis and data-driven decision making, and are involved in the decision making process (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Green, 2001; Sergiovanni, 1992; Zapeda, 2007).

## **Supervision and Evaluation**

Additionally, under the umbrella of instructional leadership, principals are responsible for the supervision and evaluation of faculty and staff. A number of scholars support the push for alignment between professional development, student outcomes, and teacher evaluations (Merserth, 2009; Sims, 2008; Vitali, 2005).

Asestine, Faryniarz and Rigazio-DiGilio (2006) suggest a:

. . . collaborative effort between a teacher and supervisor to align the teacher's annual development plan with explicit student learning needs: choosing an area of 'essential learning,' analyzing related performance data, indentifying a specific learning need within that area, and pursuing the professional development necessary to address that need more effectively . . . this model consistently focuses on student learning and building teacher capacity to address student learning needs. (pp. 9-10)

This approach directly links the principal's support of teachers through the

observation and supervision process to student achievement.

### **Shaping School Culture**

Principals are responsible for shaping school culture. School culture includes encouraging behavioral norms for the school community that contribute to student success, including high standards for behavioral and academic norms for students, as well as professional norms for adults. *Shaping School Culture* (2002) and *Leadership for Equity and Excellence* (2003) describe the principal's role as:

1. Creating cultures that value equity and high expectations through communicating a clear purpose through dialogue, action, and symbolic gestures.
2. Building consensus by taking stock, making tough decisions, identifying advocates, sharing authority, supporting staff members, eliminating distractions, and providing time to collaborate.
3. Having time to improve. (Picucci, Brownson, Kahlert, & Sobel, 2002; Scheurich & Skrla, 2003)

Conners (2000) states that when a group of teachers were asked what makes them successful, they readily responded that they:

. . . had an administrator who encouraged and supported them, trusted their professionalism, and made them feel like a significant member of a very important team. . . . A leader who creates a culture of nurturing and identifying talents (ultimately capitalizing on those unique talents) is one who 'feeds' teachers on a continual basis. (p. 21)

### **Human Resource Management**

In the quest for school improvement, principals must be knowledgeable in the area of human resources. They have to be willing to address various kinds of human resource issues and perform conflict resolution as needed. Principals are also responsible



for having difficult conversations with staff and students, and making difficult decisions based on the outcomes of these conversations. Furthermore, the principal must be aware of the legal implications of his or her actions (being knowledgeable about just cause and due processes), and making the appropriate decisions regarding the discipline of staff and students (Zapeda, 2003).

### **Resiliency in the Principalship**

With so many responsibilities entrusted to one role, the ideas of equilibrium and stability become very important. Some scholars discuss the need for balanced leadership—which is the idea that the principal is able to manage the demands of the various roles of the principalship, to judge when a given action is necessary, and to carry out those actions appropriately. Balanced leadership also refers to the principal’s ability to see the big picture and remain focused on the goals in the midst of the sometimes hectic nature of a school day (Hebert, 2006; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

Perhaps most importantly, James Blaydes (2002) describes three other areas that principals must master, which he termed as “the new 3Rs.” Blaydes’ three Rs include:

1. Resiliency.
2. Renewal.
3. Reflection.

Resiliency is necessary for the principals to lead with a clear vision despite adversity. Blaydes (2002) asserts that a principal’s resiliency is supported by having a life outside of work, and developing relationships with a network of other principals in order to avoid working in isolation. Blaydes argues that principals must find ways of renewing

their spirits, energy, and passion for the principalship. In other words, they have to take care of themselves if they are to take care of others. Finally, a principal must reflect—finding time for contemplation and meditation. Reflection offers the principal the opportunity to more deeply process decisions, and possibly gain more perspective concerning circumstances in the workplace (Blaydes, 2002).

Jerry L. Patterson and Paul Kelleher (2005) discuss resiliency as a person's ability to emerge from adversity stronger than ever, however, they also define resiliency as a three dimensional framework including, "the interpretation of current adversity and future possibility, the resilience capacity to tackle adversity, and the actions needed to become more resilient" (Patterson & Kelleher, 2005, p. 3). Along with developing their framework, Patterson and Kelleher combined advice and stories from 25 educational leaders to describe the Six Strengths of Resilient Leaders:

1. Resilient Leaders Accurately Assess Past and Current Reality.
  - a. They expect the world to be filled with disruptions.
  - b. They develop a high tolerance for ambiguity, paradox, and complexity.
  - c. They determine root causes and risks posed by adversity.
  - d. They understand reality from multiple perspectives.
2. Resilient Leaders Are Positive About Future Possibilities.
  - a. They focus on opportunities, not obstacles.
  - b. They expect that good things can happen despite adversity.
  - c. They exert positive influence to create positive outcomes.
  - d. They maintain a positive perspective for the long-term outcome.
3. Resilient Leaders Remain True to Personal Values.
  - a. They are clear about what matters most in the hierarchy of values.
  - b. They stay focused on being value-driven, not event-driven.
  - c. They solicit feedback to align values and actions.
  - d. They model for others personal core values.

4. Resilient Leaders Maintain a Strong Sense of Personal Efficacy.
  - a. They recover quickly from setbacks.
  - b. They achieve and celebrate small wins.
  - c. They maintain confidence in personal competence.
  - d. They sustain a base of caring and support.
  
5. Resilient Leaders Invest Personal Energy Wisely.
  - a. They renew physical energy through periodic recovery time.
  - b. They develop emotional empathy and self-awareness.
  - c. They maintain clear mental focus and steady concentration in the face of adversity.
  - d. They invest in spiritual-driven purposes and causes beyond themselves.
  
6. Resilient Leaders Act on the Courage of Personal Convictions.
  - a. They are clear about and act on what matters most even when risks are high.
  - b. They act decisively when deepest values are at stake.
  - c. They remain courageous in the face of strong opposition.
  - d. They acknowledge and learn from mistakes by modifying actions to align with values. (p. 147).

In summary, the multifaceted demanding role of the principal is no light undertaking. Any individual that chooses to enter the profession of school leadership must do so understanding that a huge responsibility will be placed upon his or her shoulders. Perhaps the most important responsibility of all is ensuring that students have an educational experience that is nothing less than excellent—specifically one that prepares them to meet and exceed academic performance standards. However, do Generation Y principals want this responsibility, and if so, why?

### **Generation Y Characteristics**

Given the current state of leadership preparation and the challenging role of the principal, one might question how the new generation of principals perceives both the daunting tasks of leadership and the preparation they received to approach leadership.

This study specifically focused on principals belonging to Generation Y (individuals born between 1975 and 1985). In many ways, Generation Y is distinguishable from previous generations by the immediate accessibility to technology, which immediately connects these individuals with the world around them. Individuals born during this timeframe are born into a world of immediate feedback and quick results. They've been problem solving since childhood in the form of gaming systems and virtual challenges with their peers across the globe. Linda Gravett and Robin Throckmorton (2007) characterize Generation Yers as being born in the fast lane—with dual-income parents, divorces, and daycare, who grew up with very different parenting styles and styles of discipline, and are generally unafraid to voice their opinions on many topics. Many demonstrate extreme confidence and self-esteem, an entrepreneurial spirit, and comfort with technology of all sorts (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Martin & Tulgan, 2001).

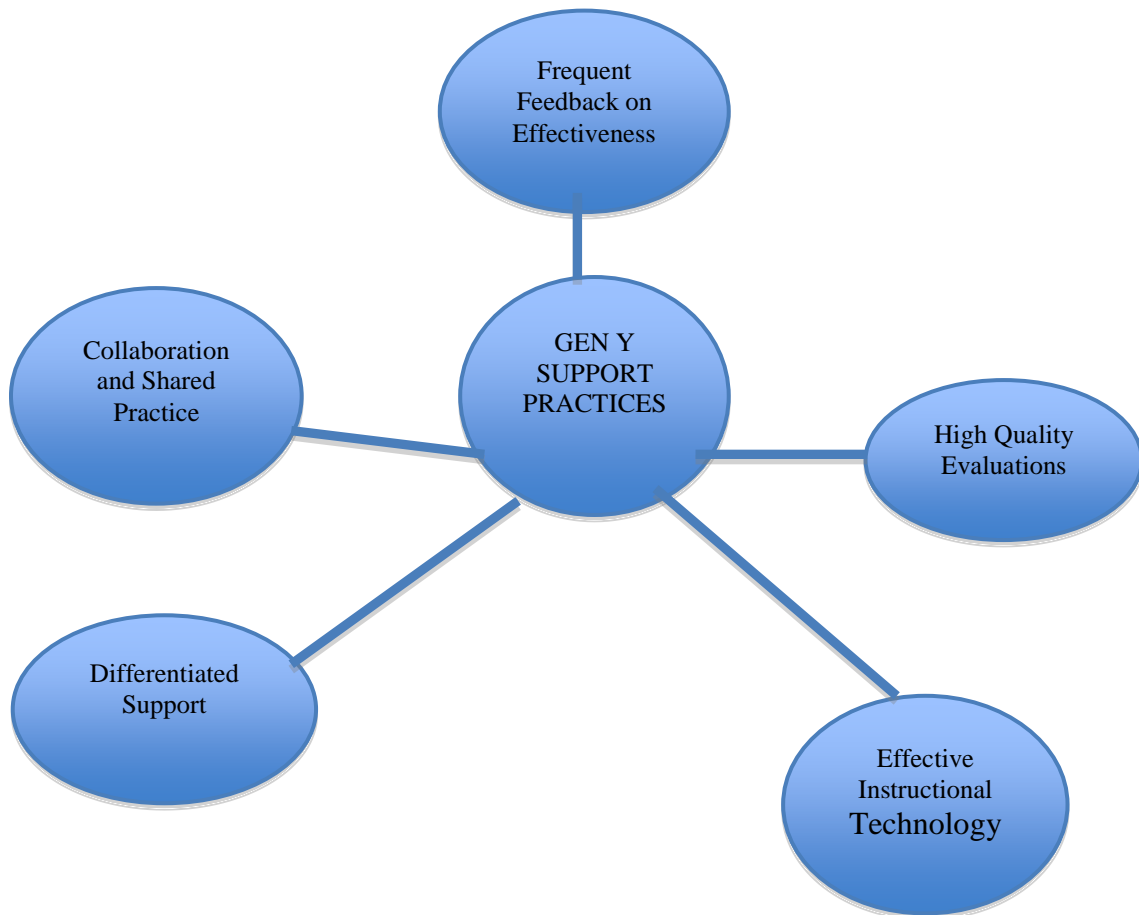
It's no surprise that a generation of individuals born with technology at their fingertips desires instant gratification in most areas of life. Even in the workplace, Generation Yers expect speedy results. In terms of the professional characteristics of Generation Y, individuals belonging to this generation have been described in the following way:

The frustrations of Generation Y are also clear, as they want to live now rather than live when they retire. Generation Y values their free time, energy, and health during long hours at the office and they insist that work be part of life, not life itself. . . . As a whole, this generation is a group of 'catapultors.' More specifically, they can either catapult to the top of the organization and illuminate the company's potential with their talents, or they can catapult right out of the organization into the hands of the competitors. (Lipkin & Perrymore, 2009, 17-18)

Along with Generation Yers' expectations for prompt results is the belief that their time should be spent doing something worthwhile. The idea that one should do something for the sake of having a job is not popular among Generation Yers. According to Penelope Trunk's (2007) article, *What Gen Y Really Wants*, Generation Yers will go so far as to move back into their parents' homes after obtaining degrees so that they have time to pick the job they really want. Because technology is so integrated into every aspect of Generation Yers' lives, the line between work and home is often blurred.

Learning Point Associates and Public Agenda produced a report in 2010 entitled, *Retaining Teacher Talent: The View from Generation Y*, that analyzed how Generation Y teachers, who at the time made up 18 percent of the teaching force, viewed their schools in order to provide school leaders and policy makers with a clear picture of what this group of teachers felt was needed to create a productive professional school climate that decreases turnover among public school teachers under 30-years old. The report concluded that Generation Y employees value the effective use of technology in the workplace, frequent constructive feedback and performance assessments, and upward mobility within a field (Coggshall, Ott, Behrstock, & Lasagna, 2010).

More recently, the American Federation of Teachers and the American Institute of Research produced a report entitled, *Workplaces that Support High-Performing Teaching and Learning: Insights from Generation Y teachers*, which outlines the workplace needs of Generation Y teachers. Figure 3 illustrates what Generation Y teachers believe to be the facets of a high-performing workplace, according to this report (Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Drill, 2011, p. 3).



From: Cogshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Drill, 2011, p. 3.

*Figure 3.* Workplace Needs of Generation Y Teachers

Furthermore, Generation Y teachers believed that their workplaces were conducive to high-performance when:

1. They received frequent feedback on their effectiveness as teachers.
2. They engaged in a high quality evaluation process.
3. They received differentiated and individualized support in the form of professional development.
4. There were multiple opportunities for collaboration.

5. Instructional technology was current and used efficiently.

Knowing what Generation Y teachers value is important, given the fact that a growing number of teachers belonging to this group are now moving into school leadership positions. At public elementary and secondary schools, the percentage of principals under 40-years old increased, as did the percentage of principals 55 years and older, while the percentage of principals between 45 and 54 years old decreased. For example, 10 percent of elementary public school principals were under 40-years old in 1999-2000, compared with 19 percent in 2007-2008 (Characteristics of School Principals, 2010).

### **Generation Y and the Principalship**

Judith Tavano, Director of the Professional Development Academy at the University of Arkansas, has heavily researched generational issues within the workplace. She explains that one-third of the nation's educators belong to the Baby Boomers generation (individuals born between 1946-1964). During the years 1965-1975, the Generation X years, the nation experienced the lowest birth rates in recent history. Generation Y, however, is expected to grow to a population of 95 million (Stambuck 2009). Concerning the principal shortage, Tavano states that, "Generation Y may be our hope...They are likely to leapfrog the Xers into positions of responsibility. Xers know this, and some who do not want the burden of jobs like the principalship will be quite willing to let the younger generation step up and take over" (Stambuck, 2009, p. 27).

Figure 3, Workplace Needs of Generation Y Teachers, details what Generation Y teachers need in order to experience success. In the same turn, school leaders belonging

to Generation Y may benefit from these characteristics in developing high functioning work environments:

- Frequent Feedback on Effectiveness and High Quality Evaluations- It has been noted that members of Generation Y enjoy consistent feedback concerning their work performance. However, for school leaders that are rarely evaluated in some cases, this lack of constant feedback may present a challenge for the Generation Y principal. The state of Illinois has completed an eighteen-month development process to transform its evaluation process for teachers and school leaders into one that provides consistent feedback concerning strengths and opportunities for growth. The evaluation tool will consider student academic growth as a factor in rating the principal's effectiveness. According to the guidelines for the new principal evaluation process, the benefits of the new process include:
  - Consistent standards: clear more objective and timely feedback;
  - Improved professional development;
  - Multiple measures of student growth, including the ISAT or PSAE;
  - Developed over 18 months by Illinois educators (including 32- member advisory council plus input from over 2,300 teachers and administrators);
  - Effective teachers in every classroom...and effective leaders in every school; and
  - Improved student learning. (Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, ISBE, 2011, <http://isbe.net/PEAC/default.htm>)

Illinois principals will be evaluated annually with at least two formal site observations conducted by a trained evaluator, and as many informal observations as needed. The state model encourages measures such as school climate to be factored into the principal's rating. As of October 1, 2012 principals meet with the evaluator to establish goals for student growth. Written evaluations must be completed by March 1, 2013. For those principals belonging to Generation Y, this new process for evaluation may prove to add a level of support and decrease tension and/or anxiety, given the increased amount of feedback concerning work performance (Performance Evaluation Advisory Council, ISBE, 2011).



- Collaboration and Shared Practice - In *Mind the Gap: Own Your Past, Know Your Generation, and Choose Your Future*, Graeme Codrington and Sue Grant-Marshall (2005) describe Generation Y as being highly sociable and sharing. They see the workplace as an opportunity for collaboration with others locally and globally. Additionally, they suggest that Generation Y typically thrives in team settings. This characteristic may have major implications for school leadership. DuFour and Marzano's claim that "professional development strategies must be designed to develop the collective capacity of educators to meet the needs of students", may mean that Generation Y school leaders will easily adapt to this approach and will excel in operating in a collective capacity. The move towards the development of professional learning communities (PLCs) in schools is a model that lends itself to Generation Y strengths: the ability to establish a community where educators collaboratively support student achievement (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2005; DuFour & Marzano, 2011, p. 21).
- Differentiated Support - Codrington and Grant-Marshall describe Generation Y as enjoying interaction with older generations and learning in a hands-on manner. This notion seems to support the current trend of states (such as Illinois) and districts to have experienced/veteran principals and school leaders mentor novice principals. They also note that Generation Y desires to be challenged through problem solving and projects. Again, the new design for the Illinois Principal Preparation Program supports the needs of Generation Y principals through its project-based/evidence-based structure (Codrington & Grant-Marshall, 2005).
- Effective Instructional Technology - Tavano states, "Members of Generation Y come into the workforce with some advantages that may help with the heavy workload of a principal. They know more about integrating technology into work...To them, technology and work are not separated...And if they are to be our future, we need to help them to grow and develop, and plan for them to take on the vacancies caused by the Boomer exodus" (Stambuck, 2009, p. 27).

An added layer of support for Generation Y principals in Illinois is the Consortium for Educational Change. This organization offers a program entitled Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success (CLASS) in which new and early career principals receive professional coaching from former principals based on research that supports strong, competent leadership. The coaches participate in a three-day training

session, the new principals participate in in-person coaching, and the program also includes continuous professional development in leadership institutes. This mandatory mentoring, instituted in the 2007-2008 school year, requires that Illinois principals have at least 50 contact hours with the mentor. As of 2012, the state budget for the mandatory mentoring has been reduced to \$1, however, districts may fund the initiative and individual principals may still request a mentor. New and early career principals may continue meeting with the mentor/coach during the second year of professional experience. These meetings include regular and structured dialogue. The coach may visit meetings, observe classrooms, and attend other events all to support the principal's growth. A Generation Y principal may find meetings with a mentor or coach from the Baby Boomer generation or Generation X useful. Baby Boomers are retiring and research from an Arkansas leadership study suggests that a large number of Generation X educators are not interested in the principalship. If that is true, Generation Y is next in line for the principalship and will need to gain from their Baby Boomer coaches and mentors the additional knowledge and support that they need to be more successful in leading their schools (CLASS, Consortium for Educational Change, 2011; Stambuck, 2009).

Westman (2010) suggests that Generation Y is more likely to stay with an employer than Generation X (individuals born between 1965-1975). He describes Generation X as developing more family-oriented goals. Generation Y seeks to develop a meaningful and fulfilling career. This may account for the decline in the percentage of principals between the ages of 45 and 54, and the increase in principals ages 40 and

under. Westman also notes that in terms of work-related goals, only 16 percent of Generation X felt it important to become an influential leader. Again, as Generation X experiences a shift in priorities (placing more value on personal and family lives) the number of school principals in that generation declines. Additionally, as Baby Boomers retire (individuals born between the years of 1946-1964), Generation Y is left to carry the torch. In light of the new principal preparation models, Generation Y may experience more job satisfaction if programs are better preparing them to cultivate their strengths and positively impact student achievement (Westman, 2010).

It is necessary to consider what facets of the principal preparation program Generation Y principals believe to be effective, and whether or not their preparation positively impacts their capacity to lead and improve schools. This generation is charged with impacting student achievement, perhaps at an unprecedented level of intensity. Generation Y principals are being asked to rethink approaches to teaching and learning, and to restructure school models, all while balancing the management and operational side of administration. Perhaps Generation Y principals are moving into leadership roles at the perfect time. As principal preparation programs are being redesigned with a heavy emphasis on experiential pre-service activities, frequent constructive feedback, and on-going performance-based evaluations, this group of school leaders who desire constant and immediate feedback, opportunities for collaboration, and meaningful careers, seems to be compatible.

This chapter has provided a review of the relevant discourse on the topics of the state of school leadership preparation resulting in Arthur Levine's 2005 report, the state

of school leadership preparation in the state of Illinois, the demands of the principalship in today's schools, and the characteristics of Generation Y. The review of literature has established a context for the research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975–1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?
2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975–1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

CHAPTER III  
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**Introduction**

Nearly 30 years have passed since the United States Department of Education released the report, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Education Reform* (1983), which highlighted the alarming state of American public schools and sparked years of reform efforts (The National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Since that time, a number of approaches to reform have been executed. Still, many public schools in this country are generally perceived as unsatisfactory. The intense focus on school improvement places immense pressure on those individuals charged with leading these schools—particularly the school principal. The principal is responsible for selecting highly qualified teachers; providing professional development; building meaningful connections between the school, families, and community members; and generally ensuring the safety of the school community—all while developing and executing a practical budget, keeping abreast of school laws and best practices, and navigating the world of student achievement data.

While the federal government and states have begun to approach reform in multiple ways (such as with Public Law 107-110, known as the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* and the *Race to the Top Grant of 2009*, which was available to states through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009; H.R. 1-111th Congress, 2009), many

graduate schools of education have also undergone the process of shifting how they prepare principals by reviewing the curriculum offered, surveying students, rating professors, and in some cases, offering redesigned and innovative programs in hopes of better preparing school leaders. McCarthy and Forsyth (2009) note, “There appears to be universal agreement that empirical documentation of the merits of leadership preparation is lacking and that much written about this topic cannot be considered research” (p. 117). The intent of this research was to examine the effectiveness of principal preparation—as perceived by Generation Y principals born between 1975–1985 with five years or less experience. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach, the researcher interviewed 10 Generation Y principals consisting of nine men and one woman in the state of Illinois, and synthesized these data to answer the following research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program’s capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today’s schools?
2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and

contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

The goal of this research was to contribute to the existing empirical documentation concerning the topic of principal preparation. This chapter outlines the research design, sampling plan, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, bias prevention, and the validity and limitations of the study.

### **Research Design**

Glesne (2006) states, “Qualitative research methods are used to understand some social phenomena from the perspective of those involved, to contextualize issues in their particular socio-cultural-political milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions” (p. 4). Glesne goes on to say:

Qualitative researchers . . . seek to understand and interpret how the various participants in a social setting construct the world around them. To make their interpretations, the researchers must gain access to the multiple perspectives of the participants. Their study designs, therefore, generally focus on in-depth, long-term interactions with the relevant people in one or several sites. Although site-specific hypotheses may be a result of the study, the researcher tends to not begin with them, but rather with an exploratory, open mindset to the variety of perspectives and issues that might arise. The researcher becomes the main research instrument as he or she observes, asks questions, and interacts with research participants. Qualitative researchers often look for patterns, but they do not try to reduce the multiple interpretations to a norm. Formal write-ups are descriptive in nature with only minor use of numerical indices. (pp. 4-5)

Marshall and Rossman (1999) offer the following table (see Table 1) in their discussion of the varied approaches to qualitative research designs over time, and the scholars advocating for each genre.

Table 1

*Typologies of Qualitative Research*

<b>JACOB (1987, 1988)</b>	<b>ATKINSON, DELAMONT, &amp; HAMMERSLEY (1988)</b>	<b>DENZIN &amp; LINCOLN (1994)</b>
Human Ethology	Symbolic Interactionism	Case Studies
Ecological Psychology	Anthropology	Ethnography
Holistic Ethnography	Sociolinguistics	Phenomenology and Ethnomethodology
Cognitive Anthropology	Ethnomethodology	Grounded Theory
Ethnography of Communication	Democratic Evaluation	Biographical Method
Symbolic Interactionism	Neo-Marxist Ethnography	Historical Social Science
	Feminism	Participative Inquiry
		Clinical Research

From: Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 4.

Marshall and Rossman (1999) contend that the following assumptions are imbedded in qualitative research:

1. . . . Knowledge is subjective rather than being the objective truth . . . ;
2. The researcher learns from participants to understand the meaning of their lives, but should maintain a certain stance of neutrality;
3. Society is structured and orderly . . . ;
4. Research fundamentally involves issues of power;
5. The research report is not transparent but rather, is authored by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual;
6. Race, class, and gender (among other social identities) are crucial for understanding experience;
7. Historic, traditional research has silenced members of oppressed and marginalized groups . . . ;
8. Researchers must examine closely how they represent the participants in their work—the Other;
9. Researchers should carefully scrutinize the “complex interplay of their personal biography, power and status, interactions with participants, and written word”; and
10. Researchers must be vigilant about the dynamics of ethics and politics in their



work. (pp. 4-5)

Stake (1995) defines a case study as “the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances” (p. xi).

Yin (2003) offers the following definition:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that:
  - a. investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
  - b. the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident
2. The case study inquiry:
  - a. copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
  - b. relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
  - c. benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (pp. 13-14)

This research is defined as a “collective case study” in that it “looked at several cases and allowed the researcher to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (Glesne, 2006, p. 13). That is to say, the 10 Generation Y principals who participated were the cases, and the researcher investigated their perceptions of the effectiveness of their leadership preparation programs as the phenomena. Yin (2003) discusses a multicase design as having distinct advantages and disadvantages: “The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust” (p. 46). However, Yin mentions, “the conduct of a multiple-case study can require extensive resources and time beyond the means of a single student or independent research investigator” (p. 47). Stake (1995) suggests, “A collective case study may be designed with more concern for representation but, again,

the representation of a small sample is difficult to defend” (p. 5). Study participants were selected according to the criteria described in the Sampling Plan section of this research. This study implemented a multicase study using in-depth interviews in order to fully understand the participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs, and their perception of the necessary professional development in their beginning years as a principal.

Glesne (2006) discusses “topical interviews, in which the discussion is focused more on a program, issue, or process than on people’s lives” (p. 80). The open-ended questions posed to study participants attempted to provide information that allowed the researcher to understand the perceptions of Generation Y principals of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. Glesne goes on to distinguish between research questions and interview questions in that, “research questions formulate what the researcher wants to understand, and interview questions are asked in order to gain that understanding” (p. 81). Yin (2003) suggests that:

. . . the researcher has two jobs during the interview process: (a) to follow his or her own line of inquiry, as reflected by his or her case study protocol, and (b) to ask his or her actual (conversational) questions in an unbiased manner that also serves the needs of his/her line of inquiry. (pp. 89-90)

The student achievement data from each participant’s school was used as another data point for analysis. The official student achievement data from the Prairie State Achievement Examination—an Illinois state assessment given to students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to measure reading, math, science, and writing—was used to triangulate the interview data. The researcher compared participants’ perception of their effectiveness in

positively impacting student achievement to the actual scores. The purpose of this step in the data analysis process was to discover the relationship to how the participants think they impacted or will impact student achievement versus the actual achievement score. The researcher obtained a copy of the student achievement data electronically from the 2010-2012 *Illinois Interactive School Report Card*. In addition to the student achievement data, the researcher also looked at the curriculum offered at the universities' principal preparation programs during the time the participants attended in order to discover the types of courses that the participants could have taken during their studies.

Interview data was triangulated with the literature, the student achievement data from each participant's school, and the universities' principal preparation program course catalogs. When analyzing these data, the researcher compared the statements of the participants to the conceptual framework based on Arthur Levine's (2005b) proposal of an excellent principal preparation program to identify commonalities, and in the same turn, areas that lack cohesion between the experiences of the participants and Levine's description of a well-executed program. The researcher also looked for commonalities in participants' responses in order to make assumptions concerning the quality of principal preparation programs and relevance of the programs' curriculum to the needs of practitioners. Additionally, the researcher compared these data to the Generation Y profile in order to determine if the perceptions of the participants aligned to the general characteristics of Generation Y. The researcher connected participant feedback to current practices in educational leadership programs and to what scholars consider to be best practices in the field.

### **Sampling Plan**

When determining the sample for this study, the researcher developed criteria for participant selection. Yin (2003) states, “the more a study contains specific propositions, the more it will stay within feasible limits” (p. 23). Each study participant was characterized as belonging to Generation Y—an individual born between the years 1975-1985. At the time the interviews were conducted, each study participant had five years or less professional experience as a school leader. This means that he or she entered the leadership profession no earlier than 2007. The nine males and one female school leaders were employed in high schools, grades 9-12, in DuPage, Suburban Cook, Kane, Boone, Kendall, Champaign, Ogle, and Peoria counties in Illinois. To control for socioeconomic status and community dynamics, these counties have similar demographics. The principals also had students with similar academic performance as determined by the Prairie State Achievement Examination.

The Freedom of Information Act allows the researcher to obtain a comprehensive list of principals in Illinois counties from the Illinois State Board of Education. A letter of request was emailed to Illinois State Board of Education for a listing of all principals in counties with five years or fewer experience as a school principal (see Appendix A). Upon receipt of the requested list, the researcher contacted potential participants via emailed recruitment to articulate the purpose of the study, determined if they met the sampling criteria, and scheduled an in-person interview. In the emailed recruitment, the researcher explained the procedures, risks, and benefits of participating in the study (see Appendix B for emailed recruitment script). If the participant agreed, the researcher

electronically sent each participant a Letter of Cooperation to Participate in Research (see Appendix C) and an Interview Protocol (see Appendix E). Each of the 10 interviews was scheduled using this format; which were held at the principal's school, unless the participant requested an alternative location.

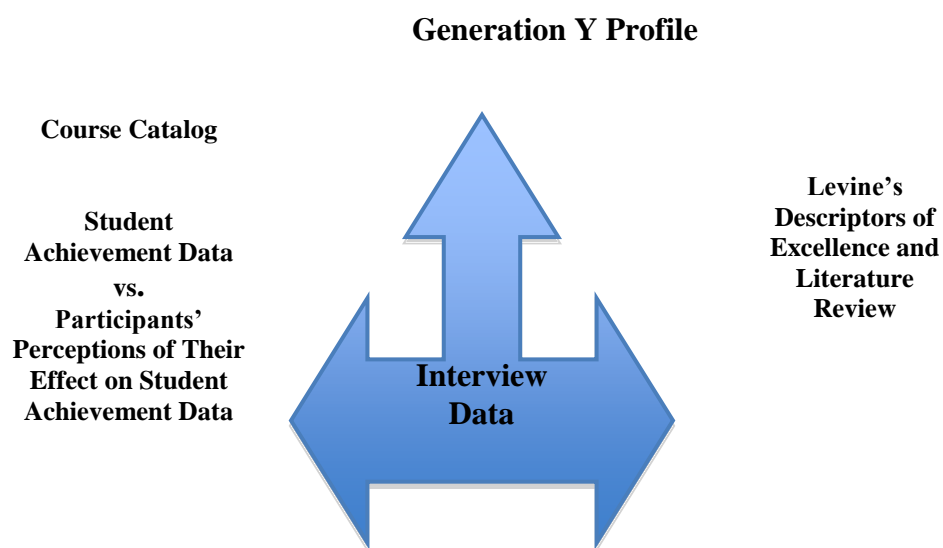
On the day of the interview, the researcher reviewed the Consent to Participate in Research (see Appendix D) with the participant and allowed time for clarification of the interview questions. Once the participant agreed to the terms (which also included agreeing for the interview to be audio-taped) the participant was asked to sign the consent form. A signature indicated the participant's willingness to commence the interview and take part in the study. Afterward, the researcher provided participants with electronic copies of their transcribed interview. At this time and prior to the data analyses, participants had the opportunity to request that the researcher make changes to the transcribed interview as a member checking method to ensure the validity of the study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Once the interview data was collected and transcribed, the researcher assigned an ID# to each participant in order to keep track of interview responses and student achievement data in a way that ensures confidentiality to the participant. The researcher analyzed and classified the information, using a thematic analysis process—a coding process in which ideas and themes that emerged were categorized together—as outlined by the nine qualifiers of an excellent principal preparation program described in Arthur Levine's (2005b) report. This process allowed the researcher to make connections between data and the research questions. Levine's report served as a contextual

framework for this study. The researcher connected the data provided by the respondents to the Generation Y profile in order to determine if the participants' perceptions aligned to the Generation Y Profile. The researcher also looked to identify other trends that emerged from these data beyond Levine's qualifiers. These collected data were also related to the relevant literature on the topic, and analyzed to identify potential illuminations concerning the phenomenon of the effectiveness of principal preparation as perceived by Generation Y principals. Finally, the interview data were triangulated with the student achievement data from each participant's school, along with the course catalog offerings from each participant's university principal preparation program. When reviewing the student achievement data from each participant's school, the researcher compared each participant's perception of his or her impact on student achievement to the actual student achievement scores on the Prairie State Achievement Examination.

Figure 4 illustrates the triangulation of data for this study.



*Figure 4.* Triangulation of Interview Data

### **Ethical Considerations**

A number of ethical issues were considered in this study. For instance, it was important to protect all participants from harm and to ensure their confidence in the security of the process and the integrity of the interviewer. During the “Informed Consent” process, the researcher carefully explained the study’s intent, the interview questions, the interview process, and gained permission to audiotape the interview sessions. Additionally, each participant was guaranteed the right to withdraw from participation in the study at any time and guaranteed that the information collected would be used exclusively for the purpose of this study. Individuals that agreed to participate signed and submitted a “Letter of Cooperation” on their individual letterhead prior to interview scheduling. At the time of the interview, each participant signed the “Consent to Participate in Research” letter, and was allowed to decline to answer any question. Care was taken to safeguard all audiotape recordings and transcripts to ensure confidentiality. Extreme care was taken to protect the identity of the participants by removing all participant identifiers to ensure confidentiality. Also, all audiotape recordings and transcripts were kept in a locked file, which only the researcher had access to, and that is located in the researcher’s residence. These documents and tape recordings were destroyed once the research was completed and submitted.

### **Bias Prevention**

Glesne (2006) recommends “clarification of researcher bias—reflection upon one’s own subjectivity and how he/she will use it and monitor it in research” as a means to gain trustworthiness or research validity (p. 37). The researcher made every attempt to

disconnect her personal experience from the study, given she was a former high school principal with less than five years leadership experience and belonged to Generation Y (born in 1978). The researcher maintained a personal journal to record any feelings, reflections, or assumptions that may have influenced the study.

### **Validity and Limitations of the Study**

Glesne (2006) offers a number of verification processes to researchers conducting qualitative research ranging from extended time in the field in order to establish trust to the use of multiple data-collection methods, sources, investigators, and theoretical perspectives. Other verification processes include peer review and debriefing, negative case analysis, clarification of researcher bias, and member checking. Finally, Glesne suggests the use of rich, thick, descriptions that allows the reader to enter research context, and the use of an outside person to audit field notes, research journals, and analytical coding schemes (pp. 37-38). During this study, the researcher utilized these procedures to ensure validity.

The researcher was aware of the following limitations associated with this study:

1. The researcher initially attempted to include 10 school leaders (five male; five female) from DuPage and Will counties in the state of Illinois. This proved to be difficult, resulting in 10 participants consisting of nine males and one female. The researcher did not include District 299, which is in the City of Chicago, because it is often difficult to get timely approval to conduct research in this district. This exclusion limited the amount of available novice principals. Therefore the researcher extended the list of counties to include:



DuPage, Suburban Cook, Kane, Boone, Kendall, Champaign, Ogle, and Peoria.

2. The sample size was limited to 10 and the age range and location of the principal are limited. This further narrowed the pool of potential participants.
3. The researcher herself was in fact a former novice school principal belonging to Generation Y and completing an educational leadership program. These factors could have potentially become limitations by increasing the potential for bias. As previously stated, the researcher maintained a journal to limit the influence of bias on the study.
4. This short-term study eliminated long-term observation from the research design due to the limited time to collect data.

### **Summary**

In summary, a qualitative methodology was used to gain an understanding of Generation Y principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. The researcher utilized a multiple case study approach consisting of 10 principals (nine males; one female) that met the sample criteria. The researcher followed protocols pertaining to participants' consent to participate in the study and conducted a 45-minute interview. To add validity to the study, the researcher triangulated the data gathered in the interviews with current literature and student achievement data from each participant's school. All collected data stemmed from the principal's oral interview protocol that answered the following research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?
2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF DATA AND FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine the efficacy of principal preparation programs and continuing professional development for principals new to the position. Through the use of qualitative methodology, the researcher conducted interviews with 10 Illinois high school principals and analyzed data to answer the following research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?
2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?

4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

### **Research Participant Sample**

There were a total of 75 invitations to participate in this study mailed to Generation Y principals in thirty Illinois counties, including: Lake, suburban Cook, DuPage, Will, Kankakee, Grundy, Kendall, Kane, McHenry, DeKalb, Boone, Livingston, Iriquois, Ford, LaSalle, Champaign, Ogle, Peoria, Winnebago, Stephenson, Jo Daviess, Carroll, Whiteside, Madison, St. Clair, Lee, Bureau, Sangamon, Henry, and Rock Island. Of the thirty counties, nine represent the most heavily populated counties in the state. Twelve principals responded to the invitation, including one that did not meet the selection criteria because his high school did not have grades 9-12, and one that met the criteria and agreed to be interviewed, but did not keep the interview appointment. From the eleven respondents that met the selection criteria, 10 principals were asked to participate by agreeing to be interviewed by the researcher and participated in the interviews. The interviews were conducted throughout the months of August - October, 2012 and each were held at the respective interviewee's school of employment before or after normal school hours. Each session lasted between 20-46 minutes. Prior to each interview, each participant was presented with, and then signed, a Letter of Consent to Participate in Research. After each interview, the voice recording was transcribed verbatim and emailed to the respective principal for clarity and editing purposes. There

were a total of 159 pages of transcribed data. Additional data were obtained from each university's website and publicly displayed brochures.

The "Demographic Information" (see Table 2-Table 5) illustrates background information for each participant. Actual names of the participants were not used in this study. Instead, each principal was assigned a number.

Table 2

*Demographic Information, Part I (County of Employment, Birth Year, Age, Gender, Race and Ethnicity)*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>County of Employment</b>	<b>Birth Year/Age (at the time of the interview)</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>
Principal 1	DuPage	1982 / 30 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 2	Suburban Cook	1977 / 35 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 3	Suburban Cook	1975 / 37 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 4	Kane	1975 / 37 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 5	Boone	1975 / 37 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 6	Kendall	1977 / 35 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 7	Champaign	1981 / 31 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 8	Ogle	1980 / 32 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White
Principal 9	Peoria	1976 / 36 yrs.	Female	Caucasian/ White
Principal 10	Champaign	1975 / 37 yrs.	Male	Caucasian/ White

As can be seen by these data above, the participants represented 8 Illinois counties. Twenty percent (n=2) are leading schools in suburban Cook County and another 20% (n=2) represent Champaign County. The remaining principals lead schools in DuPage, Kane, Boone, Kendall, Ogle, and Peoria counties. While Generation Y is identified as being born being born between the years 1975-1985 (28-38 yrs.), each of the participants was between the ages of 30- 37. No participants were younger than 30 years.

Fifty percent (n=5) of the participants were born in 1975 (37 yrs), while the other 50% (n=5) ranged between ages 30-36 yrs. Ninety percent (n=9) of participants identify their gender as male, while 10% (n=1) identify as female. One hundred percent (n=10) of the participants identify their race/ethnicity as Caucasian/White.

Table 3

*Demographic Information, Part II (Teaching Experience, Principal Preparation, and Degrees/Certifications)*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b># of Years as a Teacher Prior to Becoming a Principal</b>	<b>Subject Taught</b>	<b># of Years as a Principal (at the time of the interview)</b>	<b>University Attended for Principal Preparation</b>	<b>Degrees and/or Certification Earned</b>
Principal 1	4	Social Studies	1	Northern Illinois University	Master of Science in Educational Administration/ Type 75
Principal 2	8	Social Studies/Spanish	2	Governor's State University	Master of Arts in Educational Administration/ Type 75
Principal 3	8	Social Studies	1	Concordia University	Master of Arts in School Leadership, Principal Preparation/ Type 75
Principal 4	3	Special Education	2	Aurora University	Master of Arts in Educational Leadership/ Type 75
Principal 5	6	Mathematics	1	Eastern Illinois University	Master of Science in Educational Leadership/ Type 75
Principal 6	2.5	Physical Education	5	Aurora University	Master of Arts in Educational Leadership/ Type 75
Principal 7	6	English as a Second Language/	1	University of Illinois at Urbana-	Master of Education in Educational

		Bilingual Education		Champaign	Organization and Leadership/ Type 75
Principal 8	2.5	Sociology	2	National Louis	Master of Education (M.Ed)/ Type 75
Principal 9	8	Instrumental Music	1	Bradley University	Type 75 certification only
Principal 10	9	English	3	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Master of Education in Educational Organization and Leadership/ Type 75

Table 3 focuses on demographic data concerning the teaching and principal preparation backgrounds of the participants. The average number of years teaching among participants is 5.7 years. Thirty percent (n=3) of the participants taught Social Studies, one of which also taught Spanish. The other principals taught different subjects, including: Spanish, Special Education, Mathematics, Physical Education, English as a Second Language and Bilingual Education, Sociology, Instrumental Music, and English. The average number of years of experience as a principal is 1.9 years. Between the 10 participants, they attended 8 universities for principal preparation. Twenty percent (n= 2) participants attended Aurora University. An additional 20% (n=2) of participants attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The remaining 6 participants attended the following universities for principal preparation: Northern Illinois University, Governor's State University, Concordia University, Eastern Illinois University, National Louis University, and Bradley University. One hundred percent (n=10) of participants attended universities in the state of Illinois for principal

preparation. Ninety percent (n=9) received Master's in Education or Education Leadership along with the Type 75 Illinois general administration endorsement/certification while 10% (n=1) received the Type 75 certification only. One hundred percent of participants (n=10) received a Type 75 upon completion of their principal preparation program.

Table 4

*Participant Demographic Information (Percentage of Students which Meet & Exceed Illinois Learning Standards on the PSAE in Reading and Math in the 2010, 2011, and 2012 school years)*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>PSAE 2010</b>	<b>PSAE 2011</b>	<b>PSAE 2012</b>
Principal 1	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a
Principal 2	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- 51% Math- 52%
Principal 3	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a
Principal 4	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- 55% Math- 60%
Principal 5	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a
Principal 6	Reading- 46% Math- 42%	Reading- 39% Math- 36%	Reading- 45% Math- 38%
Principal 7	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a
Principal 8	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- 53% Math- 47%
Principal 9	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- n/a Math- n/a
Principal 10	Reading- n/a Math- n/a	Reading- 56% Math- 51%	Reading- 50% Math- 53%

The PSAE is an Illinois state assessment given to students in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade to measure reading, math, science, and writing. The above data show that 50% (n=5) of the



participants are first year principals, therefore the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in their schools have not yet taken the PSAE under their leadership. Assessments are administered during the spring semester of the school year; therefore results are not yet available for the 2012-2013 school year at the time that this research was conducted.

Thirty percent (n=3) of the principals, Principals 2, 4, and 8, are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the principalship therefore the assessment results for the 11<sup>th</sup> grade students tested during the 2011-2012 school year are available. In Principal 2's school the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards is 51% in Reading and 52% in Math. In Principal 4's school the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards is 55% in Reading and 60% in Math. In Principal 8's school the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> grade students meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards is 53% in Reading and 47% in Math.

Principal 6 has five years of experience; therefore PSAE results are available for 11<sup>th</sup> grade students taking the assessment in the 2010, 2011, and 2012 school years. In 2010, the percentage of Principal 6's 11<sup>th</sup> graders meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards was 46% in Reading and 42% in Math. In 2011, the percentage of Principal 6's 11<sup>th</sup> graders meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards decreased to 39% in Reading and 36% in Math. In 2012, the percentage of Principal 6's 11<sup>th</sup> graders meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards increased to 45% in Reading and 38% in Math.

Principal 10 has three years of experience as principal. PSAE results are available for the 2011 and 2012 school year. In 2011, the percentage of Principal 10's 11<sup>th</sup> graders

meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards was 56% in Reading and 51% in Math. In 2012, the percentage of 11<sup>th</sup> graders meeting and exceeding Illinois Learning Standards decreased in Reading to 50%, but increased in Math to 53%.

Table 5

*Number of Required Semester Hours in University Preparation Program and Length of Practicum*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Number of Required Semester Hours</b>	<b>Length of Practicum</b>
Principal 1	Northern Illinois University	34 credit hours	Two semesters
Principal 2	Governor's State University	36 credit hours	One semester
Principal 3	Concordia University	30 credit hours	2 internship experiences (both done during summer sessions)
Principal 4	Aurora University	36 credit hours	Two semesters
Principal 5	Eastern Illinois University	33 credit hours	One semester
Principal 6	Aurora University	36 credit hours	Two semesters
Principal 7	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	40 credit hours	Two semesters
Principal 8	National Louis	34 credit hours	4 Internship Seminars: Internship experience was embedded within each course of the principal preparation program.
Principal 9	Bradley University	36 credit hours	Two semesters
Principal 10	University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign	40 credit hours	Two semesters

Table 5 above displays data concerning the universities that participants attended for principal preparation, the number of credit hours, and the length of the practicum experience.

The university with the least amount of credit hours required was Concordia University, requiring 30 credit hours. The university with the most amount of courses required (excluding the practicum experience) is the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, requiring 40 credit hours.

In terms of the practicum experience, 20% (n=2) of the participants had a semester-long internship. Sixty percent (n=6) had a yearlong internship experience. Ten percent (n=1) of participants had internship experiences embedded throughout the entire program. Ten percent (n=1) of participants completed the internship over the course of two summer sessions.

Participants in this study were asked multiple questions to explore their perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. The researcher emailed the guiding questions to the principals prior to the interview. During the interviews, these questions were used as a guide to generate discussion that would reveal a clear understanding of the principal's perception of his/her principal preparation experience. The questions were framed in a manner that would draw out the Generation Y participants' views on the comprehensive principal preparation program, the effectiveness of the program in terms of preparing the principal to effectively lead in his or her school, and the ongoing professional development necessary to support a new principal in the first three years of the principalship. The interviewer sought to identify

common themes that occurred among the participants' responses. Additionally, the questions were designed to highlight the conceptual framework presented in Levine's nine-point template for judging the quality of school leadership programs. These guiding questions are presented below, along with a summary of each participant's response.

### **Question 8**

#### **What motivated or inspired you to become a school principal?**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 saw the principalship in his career trajectory. He stated, "I knew I wanted to get into administration at some point...the thing that had really drawn me to that was being able to effect the whole school...I knew if the opportunity arose, I should go for it...I was really excited about the opportunity to work with families and students in a variety of ways- and more big picture elements."

##### *Principal 2*

As a teacher, Principal 2 looked to his principals as a source of support and this perception of the teacher/principal relationship became the driving force for him to become a principal. He stated, "I try to be all about service...and with that being said,... if I directly impact my teachers, it makes them directly impact their students, so indirectly,...it is a student-first type atmosphere."

##### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 felt that becoming a principal was a natural progression, since he engaged in leadership opportunities as a teacher. He recalled, "I became part of some larger discussions within the school and kind of seeing I have a good grasp of the vision

and direction of the school...I also feel like I work pretty well with people, and I think I can make some good decisions... that bring people together.”

*Principal 4*

When asked what motivated and inspired him to become a school principal, Principal 4 very clearly and precisely stated that his motivation was, “The opportunity to lead staff on a more global, large scale.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 expressed that he loved teaching and was proud of the accomplishments that he made as a teacher. He stated the following about his motivation for becoming a principal, “The honest to goodness reason why I became a principal was... to help support my family...I had several people tell me that I should go into administration to help people out, but to tell you the truth, the biggest thing was to support my family.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 stated that he was motivated to become a principal because of the skills that he possessed. He shared, “I thought that I had the necessary skill set to be an effective leader...I was used to handling non-traditional situations on a regular basis...I could become an effective instructional leader.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7’s motivation derives from his experience as an English as a Second Language and Bilingual education teacher, and the population of students that he mainly served. He stated, “I always kind of saw a major need for principals and administrators

who could lead from a combination of lenses. I hadn't had any experience with any principals who had the background or experience in bilingual education for one, and then also a lack of experience around issues of social justice and equity with Latino students...I see the role of the principal as critically essential in school improvement, student learning, and providing equitable opportunities for students to succeed, not only in school, but preparing them for life to help shape the future."

#### *Principal 8*

Principal 8's inspiration to become a principal resulted from his experience as a teacher and the desire to change some of the realities of the system that he witnessed as a teacher. He stated, "I don't want to sound arrogant, but honestly, to fix the ailments of the schools. I was working in Chicago schools and a lot of what I saw, I felt like I could do a better job as a leader to effect change."

#### *Principal 9*

Principal 9's inspiration for becoming a principal grew out of her experience as an Instrumental Music teacher. She explained, "Having taught Instrumental Music as a high school band director, a lot of that job is more administrative I think, than people realize. You know, between that and being fascinated with running a school, I mean the business angle of it...Then having the chance to really teach under some good principals, and to be an assistant to at least one good principal, I think were my motivating factors."

#### *Principal 10*

When Principal 10 was an English teacher, he became inspired to become a principal by his former administrator. He shared, "It was really all linked to my growing

job as an English teacher. We had a new administrator...and he really went out and helped me out quite a bit... He brought me into various positions for a few years. I became department chair after that...he strongly encouraged me to consider the assistant principalship, and I did, and that's kind of where it went.”

Table 6 below illustrates the sources of motivation and/or inspiration for each of the participants to become a high school principal.

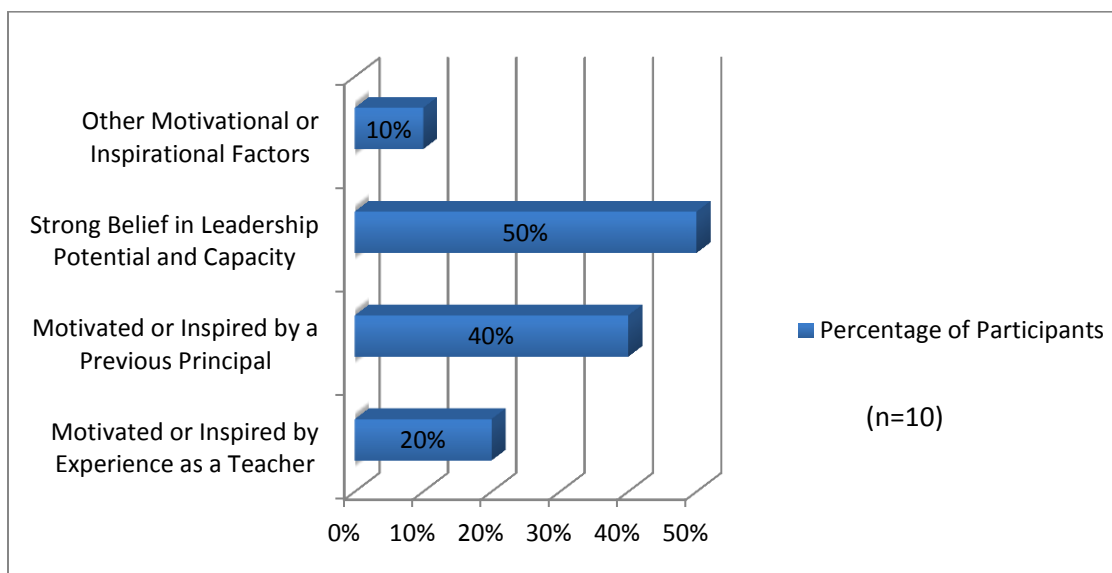
Table 6

*Origin of Participants Motivation or Inspiration for Becoming a Principal*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Motivated or Inspired by Experience as a Teacher</b>	<b>Motivated or Inspired by a Previous Principal</b>	<b>Strong Belief in Leadership Potential and Capacity</b>	<b>Other Motivational or Inspirational Factors</b>
Principal 1			“The thing that had really drawn me to that was being able to effect the whole school...and more big picture elements”	
Principal 2		Recalls his principal who was supportive of teachers, therefore seeks to support his teachers, and indirectly positively impact his students		
Principal 3	Participated in leadership opportunities as a teacher		Believes he possesses the necessary leadership skills sets to be an effective principal	
Principal 4			Motivated to lead staff on a more global, large scale	
Principal 5				Became a principal to be able to better support his family

Principal 6			Believed he possessed effective leadership skills	
Principal 7		I hadn't had any experience with any principals who had the background or experience in bilingual education for one, and then also a lack of experience around issues of social justice and equity with Latino students.		
Principal 8	"To fix the ailments of the schools. I was working in Chicago schools and a lot of what I saw, I felt like I could do a better job as a leader to effect change."			
Principal 9		"Having the chance to really teach under some good principals, and to be an assistant to at least one good principal"	"Having taught Instrumental Music as a high school band director, a lot of that job is more administrative I think, than people realize." You know, between that and being fascinated with running a school, I mean the business angle of it."	
Principal 10		"We had a new administrator... and he really went out and helped me out quite a bit... He brought me into various positions for a few years."		





*Figure 5.* Percentage of Participants Categorized by Areas of Motivation for Becoming a Principal

Table 6 and Figure 5 above depict the motivating or inspirational factors influencing participants to become principals, and the percentage of participants in each category of motivational or inspirational factors for becoming a principal, as described by the interview data. Twenty percent ( $n=2$ ) of participants were inspired to become principals because of their experiences as a teacher. Forty percent ( $n=4$ ) of participants were motivated or inspired to become a principal because of their previous principals. Fifty percent ( $n=5$ ) of participants were motivated by the belief that they possessed the leadership potential or capacity that would enable them to be successful in the role of principal. Ten percent ( $n=1$ ) of participants were motivated or inspired to become a principal by other factors. The reader will note that these data total more than 100% in that some participants listed multiple motivating factors.

**Question 9****What factors led you to the selection of your principal preparation program?***Principal 1*

Principal 1 chose to attend Northern Illinois University on the recommendation of his previous department chair. He stated, “I had a department chair who went to Northern...I was encouraged by my department head at the time to do that, and he went through NIU...and that was the reason I did that.” Additionally, Principal 1 mentioned the financial incentives for choosing his principal preparation program. He added, “In addition, there were some financial reasons too. You know some private schools are a little more expensive and whatnot, and so it was what I could afford. You know the quality of the program is what you put into it.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 mentioned convenience as a major factor in his selection of his principal preparation program. He stated, “In honest and fairness, it was a cohort program which obviously appealed to me. It was after school hours, which again appealed to me as a teacher, and a coach, and it was offered at the school I was currently teaching at. So you know in honesty, convenience was a major factor in that decision.”

*Principal 3*

Like Principal 2, Principal 3 mentioned convenience as a key factor in selecting a principal preparation program. The cohort was offered in the school where he taught and later became principal of, and he received positive reviews about the program for other colleagues who had gone through the cohort program. He shared, “To be very honest,

they were offering a cohort that was hosted about 100 feet from here, in our school...It became pretty convenient, and I had talked to other people who went through the program and had good things to say.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4’s selection of his principal preparation program was initially guided by convenience and location, but he was also concerned with the success rate and job placement of students. He explained of his selection criteria, “One is convenience. The other is access. You know, so location. Do I have to drive two hours?...I wanted something that I could get to and from in a reasonable amount of time. You know, the quality, job placement. So what was the success of the program? After you went through there, what was the likelihood that you’re going to be able to obtain a job in administration?”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 considered quality, location, and costs during the selection of his principal preparation program. He stated, “I had heard that Eastern was one of the better programs from what I had researched in the state. And it was only a 45 minute drive for me to the Eastern Illinois University campus...I definitely wanted to go to a state school, because I was also a member of the Army National Guard and they would pay for my degree there.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 initially began his principal preparation at Northern Illinois University, but then switched to Aurora University out of convenience. He explained,

“Actually, I started my program at Northern, and that was mostly because I had student teachers my first couple of years, and tuition waivers...After my first few classes at Northern, it really became the convenience of the program that they offered at Aurora University...I had good knowledge of many of the individuals that had finished that program who were local administrators, so gaining that knowledge ahead of time was beneficial.”

*Principal 7*

When asked what factors led to the selection of the principal preparation program, Principal 7 mentioned that he was driven by a desire to attend a program that challenged his thinking. He was concerned with the rigor of the program and the program’s focus on the theories of educational leadership. He stated, “I wanted to go into a Master’s principal preparation program that was more than just your typical practitioner based principal preparation...I wanted something that was more challenging and scholarship based, more theoretical based, because I think it’s easy to get the practice. You can only get so much practice. There are so many things that you’re just going to have to learn once you get in the role. But, you can’t learn theory, and scholarship, and research in the role of the principal. That’s something that you have to learn through school in my perspective. So I wanted something that would challenge my thinking, challenge my educational philosophy, and around leadership and education in general. And so, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign obviously is a Research I school and the grad program, although it definitely has its strengths and weaknesses, but it was more geared towards research and theory than other programs in the area.”

*Principal 8*

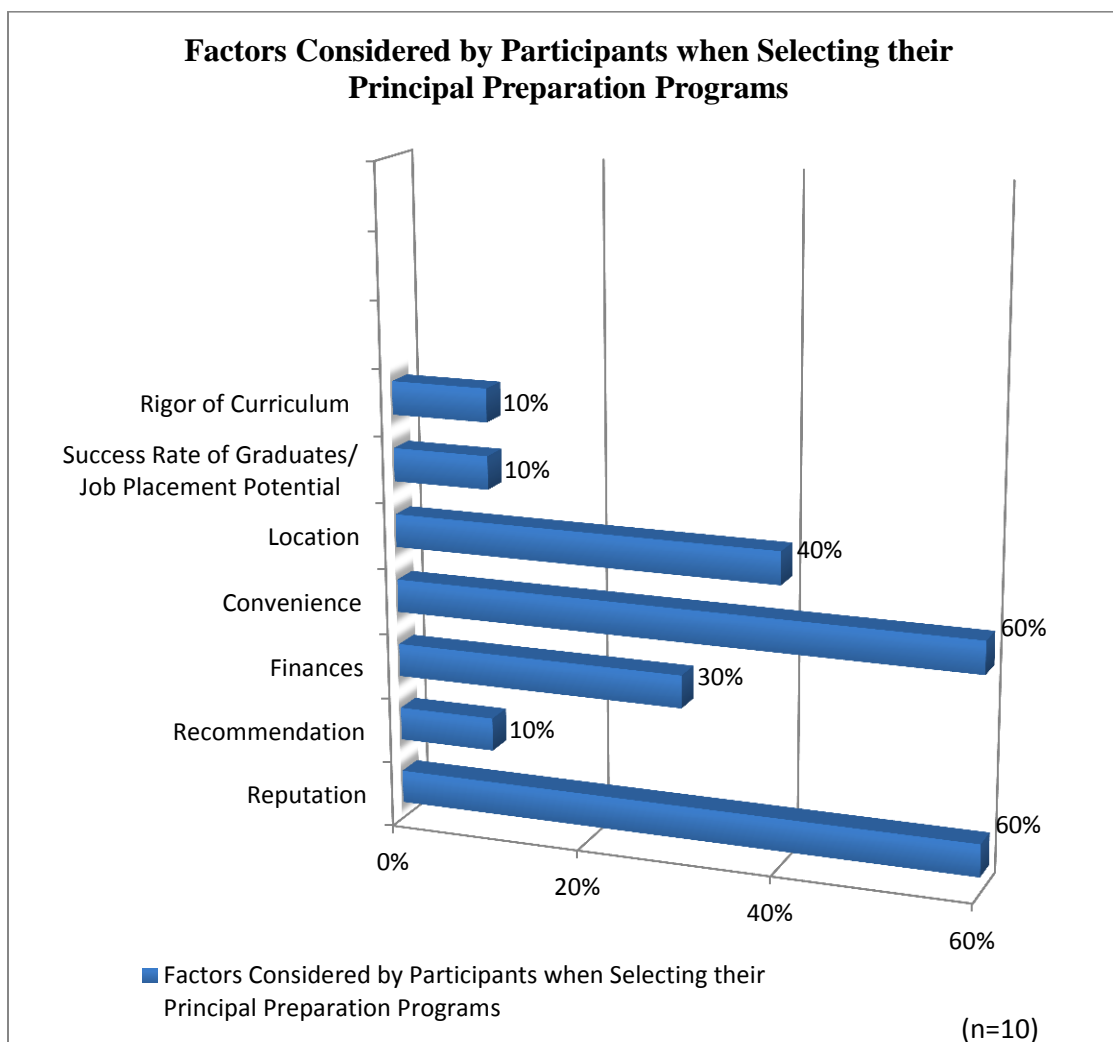
Principal 8, a former teacher in Chicago, chose his principal preparation program out of convenience. He stated, “Convenience. Availability. There was a flyer in my box and they were offering a Chicago teachers cohort.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 mentioned convenience as the greatest element in her selection of a principal preparation program. She shared, “The major factor for me at that point in time was convenience, because it was in the town where I was living, and my high school had a lot of union activities and extracurricular activities I did with my band. So it was nice to be able to go back and forth in ten minutes.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 explained that he selected his principal preparation program for reputation, his familiarity with the institution, and location. He mentioned, “Well, the U of I has a real strong reputation, so I had no doubts about its program and it’s where I got my undergraduate degree too. But, I also work right here in Champaign, so it’s location too, really.”



*Figure 6.* Factors Considered by Participants when Selecting their Principal Preparation Programs

Figure 6 depicts the factors that the participants considered as they selected principal preparation programs. Totals equal more than 100% given that respondents often listed more than one factor in considering a program. Of the participants 60% (n=6) considered the institutions reputation as a major factor in their decision-making. Sixty percent (n=6) of the participants also considered convenience as a major factor. Forty percent (n=4) of the participants considered the institution's location in relationship

to their home or workplace. Thirty percent (n=3) of the participants considered the financial circumstances – the costs of the institution in comparison to their personal financial situation. Ten percent (n=1) of the participants considered the recommendations of other individuals that had gone through the program. Ten percent (n=1) of the participants considered the success rate of the institution based on job placement of graduates. Finally, 10% (n=1) of participants considered the rigor of the curriculum, in relation to amount of focus on theory versus the amount of focus on practice.

### **Question 10**

**Was the purpose and focus of your principal preparation program made clear to you as a student? Please describe how this was accomplished.**

#### *Principal 1*

When asked if the purpose and focus of the principal preparation program was made clear to him as a student, and how that was accomplished, Principal 1 stated the following, “Yes, I think that the focus of it was on being a leader, what leadership is all about, understanding how the whole system works outside of just your classroom or your department, in a principal role. And, they did make that clear. Obviously, there are some courses that did that better than other courses.”

#### *Principal 2*

When asked the same question, Principal 2 answered, “Honestly, when I looked over these questions, I answered no to that...I don’t know that they ever came out and said here’s our mission, here’s our focus...It was more like there’s going to be a cohort

offered in this building. Would you like to take it? Yes, I would. You know? And that, that was it.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 stated that the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program was made clear to him as student. He recalled, “Yeah. It was. It was. You know that was always characterized by the standards of administrative leadership. So every class we went through, we were always collecting artifacts of specific areas of each standard of leadership. So, yeah. That was clear.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 did not feel that the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program was made clear to him as a student. He stated, “No. You know the problem with principal preparation is that they’re preparing you to be a dean or anything that requires a Type 75. It wasn’t specific towards being a principal, and I think the distinction of preparing someone for being a principal, versus dean of student, versus athletic director, versus department chair is absolutely unique. Had I went from the principal preparation directly into the principalship, I wouldn’t have had the skill set necessary. I would have failed miserably.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 felt that the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program was made clear to him as a student. He discussed how that was done through a general overview course. He discussed, “I would say probably, they covered a lot of the general topics of administration. It was fairly obvious to me what they were trying to prepare me



for. As we went through the things, they had a general overview class, which kind of said what we'd be going through and that was actually a wonderful class, probably one of the best I'd been to, through my preparation. Then, in each class I took past that, was a little more focus. I know one was on technology, one was on personnel, and one was on law. So each one of those got a little bit more specific, in terms of what they were teaching me, and certainly they were aligned with what they were trying to teach me, and I understood. They did help me understand the broad general brushstroke of being an administrator in a public school.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 felt that the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program were not made clear to him as a student. He stated, “I would say it was not made clear to me...I struggled with getting some of those expectations within my program and within my classes. So overall, I was a little disappointed with the program.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 felt that the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program were made clear to a certain degree, but not as clearly as he would have liked. He stated, “I think one of the weaknesses of the program that I was in, was that...most of the professors in the department were tenure track professors, so obviously, they have the responsibility to publish...I think because of that, it did sometimes lead to not as clearly of a defined program for principal preparation...I think the purpose there was a combination of scholarship, theory, research, and practice. Kind of makes you a whole-rounded principal candidate when you're done. Although it wasn't always clearly

articulated. I think some professors did better than others in articulating that...but as far as that being accomplished, maybe on a scale of 1-10? Maybe 7?"

*Principal 8*

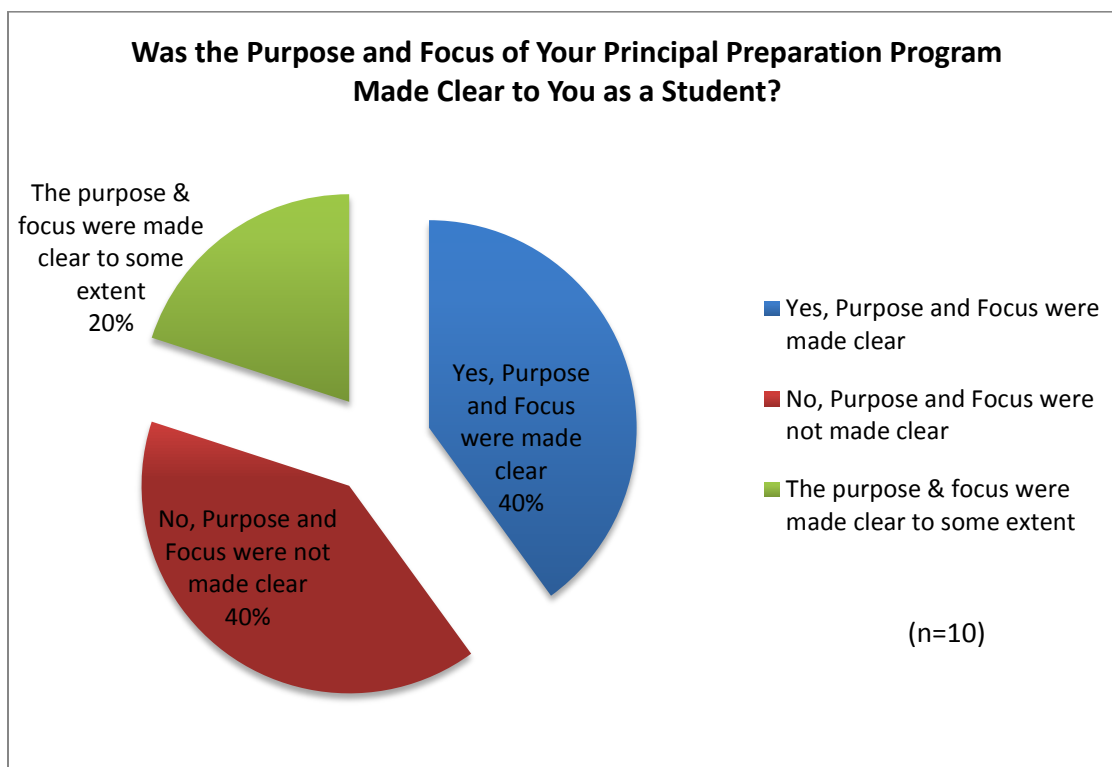
In regards to whether or not the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program was made clear to him as a student, Principal 8 stated, "The goal was really more about preparing us for a test and state requirements and less about effective leadership."

*Principal 9*

In response to the same question, Principal 9 stated, "I think it was made clear in writing at least. I'm not sure if it was made clear always in the instruction that I received."

*Principal 10*

Finally, Principal 10 did not feel that the purpose and focus of his principal preparation program were made clear to him. He stated, "I don't really think it was that clear. There was an administrative portfolio that I had to complete, and so the goals of that were fairly clear, but I wouldn't argue that the goals of that specific portfolio, which was supposed to be the cumulative event of my efforts, were linked to the specific goals of certain classes. Right? So, an overall goal for the entire program for me? Not that clear."



*Figure 7.* Was the Purpose and Focus of Your Principal Preparation Program Made Clear to You as a Student?

Figure 7 above highlights the participants' perception of whether or not the principal preparation program made clear to students the purpose and focus of the program. Forty percent (n=4) of the participants, Principals 1,3, 5, and 8, perceived their preparation programs as having made the purpose and focus clear to students. Another 40% (n=4) of the participants, Principals 2, 4, 6, and 10, perceived their principal preparation programs as not having made the purpose and focus clear to students. Twenty percent (n=2) of the participants, Principals 7 and 9 felt that their programs made the purpose and focus somewhat clear, but lacked in complete clarity.

**Question 11**

**Explain how the goals of your principal preparation program reflected your needs as a new principal?**

*Principal 1*

Principal 1 believed that the goals of his principal preparation program reflected his needs as a new principal, especially in the areas of budget and finance, the importance of establishing and articulating a vision, goals, and a message to multiple stakeholders, and professional reflection. He recalled, “I think that was a big thing, how to handle people...the business element in terms of school finance was important, even though I don’t deal with that on a real finite level, you know revenues and expenditures and all that type of stuff...it’s more people skills and the management of people, and how to craft a message, was something that I constantly, still do reflect on. What is the message that we want to come across with? What are we trying to communicate? Looking through that in whatever coursework I did and thinking about that in my own practice...I think that was truly the most valuable thing in both my principal preparation... thinking about who the stakeholders are, and what message are we trying to convey and how do we get there together as a team? And, identifying what the issues are and coming up with the solutions I think is something that I got out of my preparation program.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 viewed his principal preparation program as effective in preparing him to obtain his Type 75 certification. He stated, “Honestly, this process of getting a Type 75 was part of the job requirements...It is a requirement to have your Type 75 to be a

principal and assistant principal, a dean,... whatever the position you want to go in.”

Therefore he viewed the Type 75 certification as a need that his principal preparation program fulfilled.

### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 saw his principal preparation program as seeking to prepare new principals with a holistic approach to preparation. He stated, “I think of the goals of the program as being a holistic approach. They definitely tried to stress all of the different areas of leadership, so I mean that fits nicely into becoming a new principal. I think that if you go into a program that specializes in one particular aspect, you know, if you only focus on instructional leadership, which is the most important thing we do, but unfortunately, it’s not the only thing we do, then you’re going to have some pretty big gaps in your skill set as you enter your first year. So, I think it’s important to have a comprehensive program.”

### *Principal 4*

Principal 4 did not feel that the goals of his principal preparation program reflected his needs as a new principal. He stated, “It didn’t, because it prepared me to serve in a general administrative capacity. Not to serve in a role, specifically to be a principal.”

### *Principal 5*

Principal 5 spoke of his principal preparation program as having goals around preparing students with the basic ideas around school leadership, leading for change, and school operations. He described his program as, “Giving me an idea as to how things

were run, kind of the rules and regulations I had to follow...Exactly what I'd be dealing with, the ideas behind leading change in a school, which I would say as far as change in the school...pretty much giving me a big idea of the things that I would be dealing with in general and how to deal with them, and some of the resources that I could use to help me deal with certain aspects of being an administrator.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 believed that his principal preparation program reflected his needs as a new principal in the areas of finance and law, but fell short in the areas of curriculum and assessment. He stated, “I would say that in general the support in finance and in law were adequate to above adequate. They did support me in a positive direction and I felt very ready walking into my first principal position. Even now I feel pretty good in those two areas. In some of the curriculum, assessment areas, is where I believe the program fell a little short...Especially for somebody that was not in a core content area, it would have been more beneficial to have a more in depth experience in curriculum and assessment in my graduate program. So those would be areas where I think we fell short a little bit, but the other areas I felt were real strong, and that the program met my needs.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 described his principal preparation program as “hit or miss” in terms of its goals reflecting his needs as a new principal. He stated, “We’re getting ready to embark on school improvement planning. I think at the preparation program that I went through, unfortunately the school improvement class that I took was very weak. I don’t know if it was based on the professor or just the course scope and sequence, or objectives

of the course, but I feel like I'm pulling more from my own experiences in other courses to help with the school improvement planning right now. I think the best courses that I've had though were supervision and evaluation. Also, that was probably the best course in my master's program- the supervision and evaluation course, because it was really well done in terms of a combination of practical tools to use when doing the evaluation cycle but also a lot of research and a lot of reading around adult learning theory, a lot of research and reading around leadership for social justice, professional development for social justice and how to embed that in your staff supervision and evaluation plan. I think it was hit or miss; there were some things that were really good and some things that were not really good that I had to kind of learn on my own."

*Principal 8*

When asked to explain how the goals of his preparation program reflected his needs as a new principal, Principal 8 frankly responded, "It didn't."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 believed that the goals of her principal preparation program aligned to her needs as a new principal. She shared, "I think that the written part of the goals, and the things that went along with my personal beliefs in regards to the practice of democratic ideals, and centering the bulk of what I'm doing around students. Centering my activities and my focus for the day around instruction, and trying to up the level of instruction. I do think that was something I received in my preparation."

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 described his principal preparation program as "hot and cold" in

terms of whether or not the goals of the program reflected his needs as a new principal. He stated, “It’s very difficult to speak about the way that the entire program prepared me. There were certain classes that were useless, frankly, that’s speaking from somebody who likes the program. There were some classes that were useless depending on the curriculum and who was teaching it. But, there were some classes that were incredibly helpful, and the instructional supervision course for example, was one that was really beneficial to my growing. So, the overall program was kind of hot and cold. You know, 50/50, but there were some courses that were really helpful.

Table 7

*Did the Goals of the Principal Preparation Program Reflect Your Needs as a New Principal?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>In what areas did the program reflect your needs as a new principal?</b>	<b>In what areas did it not reflect your needs as a new principal?</b>
Principal 1	Budget and Finance, Vision, Goals, and Messaging	
Principal 2	Type 75 requirements	
Principal 3	Comprehensive preparation addressing varied aspects of the principalship	
Principal 4		Did not meet any needs
Principal 5	Overall view of leadership and school operations	
Principal 6	Met needs in finance	Did not meet needs in curriculum and assessment
Principal 7	Met needs in the supervision and evaluation process	Did not meet needs in school improvement
Principal 8		Did not meet any needs
Principal 9	Focus on instruction	
Principal 10	Met needs in instructional supervision	Some classes felt useless



Table 7 describes whether or not participants felt that their principal preparation programs met their needs as new principals, and in what areas those needs were met, or were not met. Fifty percent (n=5) of participants believe that their programs met their needs as new principals. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants did not believe their programs met their needs as new principals. Thirty percent (n=3) of participant believed that their programs met some of their needs, but not all of them.

### **Question 12**

**How would you describe the effectiveness of your principal preparation program's curriculum in terms of preparing you with the skills and knowledge needed in your role as a new principal?**

#### *Principal 1*

In terms of the effectiveness of the curriculum in his principal preparation, Principal 1 would have appreciated a balance of professors that are current practitioners and those that are, what he described as “theorist” who focus more on the big picture. He would like to see the curriculum have more of a practical focus, in which school leaders can work through real issues from their schools, in their preparation classes. He described the effectiveness of the curriculum in his program as, “Above average...I never felt I got a really rich experience from my professors that were adjunct and were doing the job. I've always found that those are like, that's a great way to start thinking about how to think of this type stuff, and it's the little things that you may not think about, whereas the theorist, they're always into the big picture stuff and you're like, yes, ideally that would be great, but how do you get that in terms of the practical element? So to have

that blend made it a good combination...I found the colleagues that I worked with, and the adjunct professors that had some of the experiences in the field to be the most valuable. If I had to name something else I would like to have seen, it's probably a little more in terms of the work being something that you can implement in your own building. So, that's something I would like to have seen... pick a project that you have in your building and apply this framework or theory or whatever to that to where you can then bring it to a meeting, or unveil it and reflect on it. I think that probably many graduate students would say a similar thing, because you see that applicability of it."

#### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 did not view the coursework as valuable, but saw the practicum as a very valuable experience. He stated, "I will give credit to the Governor's State's program in the fact that the practicum model they had allowed you to do as much or as little as you want. If you put in the effort, then you actually did receive some very good hands-on training. I actually still have both my binders up here from Governor's State. I decided that despite the coursework, which I don't necessarily think was that valuable to me, I said I'm going to take the practicum seriously and get what I put into it, out. There are things specifically from the practicum that I remember using and thinking about when it came time for me to get my first position in administration....So I think the practicum was the most important part."

#### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 believed that the curriculum of his principal preparation program was effective because of the tendency for professors to present reality-based situations to

students and to have students problem-solve through those situations. He said, “I think overall it was effective...I think as often as possible, if your program asks you, to make decisions within a particular situation, you know, anything that’s discussed in class needs to be situation based. I think it’s difficult to talk about things we have to deal with as a principal in isolation. I think that was one of the things most of our professors were pretty good at. Most of them were, speaking from experience, being former administrators. So usually they would frame things around particular situations, and I just think that’s paramount to any program- that as long as its situation based, it’s based in the reality of what you deal with, instead of it in isolation as a theory. I think if it’s too theoretical and not reality based, then you could probably have some issues that first year as principal.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 described the effectiveness of the curriculum in his principal preparation program as having “minimal effectiveness.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 felt that the curriculum of his principal preparation program was effective in preparing him for his role as new principal. He stated, “I think it prepared me fairly well, although, I would say that there are some drawbacks to it, in the sense that, I don’t feel like I have a real strong foundation for managing funds in the school. And of course one of the problems with that, is that every school is different as far as their needs go, and it is fairly difficult on that matter to teach everyone as far as the specifics, but probably more a manner of how all of the Title funds could be used. I think that could have been more vital to my training. Other than that, I think it did a fairly good job,

because I mentioned in a previous conversation, I don't think you could ever fully prepare for being a principal, and every situation that you'll encounter. You know, I think it's more in how you handle the situation rather than being prepared for it."

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 felt that the curriculum in his preparation program was generally effective in meeting his needs. He highlighted a few courses that were weak and stated possible transition within the department as the cause. He said, "The curriculum was well established and I think that those classes were great. Within the program, it was a time of transition, so some of the classes, the curriculum and assessment, were areas that we struggled with a bit. And even I would say supervision, because even until my first admin academy when we were evaluating teachers, I really didn't have a solid sense of how to effectively support teachers through evaluation. So that would be an area where I think we fell a little short in - that I probably was not prepared until I was out in my first administrative position."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 described the effectiveness of the curriculum in his principal preparation program as "hit or miss". He stated, "As far as the curriculum, I would say, back to that course we had, Intro to Educational Leadership, we had school law, school finance, school improvement, the principalship, and some other elective courses. I would say the curriculum hit a lot of the big areas of leadership. Luckily for me, I had a professor who made it a priority to talk about leadership for equity and social justice. It's not embedded in the curriculum at the Master's level, so it basically depends on the

professor. I think professors kind of veered off the curriculum based on what they feel more comfortable with. For example, in my finance class we didn't really talk about school budget. We talked about statewide finance, federal finance, which I felt was much more applicable to a district level administrator like a superintendent. We didn't really talk about school budget. So I think it was kind of hit or miss. Some things were really well done, and in some things there were gaps.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 did not believe that the curriculum of his principal preparation program effectively prepared him for his new role as principal. He stated, “It really didn't prepare me. There was a heavy focus on Budget and Finance, and Law, but those things weren't things that I necessarily needed to be an effective principal in my first years, not very effective. It was heavy on the theory side, but not the practice side. It gave me the knowledge, but not the skills necessary to lead.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 felt that her principal preparation program's curriculum lacked in some areas. She stated, “It varied between instructors, as to what I got out of courses. For instance, I don't believe I had adequate preparation in how to deal with data: how to disaggregate data, how to actually make it meaningful.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 felt that the effectiveness of the curriculum in his principal preparation program was relevant to the principal's previous experiences in leadership in the school. He felt that the curriculum and program alone was not enough to effectively

prepare a new principal, but the curriculum in conjunction with ongoing leadership responsibilities in the school would better prepare a new principal. He suggested, “On a scale of 1-4, I would say that the effectiveness of the program overall was probably a little better than a 2 but definitely not a 3. Let me qualify that a second, because the program is, the program really was fine, but honestly in order to become a building principal you have to have strong experience being a leader in a school, and an internship and coursework simply will not prepare you for it. I think coursework and an internship are incredibly useful as ways to augment and think about the job that you might be already doing in a school, but if you don’t have a strong experience- background in a school, and you just have a Type 75 program, you don’t know what a school is, and all of the ins and outs that go with that. In some ways the purpose of the 75 program is to augment, the professional practice that you’re already engaging in, then I would give the program higher than a 2.5, it would be a 3 or 3.5, but I couldn’t argue at all that without that other background experience that it was sufficient on its own.”

Table 8 displays the participants’ perceptions of the effectiveness of the curriculum in preparing them as new principals. Fifty percent (n=5) of participants wanted more practice than theory. These five participants saw the opportunities for problem solving, thinking through reality-based scenarios, and the practicum experience as the most valuable parts of the program. Forty percent described the curriculum as having gaps. That is to say some courses were stronger than others. Principal 6 viewed the gaps as a result of departmental transitions, and Principal 9 felt that the gaps in the

curriculum were due to the varied instructional approaches of the professors. Ten percent (n=1) of the participants described the curriculum as having “minimal effectiveness.”

Table 8

*How Would You Describe the Effectiveness of Your Principal Preparation Program's Curriculum in terms of Preparing you with the Skills and Knowledge Needed in your Role as a New Principal?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How would you describe the effectiveness of your principal preparation program's curriculum in terms of preparing you with the skills and knowledge needed in your role as a new principal?</b>
Participant 1	Wanted more practice than theory: “The program was above average...I wanted more of a practical focus...time to work through real issues from our schools.”
Participant 2	Wanted more practice than theory: “Coursework was not valuable, but the practicum was very valuable...The practicum was the most important part.”
Participant 3	Wanted more practice than theory: Curriculum was effective...presented reality-based situations, opportunities for problem solving.
Participant 4	Minimal effectiveness
Participant 5	Gaps in the curriculum: Prepared “fairly well,” but there were drawbacks, not a strong foundation in Budgeting and Finance.
Participant 6	Gaps in the curriculum: Generally effective, Curriculum and Assessment courses were weak, but maybe due to a departmental transition.
Participant 7	Gaps in the curriculum: “Hit or Miss,” Some things were done well, while there were gaps in other areas.
Participant 8	Wanted more practice than theory: “Heavy on theory, but not practice...Gave me knowledge, but not skills necessary to lead.”
Participant 9	Gaps in the curriculum: Lacked in some areas, varied between instructors
Participant 10	Wanted more practice than theory: “Curriculum alone is not enough to prepare a new principal.” In conjunction with ongoing leadership responsibilities, it would offer a good foundation.

**Question 13**

**Explain your perception of the level of rigor, coherence, and organization of the curriculum in your principal preparation program.**

*Principal 1*

Principal 1 believed that the rigor, coherence, and organization of his principal preparation program were suitable in meeting his needs. He stated, “In terms of rigor I think it was appropriate. I think the coherence made sense and the organization and sequence made sense.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 did not believe that the rigor, coherence, and organization of his principal preparation program were appropriate for his needs. He stated, “I just don’t think the rigor was there...I would struggle with there being a coherent or an organization to the curriculum... I felt like I was part of a factory: You have this class and you need to get through it and you have to plug through it, but the system was the same...We got together, we got a book or a chapter, we got in groups and we presented a chapter or a book...So I guess people say well that’s adult learning, but the reality is, just give me the books and give me the assignments. I could do them on my own if that were the case. I think there has to be a little something more to a program than just, here’s your material. You guys talk about it and then present it and then we’re done with the class. I felt like that was where this particular program suffered.”



*Principal 3*

Principal 3 saw the rigor of the curriculum as owned by the student more so than the university program. He stated, “I think on all three counts it was appropriate for the program. I think rigor is something that can sometimes be misconstrued a little bit in education. I think sometimes we think of rigor as what the teacher lays out in front of us, when especially at that level, it should be what you are putting into it as a student...As long as there is not a ceiling on a particular project then I think the rigor is perfect because I should be able to take it wherever I need for it to go.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 did not find the rigor, coherence, and organization of his principal preparation program to be appropriate. He described his program as, “Poor quality, disconnected, disjointed, and not particularly aligned with any standards or framework for leadership. There was theory, but not a lot of effective practice.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 views his program as being “coherent and well organized, but lacking rigor.” As he recalled his experience he stated, “I didn’t feel necessarily that I was challenged academically. It was one of those: you read this and now let’s take a test on it, and there were some notes. Or you read this, and you end up going through some lecture and then take a test on it or do some sort of summative assessment. I didn’t feel necessarily like I was particularly challenged by the program, even though it gave me a lot of good general ideas.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 found some classes in his principal preparation program to be more rigorous than others. He recalled, “It was on a class by class basis. I would say the rigor in some courses: law and finance, those were areas that were definitely more intense...Those were areas where I felt I was prepared walking into my first position. I thought the coherence of the program, the organization of it, maybe I just went through the program at a difficult time. It did not prepare me in areas where I would have expected. Did it help in small ways? Absolutely. But overall, asking a graduate student to sit in class, read part of a text, and then report out on that information, to me was not always the most effective use of our time- going Round Robin around the class- nor was it the most effective way for us to learn. I struggled in some of those classes, as far as really being able to stay in tune, and getting relevance out of that class. I always try to take relevance out of each class, but some I struggled with more than others.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 felt that his principal preparation program lacked rigor, coherence, and organization. He explained, “At the time that I went through, the organization was poor, which is ironic for a program called Educational Organization and Leadership. Especially around the things you needed to get done, like your portfolio, your internship, all those things that are required for the state for endorsements and certification, - those things were very unorganized and somewhat frustrating for students because we never knew what needed to be included and when and how and where...As far as rigor, I think again, it depended on the professor. Some professors were more rigorous than others, especially

in terms of required readings, writing your critiques and your conversations based around issues of leadership. Some professors pushed you more than others. So the coherence across the program, I think that if all of the syllabi were followed like they were laid out, I think it would be very coherent and organized, but professors strayed from it, depending on their level of comfort.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 shared that in terms of the rigor, coherence, and organization of his principal preparation program, “Coherence and organization were there, but rigor, not so much.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 felt that the rigor of her program was comparable to principal preparation programs at other universities based on what she knew and had heard of about other universities. She felt that rigor varied from professor to professor, but she felt that her principal preparation program was strong in terms of organization and coherence. She stated, “I think that it also varied quite a bit by instructor... I only had few main kind of instructors, and there were two that I had the most, and their perceptions of those things were very different. There was one that thought that loading us up with a lot of work was the way to go, and there was one that thought that meaningful work was more important than the quantity. My perception of it from what I compared to other programs that I looked at or talked about was that the level of rigor in terms of requirements was probably about the same. Organization and coherence I think were excellent.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 felt that the rigor of his program varied depending on the course. He felt that the opportunity for coherence and organization was there, but he took the courses out of order, eliminating that possibility. He shared, “The rigor varied from course to course. Overall, I would not say that it was incredibly rigorous. It was in many ways, as rigorous as I made it, which means at times I made it really hard on myself and at other times, I did exactly what was needed.” In terms of his thoughts on the coherence and organization of his principal preparation program, Principal 10 stated, “...I didn’t go through a cohort. I did it in two years and as a result I was able to pick up courses whenever they were offered, and I didn’t go through in a sequence. So as far as having an organized coherence, I kind of messed that up myself when I went through. While I may have felt more coherence if I went through it the way that I think it was intended, I took like the Intro. to Administration class maybe 4th or 5th. (laughs). So there is no coherence if you do it that way.”

Table 9 displays how participants felt about their principal preparation program in the areas of rigor, coherence, and organization. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants believe that their principal preparation programs exhibited all three components. Thirty percent (n=3) of the participants perceived their principal preparation programs to exhibit none of these components. Thirty percent (n=3) of participants believed their programs to be consistently coherent and organized, but the rigor varied from course to course. Ten percent (n=1) of participants perceived the program to have rigor in some courses,

Table 9

*Explain Your Perception of the Level of Rigor, Coherence, and Organization in Your Principal Preparation Program*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Rigor Present</b>	<b>Coherence Present</b>	<b>Organization Present</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Number of Credit Hours</b>	<b>Length of Practicum</b>
Principal 1	X	X	X		34 hours	Two semesters
Principal 2				X	36 hours	One semester
Principal 3	X	X	X		30 hours	2 internship experiences (both done during the summer sessions)
Principal 4				X	36 hours	Two semesters
Principal 5		X	X		33 hours	One semester
Principal 6	Some, but not all courses were rigorous				36 hours	Two semesters
Principal 7				X	40 hours	Two semesters
Principal 8		X	X		34 hours	4 Internship Seminars: Internship experience was embedded within each course of the principal preparation program.
Principal 9	Some, but not all courses were rigorous	X	X		36 hours	Two semesters
Principal 10	Some but not all course were rigorous	X	X		40 hours	Two semesters

but no coherence or organization. Ten percent (n=1) of participants perceived the principal preparation program to be coherent and organized, but not rigorous.

#### **Question 14**

**Discuss how effectively your principal preparation program balanced the theory and practice of administration.**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 felt that his principal preparation program focused more on practice than theory. He recalled, “I think that the practice was more in place than the theory...I always respected that because they treated us like professionals and then occasionally the theorist was dropped in there- an academic who’s always been at the college level. That’s fine; you need that. But, it was more heavy in terms of practitioners, I would say.”

##### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 stated that he felt a disconnect between the theory and practice of administration. He felt that his program relied on current practitioners to teach the courses in his cohort. “I think there’s some disconnect between the theory and practice... For me, a lot of it had to do with the fact that it was in my building where I taught. It just felt like whoever was a Type 75 administrator at that point could teach these courses. That’s not necessarily the best approach because we had very ineffective teachers...I don’t know if Governor’s State even mentioned to them...this is what our university stands for, this is our mission or this is our drive...I think part of it has to do with the program’s set up, which depended on adjunct professors.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 believed that his principal preparation program did a great job of balancing the theory and practice of administration. He stated, “I think in most cases it did a really nice job... I recall we always had to bring back specific information from our schools or examples that would work within that framework...At the same time we were introduced to the theories, we were applying the theories to our reality.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 felt that his program did not effectively balance the theory and practice of educational administration. He described his program’s approach as, “Poorly. It was heavily reliant upon theory and very little to do with specific preparation of being a principal.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 felt that his principal preparation program did a thorough job with the theory of administration, but lacked in terms of the practice. He stated, “I think it did a great job with the theory of administration...we had the practicum... to have that one semester of learning the nuts and bolts of things it takes years to learn...Theory was wonderful. Practice of it maybe lacked a little.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 described his principal preparation program as having succeeded in balancing the theory and practice of administration. He stated, “I would say that there was a good balance, the number of classes that we had. I guess the support that we had,

as far as the classes that really brought us the practice of administration, versus just talking about the philosophy of it... I would say it was pretty well balanced.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 viewed his program as having effectively balanced the theory and practice of administration. He stated, “Honestly, I think that’s one of the strengths, and I may be on my own on this, because I hear a lot of students always say its too theoretical, it’s too theory based, I don’t know what I’m going to do, or how do I apply this. But I see theory as something that guides our practice and without theory we have nothing to pull from for our practice other than past experiences that may or may not be good or valid or research based. So I think my prep program did a good job of balancing theory with practice. Although others may say there wasn’t enough practice, but that’s where I think the yearlong internship provides you with that practice. I think some of the requirements in the principalship class, we had to do certain things around being a principal and case studies. I think there was a nice balance of theory and practice.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 viewed his principal preparation program as having more focus on theory than on practice. “It was definitely more heavy on the theory side than the practice side. It focused heavily on educational theory, but not so much aspects of leadership. It prepared me to be a great manager, but not necessarily a great leader.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 views her principal preparation program as being fairly well balanced. She stated, “My own personal preparation as far as practice goes was excellent, because I



was able to surround myself with people who would help me get there. Who would push me to be excellent. The theory part of things, I think was a little bit too theoretical. I remember using a couple of the books that I don't think I ever opened because it was just words on a page. It didn't mean anything to me. But I think the balance was pretty good.”

### *Principal 10*

Principal 10 felt that his principal preparation program provided a strong theory base, but struggled with addressing the practice of administration. He recalled, “I think that it attempted to balance theory and practice though. Obviously there are just gobs of theory. We're reading studies that have been accomplished and kind of balancing out kind of the pop current educational published theories that you can find in Ed. Leadership magazine...more rigorous studies...all that was useful and interesting. As far as balancing it out with real practice... that was really dependant on what I brought to the table or what other people in my class brought to the table. It wasn't dependant on anything really that U of I brought to it...because they weren't the ones kind of manufacturing that practice...You had go out and get it elsewhere...The internship itself tried to do that with the journals we did and the discussions we had about the journals we did, but because everybody in that internship program was...at various places: elementary schools, high schools, small rural schools, large semi-urban schools like our current one here, the experiences were so varied that it was really hard to get down to the nitty gritty, incredibly useful conversations about how the theory really informed our day

to day practice. So again, it was informed on what you brought to the table and who else was in the room.”

Table 10 highlights whether principals thought their principal preparation programs effectively balanced the theory and practice of administration or if the program focused more on theory or practice. Forty percent (n=4) of participants perceived their programs as having balanced theory and practice as they prepared new principals. Forty percent (n=4) of participants perceived the program as having a heavy focus on theory and lacking in opportunities to practice administration. While 20% (n=2) perceived their programs as having heavily relied upon the practice of administration with little focus on educational administrative theory. While Principals 4 and 6 both attended Aurora University, they expressed different perceptions of how well their principal preparation program balanced the theory and practice of administration. In the same turn, Principals 7 and 10 both attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, yet they expressed different perceptions of how well their principal preparation program balanced the theory and practice of administration.

Table 10

*How Effectively did your Principal Preparation Program Balance the Theory and Practice of Administration?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Balanced Theory and Practice of Administration</b>	<b>Heavy Focus on Theory</b>	<b>Heavy Focus on Practice</b>	<b>University Attended for Principal Preparation</b>	<b>Length of Practicum</b>
Principal 1			X	Northern Illinois University	Two semesters
Principal 2			X	Governor's State University	One semester
Principal 3	X			Concordia University	2 Internship experiences (both done during summer sessions)
Principal 4		X		Aurora University	Two semesters
Principal 5		X		Eastern Illinois University	One semester
Principal 6	X			Aurora University	Two semesters
Principal 7	X			University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Two semesters
Principal 8		X		National Louis	4 Internship seminars (Internship embedded within each course of the principal preparation program)
Principal 9	X			Bradley University	Two semesters
Principal 10		X		University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	Two semesters

**Question 15**

**How did your principal preparation program prepare you to be a successful practitioner?**

*Principal 1*

Principal 1 stated that his principal preparation program increased his practice of reflection about his role as principal. He stated, “It allowed me to reflect on what I do...and allowed me to look back at the work I was doing or going to be doing and think through all of the elements and all of the stakeholders.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 viewed his program as providing a base for his practice as an administrator, but felt that he needed to supplement it with continued professional learning while in the role. He said, “I do believe the program provided a base...I think it exposed me to the basics of research, to the basics of educational history, some practice in law. It gave me a base to where I said, Okay, I’m exposed to this material, but the reality is, if I’m going to go into practice and actually get into this position, I better ramp my game up big time here.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 felt that his program prepared him to think through decisions by looking at the possible effects of any decision made by the leader. He felt that his program could have pushed students more to think about the effects of decisions made. He said, “I think that every time a decision is being discussed in class where you’re discussing one of those situations or a decision you would make, what you need to be

forced into is looking at the possible consequences of those decisions. So I think that's the one thing that often programs can go further with. Here's the decision. We spent an hour talking about this decision and all the different possibilities. Now what are the possible consequences and how are we going to deal with each one of the possible consequences as they come about? My program could have benefited from doing more of that, I think. Looking at what is the aftermath of any particular approach that I take, or type of leadership style that I put into place in the school."

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 felt that his program prepared him to be a practitioner by having students look at real-world problems. He stated, "They attempted to review case law, case history, through case studies and group discussions...application of practices, through means of project, either program evaluation, implementing particular support for instruction or programs at the building level. Those were examples of things that we did to prepare, or that they did to prepare me."

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 spoke to how the portfolio process at his principal preparation program prepared him as a practitioner, but he wished that the process allowed him to explore other grade levels. He shared, "We had to submit a portfolio that showed certain artifacts...It was very specific as far as what we needed to do. I will say the one drawback for it was that I've been in high school my entire years in education, and when I did my practicum, my portfolio was based off of the practices that happened at the high school level. But I know very little about...I don't know as much about the elementary

school level... I feel like it may have prepared me some for the level in which I was making my portfolio, but lacked in some of those other areas.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 felt prepared by classes in which he had practical assignments that he felt as tools he could use in the role as principal. He stated, “Some classes I really felt supported in...I thought the assignments were practical...they were examples of proposals that we would potentially have to make as administrators.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 stated that the internship and the educational theory have impacted his work as a practitioner. He said, “I think the internship program where you had to have the 160 or 180 hours of observation, participation across the five standards for leadership, and having to document what you’re doing and when and how. I think that certainly helped with preparing myself to be a successful practitioner. I also go back to the readings from those classes...books based on research and theory...pulling from that to inform my practice has been very beneficial.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 credited his preparation program with extending his knowledge base for professional literature and his professional network of colleagues. He saw this as having been beneficial to his practice, “I think the one thing that was lasting was that it introduced me to a subset of literature and reading that once exposed to, I’ve continued along with. I’ve expanded my professional learning network, and my colleagues in the

area. In level of comfort, I hadn't had any difficulty in professional discussions, but I would say that would be the extent."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9's practice was impacted by her principal preparation program's setup. It allowed her to tailor make her mentor/intern relationship in a way that was comfortable for her, but also pushed her to be accountable. She stated, "I was able to choose my mentor and choose the people around me. I was able to create a situation that was approved by my advisors and the professors that would allow me to be successful...As far as being able to do the task that I had undertaken even with supervision. I was working with administrators who knew me well enough to hold me accountable."

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 credited his principal preparation program as helping him develop into a reflective practitioner. He stated, "There is a level of reflection that it brought to the table...I think that's very helpful. Where I found the preparation program to be most useful, is when I was working on specific challenges in my job (at that point as a department chair) and bringing those specific problems to the classroom and finding ways that I can come up with new ideas for this problem. If I could find some way to link it to what I was doing in the classroom or in my building as a whole, it was inspiring and fun."

Table 11

*How Did Your Principal Preparation Program Prepare You As a Practitioner?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How did your Principal Preparation Program Prepare You As a Practitioner?</b>
Principal 1	Reflective Practitioner
Principal 2	Exposure to elements of school administration
Principal 3	Decision making/ Problem Solving
Principal 4	Decision Making/ Problem Solving
Principal 5	Exposure to elements of school administration
Principal 6	Practical Tools that could be used in the role
Principal 7	Research and Literature Base
Principal 8	Research and Literature Base
Principal 9	Accountability
Principal 10	Reflective Practitioner and Decision Making/ Problem Solving

Table 11 displays how the participants perceived their principal preparation programs as having prepared them as practitioners. That is to say, what skill did they gain or enhance as a result of the program. Thirty percent (n=3) of participants improved in decision making and problem solving skills. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants improved in the practice of being a reflective practitioner. Twenty percent (n=2) gained exposure to elements of high school administration. Twenty percent (n=1) gained a research and literature base to refer to during the principalship. Ten percent (n=1) gained practical tools to use during the principalship. Ten percent (n=1) became more accountable to the role as principal.



**Question 16**

**Describe the faculty in your principal preparation program in terms of how up-to-date they were in their fields, and how well they balanced theory and practice.**

*Principal 1*

Principal 1 spoke about the faculty in his program as being up-to-date in their fields. He stated, “They were up to date. They were either current practitioners or current administrators that were adjunct. NIU doesn’t have a lot of full-time faculty, especially recently. They had more at the time. They were just recently retired, so they were very knowledgeable. You know, they knew all the new types of mandates like RTI, and PBIS...So, they got the game, you know in terms of accountability, that we’re playing now, which was helpful...Most of them were practitioners and what we did looked at it through a practical lens.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 felt that his principal preparation program struggled when it came to faculty. He stated, “This was an issue that I think the program struggled with. I would say 90 percent of my professors were adjunct professors. They were current administrators in the building that the cohort was housed in...I don’t think that was always good... I think there was a little disconnect between what they were presenting in front of us and what was actually occurring in the field...I think there was a bit of a disconnect there to just saying, I’m going to staff this with who’s around, as opposed to who’s qualified.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 perceived the retired administrators as having more time to prepare for courses than the administrators that were current practitioners. He also mentioned a desire for his professors to be more internet-savvy. He stated, “I think for the most part it was really good and I think there were a couple that weren’t as strong and as current in their practice...A few of the faculty or the professors I dealt with who are retired actually seemed more prepared to teach the classes...than maybe some of the current administrators that were professors. And that could be a function of practicing administrators having to deal with the now. Sometimes...you’re just kind of cranking through the nuts and bolts of your day at the school level, and then you’re walking into a night class at night. That can be difficult. You’re not always looking at the larger context around you, you know, what the state’s pushing down, the federal, and how this fits. You know probably when you’re retired, and that’s all you’re thinking about- the big picture...as a professor, you might have more time. So I think it might be a little bit surprising that you know some of my professors that were administrators and doing this concurrently maybe didn’t see that bigger picture sometimes, and didn’t seem as prepared as the retired administrators...Then when I was in my program it was maybe right at the cusp of that web 2.0, jumping off point, so it’s difficult to kind of hold that against somebody, and I think if I went through it now, I would hope that program’s are much more connected and they’re talking about really the necessity of instructional leaders being connected to others on the web. Because if they’re not, that would be a downfall in the program, I would look at now.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 mentioned that his principal preparation program faculty was knowledgeable and current in the field, but they lacked in terms of balancing theory and practice. He stated, “It was up-to-date and it was real time. But again, a lot of it was *theory.*”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 felt that his faculty was knowledgeable, but he felt that there was a lack in the practice of education administration. He shared, “The people who taught the program where I went at Eastern were extremely knowledgeable. A lot of them had published books, had been down in the trenches for years, and really knew a lot of the nuts and bolts of it all...really gave us some good ideas of what we could use, how to apply them, and what resources were out there for us. Again, I don’t think being able to write a paper on it prepared me for the practice of it. I don’t know that the ...semester long practicum necessarily prepared me quite as well for the practice of it either.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 felt that about half of his faculty was up to date and able to balance theory and practice. He found the faculty who were current practitioners to be more effective. He stated, “I would say if I had 12 classes, I probably had 6 retired administrators and I probably had 6 acting, practicing principals or assistant superintendents. I thought...the active ones that were currently working brought meaningful examples, brought a greater quality to the class each week. Those that were retired had some good knowledge, but many of those teachers or instructors were 3-5

years out of the profession and even 3-5 years doesn't seem like a long time out the administrative game, but a lot of things change, you know, with the emails from the state on a weekly basis, and you know their exposure to some of the information. They really tried to stay up on, but I think their exposure to some of the information was not as solid as someone who was getting this information on a regular basis.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 stated that his preparation program had a faculty with broad range of experiences. He stated, “It ranged from faculty who had been administrators fairly recently, to a combination of tenured track faculty who had experience with administrators, but very minimal. So they were going on the track of research in principal preparation. They were very much in touch with today's youth and the issues of today in terms of leadership. They were able to relate very well with our students our faculty, today's climate, No Child Left Behind, those sorts of things. There was the older faculty who were tenure track. There were some who had phenomenal experience in the public schools, k-12, but it was a long time ago, so they were able to pull from a lot of experiences from a decade or two decades ago, but they didn't have the practical experience with No Child Left Behind, or with other policies that are current. There were your non-tenure track faculty who were your advisors for principal prep. Or they were your clinical professors. And they were recently retired k-12 administrators, so they were coming straight out of the field. But they were very experienced administrators and they were recently out of the field, so they were able to give a lot recent feedback. I think there was a great mix when I was going through it of those three areas.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 viewed his faculty as being knowledgeable in educational theory, but not being up-to-date in terms of best practice. He shared, “I think they were all well learned individuals. I teach for a principal prep program right now, and I joke often with my students that they’re very lucky. It’s refreshing for them to see an active practitioner, because we’re so used to seeing retired administrators who may have or may not have been any good at their jobs. I think that was the biggest thing. They were up to date as far as knowledge or best practice. But as far as what it means to be a 21st century principal, I don’t think they had any semblance of recognition.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 shared that two faculty members taught multiple classes in her principal preparation program. In describing these two faculty members, she stated, “There were two that were kind of the mainstay. Those two were very, very different. One was actually a recently retired superintendent, who had retired like the year before, so he was extremely up to date, and had a lot of real world anecdotes or real world situations he could bring up for us to work through. The other one had spent his whole career focused on elementary school, and had not been very successful just in the public education world. And some of the things that he talked about were pretty out of date, and not able to translate easily to all levels- things that those of us in our twenties as the time, or early 30s realized were not going to work with any level of student. And then some of the adjuncts that I had were very good because they were currently practicing whatever it was they were teaching; they were area administrators or a psychologist or psychiatrist

who came in to teach one of the counseling classes. I felt like that part of things was really good. We really got to make some contacts in the community with people who we would encounter in our future positions.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10's perspective was that there were different types of professors in his principal preparation program. He viewed some as effective and some as ineffective. He described them in the following way, “Well first, I'll talk to you about the instructional supervision course that I had down here. I thought that course, that professor was incredibly up to date. He was pushing everybody's understanding about what good practice was and how you can observe it and push it yourself. Besides that, how up to date they were?... There basically are two types of professors, and it's rare that you have the balanced type of professor. So what I mean is, there is a professor who has always been in academia, and while I think it's easy to kind of pan those professors, at least that's part of the dialogue. Those are the professors that I actually like quite a bit, because they were bringing new ideas that I didn't experience on a day-to-day basis. If I brought a lot of my own practical knowledge into those classrooms, those professors and I were able to have great conversations. You know that tension was very productive. Then, there were professors that were the practitioners that the university had hired for the purpose of making sure that they had people who had worked in the schools delivering the content in the program, but most of those professors had already retired from the public schools, and were doing this as kind of their post-professional life. Those were almost universally useless classes. Good people that I'd like to talk with, but those

courses did not help, because they weren't necessarily up to date on what had been going on in the schools and might have in some cases been jaded in their thoughts about what can and can't happen in the school. Those types of classes weren't useful at all, and it's about 50/50 between those two. It really was the rare two classes that I took that had somebody who had been a practitioner in the schools for 8-10 years or fewer, you know I don't know exactly, and then went into academia afterwards. And the balance between those two was fascinating because that professor was able to embody that balance which was good to be a part of."

Table 12 illustrates that 50% (n=5) of participants reported that their faculties were comprised of mostly adjunct professors. Ten percent (n=1) of participants reported that their faculty was mostly full-time professors. Forty percent (n=4) of participants reported that their faculties were a mixture of adjunct and full-time professors. In terms of how up-to-date participants perceived their faculty to be, 40% (n=4) perceived the faculty as being up-to-date in their fields. Twenty percent (n=2) perceived their faculty as not being up-to-date. Thirty percent (n=3) perceived half of their faculty as being up-to-date, while the other half was not. Ten percent (n=1) felt that the faculty was up-to-date in the theories of educational administration, but not the practice. Concerning how well the faculty balanced theory and practice, 10% (n=1) felt that the faculty balanced theory and practice. Thirty percent (n=3) believed the faculty focused more on theory. Ten percent (n=1) perceived the faculty as focusing more on the practice of administration. Fifty percent (n=5) did not respond to this aspect of the question.

Table 12

*Participants' Perceptions of their Principal Preparation Faculty in Terms of Being Up-to-Date in their Fields and in How Well they Balanced Theory and Practice*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Type of Faculty (Adjunct Professors or Full-Time Professors)</b>	<b>Perception of How Up-to-Date the Faculty Members Were</b>	<b>How well the Faculty Balanced Theory and Practice</b>
Principal 1	Mostly Adjunct	Up- to- date	Mostly instructed through a practical lens
Principal 2	Mostly Adjunct	Not always up-to-date	
Principal 3	A mixture of Adjunct and Full-Time professors	Not always up-to-date	
Principal 4	Mostly Adjunct	Up-to-date	Instruction was more focused on theory
Principal 5	Mostly Full-Time Professors	Up-to-date	Instruction was more focused on theory
Principal 6	A Mixture of Adjunct and Full-Time Professors	Half up-to-date / Half not up-to-date	
Principal 7	A Mixture of Adjunct and Full-Time Professors	Up-to-date	
Principal 8	Mostly Adjunct professors	Up-to-date with theory, but not practice	Instruction was more focused on theory
Principal 9	Mostly Adjunct professors	Half up-to date / Half not up-to-date	Balanced theory and practice
Principal 10	A mixture of Adjunct and Full-Time Professors	Half up-to date / Half not up-to-date	



**Question 17**

**Was the faculty's size and areas of expertise aligned to the curriculum and student enrollment? Yes or No? Can you explain?**

*Principal 1*

Principal 1 thought that during the time he attended his principal preparation program, the faculty size and expertise was appropriate. He stated, "I don't know about the student enrollment element. I don't know how many people were going through Northern. I think the faculty shrunk, so I think they're stretched in terms of expertise aligned with curriculum. At the time, I always felt it was appropriate."

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 felt that the student teacher ratio did not vary, but he couldn't speak to the faculty's areas of expertise being aligned to the curriculum. He said, "Well, it's a cohort program, so our student size stayed the same. Our faculty was always one professor coming in and it was mainly an adjunct. Could I tell you if it was aligned to the curriculum? No I couldn't."

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 felt that his preparation program's faculty and size of expertise was aligned to student enrollment. He stated, "Yeah. I would say so."

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 viewed his principal preparation program faculty as being highly intentional in terms of content experts teaching related courses. He also found the size to be appropriate to his cohort. He stated, "Yes, So appropriate class size. I was in a cohort

model. We had roughly 15-17 students for each of our courses, and the expertise. What I didn't have were operations people teaching curriculum and instruction. We had practitioners in the areas of operations; we had practitioners in the areas of teaching and learning, and curriculum and instruction. When it came to school finance or school law, we had faculty that had demonstrated effectiveness in those areas within their own right."

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 felt that his preparation program's faculty was appropriately sized and that their areas of expertise were appropriate to student enrollment. He said, "The faculty had a great size and they really knew what they were talking about. They were continuously updating the faculty and looking for people who were very knowledgeable in those areas to teach those various areas."

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 felt that his faculty's expertise was generally appropriate, but described times when his preparation program struggled in this area. He stated, "I would say in general yes. I think that in times they struggled in certain classes finding professors, and I think that's when they looked to some of those retired administrators for some of that support... It seemed like certain professors would plug into spots where they needed them versus finding the right person for those classes."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 felt that the lack of diversity in areas of expertise among faculty was a weakness of his principal preparation program. He stated, "I would say one major gap in the areas of expertise was there was no one who knew anything about leadership for

bilingual education or schools with bilingual programs or English language learners, which is a major need for educational leaders to have- working knowledge of how to lead schools with English language learners. I think the size was appropriate. There was really only one professor who hit on the issue of equity. The rest did but kind of in a round about way that didn't really talk about new leadership theories around leadership for social justice or transformative leadership. So I don't know I'd say maybe average. Areas of expertise were decent but didn't cover everything."

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 felt that his preparation lacked in terms of the faculty's area of expertise. He said, "I'd say no... We were a CPS cohort and there were no people with Chicago experience. So I don't believe that necessarily met the needs."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 felt that her principal preparation program's faculty size was appropriate and that it attempted to keep up to date in the area of curriculum. She stated, "I think it was all aligned. The enrollment is not super big, just because it's a fairly small university to begin with and doesn't offer anything above a Master's or certification. I do think that some of the areas of curriculum...were changing so quickly that the curriculum probably wasn't keeping up with it. But I do think having the... current practitioners probably helped to keep it up to date, more than it would have been otherwise."

*Principal 10*

Upon reflection, Principal 10 was unsure if the faculty expertise in his preparation program met the needs of all the students. He stated, "I think everything matched fine. I

am probably biased in that regard, because I never worked in an elementary school, and I was not interested in working in elementary schools in the future, and so I wasn't really seeking that out. Almost all of the people...in the program really who had experience in the public schools in administration had that experience in 6-12 buildings.”

Table 13

*Was the Faculty's Size and Areas of Expertise Aligned to the Curriculum and Student Enrollment?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Faculty Size Aligned to Curriculum and Student Enrollment</b>	<b>Faculty's Areas of Expertise Aligned to Curriculum and Student Enrollment</b>
Principal 1	Yes	Yes
Principal 2	Yes	No- "Not sure about areas of expertise"
Principal 3	Yes	Yes
Principal 4	Yes	Yes
Principal 5	Yes	Yes
Principal 6	Yes	No- "Sometimes lacked in areas of expertise"
Principal 7	Yes	No- "Lack of diversity in areas of expertise"
Principal 8	Yes	No- "Lacked in areas of expertise pertaining to CPS"
Principal 9	Yes	No- "Struggled with expertise"
Principal 10	Yes	No- "Lots of expertise in elementary, but most students were secondary education"

Table 13 depicts that 100% (n=10) of participants perceived the size of the faculty of their principal preparation programs to be aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment. Forty percent (n=4) of participants believed the faculty's area of expertise to be aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment. Sixty percent (n=6) of

participants perceived the faculty's area of expertise was not aligned to the curriculum and student enrollment, citing that the expertise lacked in some areas.

### **Question 18**

#### **Did you find your principal preparation program's recruitment efforts and/or admissions process to be rigorous?**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 felt that the recruitment process was appropriately rigorous. He stated, "I thought that it was appropriate. They had the GRE. I think you had to submit an essay, some other elements...I don't remember it being like this is super difficult or something like that. I just remember it being appropriate to the application process."

##### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 did not feel that his preparation program's recruitment process or admissions process were rigorous. He stated, "There was no recruitment other than the fact that someone that was teaching the first class put out an email or letter to the entire faculty that said, hey if you want to get a Type 75, we're having one here...That was the effort for recruitment... I think admissions were very, very relaxed. I know we had to take the GRE, but the score didn't matter. There were some basic requirements that were even waived, like people that didn't teach for 2 years. That was one of the requirements...They would say, well, we'll take first year teachers as long as we know you're going to be teaching for two years...I'm not sure why they waived that, but they did. So it just seemed like we gotta get the numbers in here, so we're going to bend some rules. I'm not sure that's the best approach either."

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 did not view his program's recruitment or admissions process as rigorous. He stated, "It wasn't overly rigorous. It wasn't a competitive program to enter at all. It was pretty straightforward. It was an application, no interview process."

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 also viewed his program's recruitment and admissions process as lacking rigor. He stated, "No, not a lot of rigor. Absolutely not. It was a standard baseline of criteria. Did you meet the criteria? Do you have an interest of being in the program? Then you're admitted."

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 felt that his program's recruitment and admissions process lacked rigor also. He answered the question, "No, I wouldn't say necessarily. I wouldn't say that to be the case, but again I didn't feel like I was necessarily challenged in a lot of aspects of the program."

*Principal 6*

In response to the same question, Principal 6 shared, "I don't know if at the time it was as rigorous as some other programs were."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 saw the issue of rigor in recruitment and admissions as a problem in his program. He described, "Thinking back to the recruitment, I wasn't really recruited. I applied on my own. The application process was pretty rigorous. It was pretty intense. It was a long application, you had to provide proof, recent writing samples and those sorts

of things, um but as far as rigor, I felt like some of my colleagues, I don't know if it was rigorous enough... It's anonymous right?...I didn't feel like there were many that I felt were going to be principals that really had a good grasp of leadership and equity and strong intellectuals. I didn't see a whole lot of that. And I think the issue for this program was the lack of diversity in the students' enrolled. It was pretty much white middle class background students, predominately male. So there were white females as well. It was probably kind of half and half of female to male students. But in my two years in the program, there were only two students of color in the program, and they kind of went through the same track as me so we had all of our classes together, but that was two out of 22, just in my cohort. Then I would say the other years, the students that started before and after me, I don't remember any other students of color in those programs. So the recruitment effort is an issue.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 did not find his principal preparation program's recruitment and admission's process to be rigorous. He stated, “A flyer was in my mailbox to join the cohort. So I did.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 did not find her program's recruit or admissions process to be rigorous. She stated, “From my perspective it was not rigorous. It may have been for someone who didn't have a master's yet.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 shares that his principal preparation program's recruitment process was not rigorous, but the admissions process was more involved. He stated, "The recruitment process? No. It was a complicated application process, but there was no interview at all. As far as acceptance, I know they turned people down around here, so there was a bit of a screening process, that's for sure, but it never really hit me, so I can't speak to it directly."

Table 14

*Did You Find Your Principal Preparation Program's Recruitment and/or Admissions Process to be Rigorous?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Did You Find Your Principal Preparation Program's Recruitment and/or Admissions Process to be Rigorous?</b>
Principal 1	Recruitment and admissions process was appropriate
Principal 2	No- There were no recruitment efforts
Principal 3	No- Non competitive
Principal 4	No- If you had an interest in being in the program, and met the baseline criteria, you were admitted
Principal 5	No
Principal 6	No
Principal 7	No recruitment efforts, but application process was rigorous
Principal 8	No- a flyer was in my mailbox concerning joining the cohort
Principal 9	No
Principal 10	No recruitment efforts, but application process was rigorous

Table 14 depicts participants' perceptions of the rigor in the recruitment and/or admissions process of their preparation program. Ten percent (n=1) of participants perceived that the recruitment and/or admissions process was appropriately rigorous. Seventy percent (n=7) of participants believed that the recruitment and/or admissions



process was not rigorous. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants perceived that while there were no recruitment efforts made, the application process was rigorous.

### **Question 19**

#### **How were you selected for admission into your principal preparation program?**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 did not have an intense selection process. Concerning his admission into his principal preparation program, Principal 1 recalled, “I don’t think I had to do an interview. You just apply and then you get a letter of whether you were admitted or not.”

##### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 described his admissions process as follows, “I met the basic qualifications. I took the GRE. I know our score didn’t matter, but I did take it. I had 2 years of teaching and I completed the application. It was a 45 minute meeting in a lecture hall at the school and the next couple of months class started.”

##### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 remembered his admission process as involving more components than the application. He described, “It was simply based upon an application and... there were a couple of essays involved, and letters of recommendations.”

##### *Principal 4*

When asked how he was selected into his principal preparation program, Principal 4 recalled, “By meeting all of the baseline criteria. You had to have letters of recommendation. You had to demonstrate a capacity in your undergraduates to continue

in graduate work...Lastly, was an interest and support from your supervisor and administrator saying yes, I see that this person has the capacity to do well in this area.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 recalled the application process and the requirements for his application into his principal preparation program. He stated, “I simply filled out an application. I know that I had to put in some of my leadership qualities, my years of experience, and I submitted it and was accepted...I don’t know if they actually turned people away... I think maybe you even had to have letters of recommendation.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 did not find his admissions process to be difficult. He stated, “Between the application process, undergraduate GPA, and letters of reference, I don’t remember it being more difficult than that.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 described his admissions process as simple. He stated, “Basically through the application process. I received notification that I was selected and that I was accepted.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 had little to recall from his admissions process. He said he was admitted based on a required assessment. He stated, “We had to take the Miller’s Assessment.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 recalled the admission process for her principal preparation as follows, “It was based on the graduate transcripts that I submitted and maybe two recommendations from administrators that I worked with. I think there was a writing sample that I had to submit as well about my motivation and intentions.”

*Principal 10*

In regards to his admissions process, Principal 10 began his program by taking some classes without being a degree candidate. He later applied to the program. He recalled, “I took a few classes at the U of I without being a degree candidate before I got the 75. I had already been working on a few classes towards a master’s in educational policy studies, in that department, but not as a degree candidate. And so, some of the professors knew me, and I was able to turn to them for letters of recommendation. Other than the application, there were a few specific essays that I had to write. I do remember a professor emailing me back saying that my essay was well written and there was a little bit of clarification that he wanted on two other points.”

Table 15 depicts participants’ descriptions of how they were selected for admissions into their principal preparation program. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants stated that their admissions process consisted of an application only. Eighty percent (n=8) of participants stated that the admissions process included multiple components. The components included: application, GRE, Miller’s Assessment, letters of recommendations, undergraduate transcripts, writing samples, and statement of

motivation and intention. However, none of the participants were involved in any on-campus interview procedures.

Table 15

*How Were You Selected for Admissions into your Principal Preparation Program?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How were you selected for admissions into your principal preparation program?</b>
Principal 1	Application only
Principal 2	Application, GRE, meeting basic requirements
Principal 3	Application, essays, letters of recommendation
Principal 4	Application, undergrad transcripts, letters of recommendation
Principal 5	Application, letters of recommendation
Principal 6	Application, undergrad transcripts, letters of recommendation
Principal 7	Application only
Principal 8	Application, Miller's Assessment
Principal 9	Application, undergrad transcripts, letters of recommendation, writing sample, statement of motivation and intentions
Principal 10	Application, letters of recommendation, essays

### **Question 20**

#### **How were the graduation standards communicated to students?**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 recalled that the graduation standards in his program were communicated through advisors and group meetings to go over expectations. He stated, "Advisors. Through the professors and there were occasional meetings where they would bring everybody together and say once you have completed "x" number of courses, you're about to go into your internships. Here's what's remaining... They have a real helpful advisor on staff that you can call up for the ins and outs of the 75 and doctoral programs. So he's a good person to get a hold of."

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 recalled graduation requirements being explained in an orientation meeting. He stated, “There was one meeting that the university had that gave you a program outline and it said if you take these classes at this time, you’ll graduate on time. That was really it...It did also mention that you’re going to have these practicums to complete at the end of our experience and that you’ll get a practicum advisor, and you’ll have to work with an administrator, so start looking and thinking about who you’d want to work with. The reality is, in that one meeting it covered your graduation requirements.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 expressed that each faculty member communicated throughout the graduation standards of his program. He stated, “That was throughout and often. It was touched on by each professor, especially the internship requirements, and there was a portfolio that we had to have, that we built throughout our program...Each professor had a piece that they would speak to: Ok this is how my class fits into your portfolio, which was really your lasting project...Obviously the internship. So it was communicated throughout the program.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 described his preparation program as having clearly defined and communicated graduation standards. He stated, “It’s part of the student handbook at the university level. The criteria, the outline of the cohort model, the scope and sequence of courses were provided, the benchmarks were provided, potential outcomes, action

research or thesis was clearly delineated, and to what rigor that needed to be completed with was clearly outlined as well. Like, there were no secrets. Here's where you start. Here's where you end. Here's the quality of the work you need to do from point A to point B in order to be eligible to graduate.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 described his program as clearly outlining the graduation standards. He stated, “The standards were pretty straightforward as far as the GPA that we needed to earn and exactly what we needed to do to earn our degree, and what they would do to help us out.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 recalled that an advisor explained his preparation program's graduation standards. He shared, “Through a meeting with the graduate school advisor. We met regularly, and actually she was very good. She was terrific at explaining the entire program. She was always willing to help.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 viewed his principal preparation program as effectively outlining graduation standards. He explained, “They had a document that outlined all of the courses that were required. All of the assignments,...the requirements for state certification were all on one document. And each course you had a checklist that you could check off as you took these courses and passed them.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 felt that his principal preparation program clearly explained the graduation standards. He explained, “That was pretty clear. They went over that during an admissions seminar and it was all on their website. So those were communicated pretty well.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 recalled that an advisor communicated the graduation standards to her. She stated, “I remember sitting down with an advisor that first kind of go-round and looking at the program and looking at scheduling and where I could fit things in.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 shared that the graduation standards in his program were communicated through the Introduction course, which he took out of order. He also referenced an explanatory document online, and an advisor. He recalled, “Oh, you know in that course I told you that I took 4th, which was designed as an intro course, I had a packet that I had gotten myself online. So I just found that myself, but it had all those things in it. But in that 4th course, it was laid out more specifically. I guess I was assigned an advisor, but I never ever met with my advisor. My advisor came to my class once and was an observer in that class, and as we went around and introduced ourselves. He said, oh good to meet you, and I said oh, you know what? I think you’re my advisor. It just was never part of the program.”

Table 16

*How Were Graduation Standards Communicated to Students?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How Were Graduation Standards Communicated to Students?</b>
Principal 1	Advisor
Principal 2	Orientation Meeting
Principal 3	Each Faculty Reiterates
Principal 4	Handbook
Principal 5	n/a—Principal 5 did not recall how graduation standards were communicated, but knew that they were clearly outlined for students because he was aware of the standards
Principal 6	Advisor
Principal 7	Document checklist
Principal 8	Admissions Meeting
Principal 9	Advisor
Principal 10	Introduction Course, Document checklist, and Advisor

Table 16 outlines how the graduation standards were communicated to participants. Forty percent (n=4) of participants stated that an advisor communicated to them the graduation standards. Thirty percent (n=3) received the standards through handbooks or other documents, such as a checklist for graduation standards. Twenty percent (n=2) received the graduation standards in an orientation or admissions assembly. Ten percent (n=1) of participants received the graduation standards from faculty. Ten percent (n=1) received graduation standards in an introduction course. Ten percent (n=1) did not state how he received the graduation standards, but that they were clearly communicated. Principal 10 received the graduation standards in multiple ways.



**Question 21****How did your principal preparation program emphasize high quality research?***Principal 1*

Principal 1 describes his program as emphasizing research to a degree, but not the same degree as his current doctoral program. He stated, “ I think they always emphasized...knowing what your source is, and making sure it’s a reputable source, but I don’t remember the emphasis on the peer review journals and type of stuff, which now I really see in my doctoral work.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 described his program as providing a course that overviewed types of research. He stated, “There was really no emphasis on research. There was a basic introductory course...I mean it covered everything: qualitative, quantitative, historical...It just gave us a really nice base.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 stated that his preparation program emphasized high quality research. He stated, “That was a huge emphasis. I think each one of my professors bought in specific research that was specific to them, and they would also have some critiques of it. I mean it may not be as in depth as you would expect in a doctoral program, but for a master’s program I thought it was appropriate.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 mentioned that his program emphasized high quality research. He stated, “Yeah, It was a foundational principle, that we need to use practices that were

researched based and had been proven to be effective. And they gave us the skills to discern between different approaches to studies and taught us to be critical thinkers.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 stated that his preparation program emphasized high quality research. He said, “They put a lot of stress on high quality research--scientifically based research.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 shared that his program emphasized high quality research and that he feels prepared when applying research in his role. He stated, “They were supportive in that area and that’s something that I feel pretty adequate- that I can find the information that I need to present something or that I need to make better, informed decisions.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 saw the lack of emphasis on high quality research as a weakness of his program. He stated, “Thinking back, we really only had one course that made us do literature reviews. And I think that was more because of the professor, not really because of the curriculum. I really didn’t start reviewing literature until my doc program. There was one class that I did do a small literature review for. Other than that, you really didn’t critique it, you didn’t learn about research, you just took what you read as that was research and that was good research. Maybe because I thought there would be more of an emphasis around research and theory, and there was, I think, more than other universities close by would have done. But, I don’t think graduating with my master’s I was able to critique literature or critique research at all. It was a kind of, here’s what the research says and you take it as it is type thing.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 did not perceive his program to have an emphasis on high quality research. He stated, “Not at all really. I’m sure there was a research project. So I don’t know that it was really anything specific.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 10 was not required to do any research in her program’s Type 75 program because she already had a Master’s Degree. She stated, “No it did not. And I say that, the one caveat I use is that I didn’t do the full master’s. I just did the certificate. I did not take the research class there. My understanding of it was a that it was pretty standard Research 101 kind of class, but it was not anything out of the ordinary, but I also did not do it. Nor was I expected to present any research to get my certificate.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 described his program’s lack of emphasis on high quality research as a “glaring oversight”. He described, “There were two ways to make that happen right? It’s a differentiated program, so if you were interested in going into academia yourself, as a student then you wouldn’t get the M.Ed. right? You would get the M.S. and you would do a full research problem at the end. I did not do that because of the speed at which I wanted to complete the program. For me, going through with the aim of M.Ed with the Type 75, the research, the quality of the research, was, I mean, I rarely did any original research at all, besides lit reviews and such...Did I do case studies? Was I asked to do any field research myself? Did we look at methodologies for such things? Not at all. In fact, we rarely even examined the methodologies of the studies that we discussed in class.

I can speak to that a little bit. I am almost done with the coursework for my PhD program right now at the U of I as well, and it really was glaring early on in that program how little they had focused on methodologies and actual individual research in the M.Ed program before that. So it was kind of a glaring oversight.”

Table 17

*How Did Your Principal Preparation Program Emphasize High Quality Research?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How Did Your Principal Preparation Program Emphasize High Quality Research?</b>
Principal 1	By expecting students to use reputable sources
Principal 2	Through an introduction to a research course
Principal 3	Through readings, discussions, and critiques of specific research
Principal 4	Explaining foundational principles of research and how to discern reputable sources
Principal 5	Emphasizing scientifically based research
Principal 6	Preparing students to apply research to their current roles
Principal 7	Program lacked an emphasis on high quality research
Principal 8	Program lacked an emphasis on high quality research
Principal 9	Program lacked an emphasis on high quality research
Principal 10	Program lacked an emphasis on high quality research – “glaring oversight”

Table 17 depicts the participants’ perceptions of how well the principal preparation program emphasized high quality research. Forty percent (n=4) of participants felt that their programs lacked an emphasis on high quality research. Principal 10 describes the lack of emphasis as a “glaring oversight.” Sixty percent (n=6) of participants described their programs as emphasizing high quality research in a number of ways, including: how to discern and use reputable sources, critiques of research, the

foundational principles of research, how to apply research to the role of the principal, and readings of scientifically-based research.

### **Question 22**

**In your role as new principal, how do you use student achievement data to improve student outcomes?**

#### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 highlighted the multiple ways in which he uses student achievement data to improve student outcomes. He stated, “We have professional learning communities. So, our departments are working on looking at student outcomes and working in teams to come up with strategies to improve the learning of the students. We also have the E-PASS system, so EXPLORE, PLAN, and ACT. We monitor student progress on that and obviously with the strict growth model coming into play for principals this year, we’re finalizing what are the final indicators that we want to look at for our own evaluation. But we’ve kind of always looked at failure data, we’ve always looked at EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT data, and we’ve always looked at the results from the common assessments to make decisions and come up with other additional programs that we have to have. What are some parts we should, or we need to implement through those professional learning communities and departments? We then talk to the department heads about how they are working towards the SMART goals that they submitted at the beginning of the year, that we generate. So really, the PLCs are the vehicle by which we make decisions on data.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 described the way he uses measures of success to impact student outcomes. He stated, “Right now we do have a philosophy in our district...that we’re gonna use data to make decisions. A lot of times what I find is...people will say we need an extra math class. Well, do we really need a math class? Has anyone actually visited that math class? Let’s find out how the students are performing. There is the thought with data being in principals’ evals this year and data going into teachers’ evals in the near future here, I think we’ve already laid the groundwork that data is important and you have to make decisions based on it. With that being said we do use indicators of success here. So we’re gonna look at graduation rate, attendance rate, ACT scores, PSAE scores. We are already looking at data to say if we’re going to affect student achievement, let’s make sure it’s measurable.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 described the multi-faceted approach he implemented to use student achievement data to improve student outcomes. “That’s one of the things that I’m most excited about. You know last spring when I interviewed for this position, I laid out something that I’d worked with at my previous school, which is a multi-faceted student achievement measure. It’s also an award that students can get upon graduation, so it works on both fronts. It works on student motivation on their side because this is something they can achieve, but it also takes a more global view of student achievement as a school. There are 8 different categories that we ask students to achieve in to earn this excellence award; we call it. Everything from participating in extra-curriculars to

community service, to the rigor of the classes that they take, so they have to take either an AP course or what we call a Capstone course. That's like the last elective in a particular track. In the academics and in their attendance, and the number of credits they earn beyond graduation requirements, so they have to earn 3 credits more than is required for graduation. So there are a number of different things. So what I'm excited about is now I have 8 different areas that I can look at and see what areas are we making gains, and what areas are we short in, and they can be a much more targeted focus than kind of what we do with students. So if I see participation numbers are shifting or going downwards I can compare student participation to GPA and we can produce correlation to their parents to show them, you know when your students are involved -and we're not just saying it anymore- When they're involved in 3 or more activities, this is what happens to their GPA, and we'll weigh those out and communicate to students and parents."

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 defined his framework for using student achievement data to improve student outcomes. He stated, "It starts with, we are a data driven school. We use the principals for CEC, the Consortium for Educational Change. So we are a school that focuses on results, collaboration, and leadership. So we are heavily reliant upon—we begin and end with our data sources."

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 described how his school has focused on using student achievement data more effectively. He stated, "A big initiative we're working on this year in our school... We've been using data for probably the last two years to try to help teachers

make decisions on things. I think really more recently since the principals are now being graded on...since we're being evaluated on student growth, we're really trying to look out there to see what kind of data we can get and use for feedback. We had, as a matter of fact, an early release today, and one of the things we were looking at was a program called Exam View, where we're really trying to have all of the teachers submit target based assessments, summative assessments, and this Exam View, can take these targets and break them down for us, so we can see exactly the areas where students are lacking in, and where they need help. I know a lot of our teachers are starting to use pre assessments to give them focus and direction that they need to use in each unit, and then basing their assessment off of the needs of the students.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 described how his PLCs use student achievement data to impact student outcomes. He stated, “We use it all the time here. In my current school we use professional learning communities in which our departments and PLCs meet as a common planning time, weekly at the minimum. They have every other day, time available for common planning time within their department, but we meet as large groups at least once a week. Then at times per subject per course, they break out and they use that time for common planning and looking at data. As far as looking at data we use our Type 1 assessments, our EPASS data, so we're using our EXPLORE, PLAN, ACT data, as well as, we also utilize the MAP assessment here and those benchmarks are three times a year. As far as common assessments within our departments, all of our courses have quarterly common assessments as well as semester, and with those quarterly common



assessments we're able to house that information through mastery management. So the actual collection of it is very convenient for the teachers. Our big push is to move teachers from making some of those gut decisions to making data driven decisions. So actually using that data that they've produced from assessments and put it into action in their instruction. And the four main questions for us are: what do students need to learn, how are they learning it, are they learning it, and if they're not learning it what types of interventions are we putting into place, and who are those students that are mastering in areas? How are we able to extend for them? Those are the main questions that we're looking at in our PLC meetings and that's what drives our discussions."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 described his school's holistic approach to using student achievement data to impact student outcomes. He stated, "This year, as principal of this school, we're using data across multiple areas to improve student outcomes. And there's a combination of things that we're looking at. We're looking at a lot of structured- we refer to them as three tiers of assessment. Tier 1 would be your standardized state tests, Tier 2 would be your local district benchmarks and formative assessments, and Tier 3's are your classroom based individual assessments. We are using all three to make decisions around school improvement, to measure student growth, and to create action plans around, to improve student outcomes.

So what I really want to stress in this conversation and moving forward, that we're not just focusing on Tier 1, the standardized tests, as the end all/be all data for school improvement. Although it should inform us of where our students are at, it should

inform us of how our students are doing, these are very—at the high school level there is only one assessment that's given across the state at the junior level. So just using that is very limited in terms of looking at student learning. We look at district assessments that we give to form our instructional program to inform us as we move forward with different areas of teaching and learning and curriculum alignment. We have the Discovery Education assessment. It's an assessment in math, reading, English Language Arts, that are aligned to standards. And so freshman, sophomores, and juniors take the test in fall, winter, and spring and we use this to determine student growth. How many students are making average growth, above average growth and below average growth from each test? And then we structure our teaching and learning around that.

We have instructional sharing days where we bring in course teams to look at the data. We get subs and we have half days where we bring in teams and look at the data around teaching and learning. We also have early release Wednesdays where students leave 45 minutes early and teachers meet in course teams. So all Algebra I teachers are meeting together; they're reviewing their data. They're looking at student work; they're looking at their curriculum guide, and they're looking at their Understanding by Design framework of their courses. That's one piece of data, that's student data.

We're also looking at representation of students in courses. High school levels are notorious for tracking. So we've moved away from multiple tracks and at this point we only have two tracks, the AP track and the non-AP track. We're making progress in terms of representation of students of color, basically our student demographics representing the AP track and non-AP track. We're making progress but we're not there yet. Students

of color are underrepresented in AP and over represented in special education and overrepresented in discipline referrals. So that data we're continuously looking at to help us because if we can get a better representation of our students in those courses, our student data will reflect that as we look at breaking down student data in those different courses. We're looking at discipline and behavior data on a monthly basis. We're starting to share that with the entire faculty and celebrate more our successes and talk about areas of improvement. It's kind of a PBIS model of tiered intervention, and I hate to use the word intervention but RTI, Response to Intervention. I'd rather use Response to Instruction. So looking at ways to provide additional support for students who need it based on data, including behavior and academic data."

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 described his approach to using student data as the core of all of the work at his school. He shared, "It defines everything that we do! So for us, we have 7 major goals as a building and as a district and each week we take a sample size of those and communicate those to staff and on a monthly basis we meet with two different teams, the building leadership team and the administrative team to discuss our progress towards those goals, based on the data--How we can adapt midstream to move forward if we need to change route."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 described her school as having little experience with data usage. She is currently building the use of student achievement data into the culture of the school. She stated, "That's an interesting question to me at this point in my job, because I have

switched districts this year... In this building there is little to no data collected...I didn't know anybody still did that! So right now, there truly is only one data source. I am in the process of working with the newly formed teams and committees with the faculty, to not only generate more data, but to use that data when it comes to developing the Response to Intervention that does not exist here. So right now, the main thing I'm trying to do is use the data that I have right now, to get the kids that are coming in below standards, into some sort of RTI."

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 described how his teachers use student achievement data as a diagnostic tool. He shared, "We use it in a variety of ways. We use it as a universal screener initially to kind of judge the integrity of our interventions and programs within the school. So that's sort of the macro scale, and we use different assessments. And we also use it as kind of the initial diagnostic that our teachers use on a more regular basis, or I should say on course teams. Teachers look at information from MAP tests, and to a more limited extent, some standardized tests as well."

Table 18 and Figure 8 depict the participants' descriptions of how they use student achievement data to improve student outcomes in their schools. The reader will note that these data total more than 100% as that the participants often listed multiple measures. Thirty percent (n=3) of participants describe their approach as using data-driven decision making in every aspect of the school. Forty percent (n=4) of participants mentioned the E-PASS assessments, PLAN, EXPLORE, and the ACT as key data sets. Thirty percent (n=3) of participants stated that they use a multi-faceted or tiered

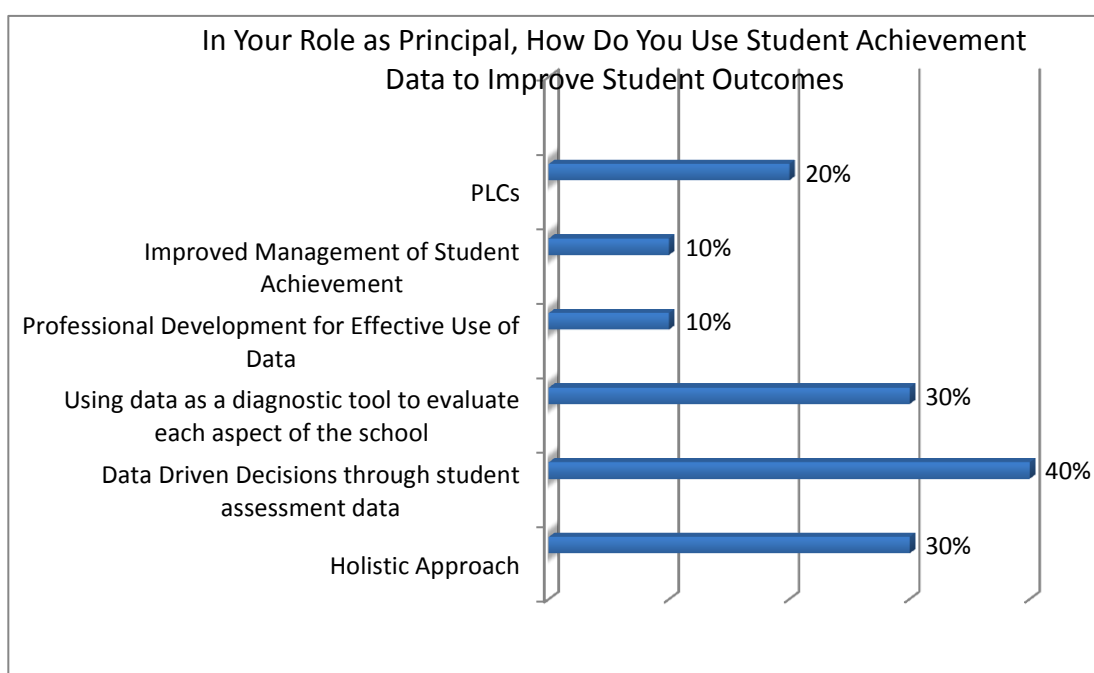
Table 18

*In Your Role as Principal, How Do You Use Student Achievement Data to Improve Student Outcomes?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How do You Use Student Achievement Data to Improve Student Outcomes?</b>
Principal 1	Data Driven Decisions: through PLCs, the E-PASS system (PLAN, EXPLORE, and ACT assessments)
Principal 2	Data Driven Decisions: through the E-PASS system
Principal 3	Holistic Approach: improving student outcomes through an 8 tiered, multi-faceted system
Principal 4	Data Driven Decision-making in every aspect of the school
Principal 5	Data Driven Decisions: improved management of student achievement data through ExamView
Principal 6	Data Driven Decisions: through PLCs, the E-PASS system, benchmarks, common assessments and additional assessments
Principal 7	Holistic Approach: improving student outcomes through a 3 tiered approach to assessments, PLCs, student demographic data, discipline data, Special Education Data, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, and Response to Intervention
Principal 8	Data Driven Decision-making in every aspect of the school
Principal 9	Developing Response to Intervention practices in the school and providing professional development about effective use of data for faculty
Principal 10	E-PASS, Data Driven Decision-Making: Data used as a diagnostic tool to judge the integrity of every program and initiative in the school.

approach, such as Response to Intervention, in using student achievement data to improve student outcomes. Principal 3 uses an 8-tiered approach in his school, which focuses on student achievement, student motivation, and student participation in honor's level courses and extra-curricular events. Principal 7 uses a number of data sets to improve student outcomes including: a 3-tiered approach to looking at student assessment data, PLCs, student demographic data, discipline data, Special Education Data, Positive Behavior Interventions and Support data, and Response to Intervention data. Twenty

percent of participants (n=2) use student achievement data in PLCs to improve student outcomes. Ten percent (n=1) of participants use professional development for effective use of data as a means of improving student outcomes. Ten percent of participants (n=1) attempt to improve management of student achievement data to improve student outcomes.



*Figure 8.* In Your Role As Principal, How Do You Use Student Achievement Data to Improve Student Outcomes?

### **Question 23**

**Describe the length and quality of your internship/practicum experience.**

#### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 found his internship to be beneficial and spoke to the quality of his supervisor versus the university advisor. He stated, “It was a semester... The quality of it was excellent. I had to work with my department head, which was really hard. I got a lot

out of it. But, honestly, I cannot say the same for my advisor. He was very hands off, which was fine, because I had a good supervisor, but at the same time, I'm sure that plenty of people that didn't have the same level of on site supervisors, they could really fall through. But I knew that the work that I did...learned a lot from it, and I was really prepared for my department chair position and my assistant principalship, and ultimately the principalship. Stuff that we talked about six years ago, I still reflect on that, but that wasn't necessarily the university, that was probably a matter of my supervisor.”

### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 found his semester long internship to be a valuable experience. He stated, “I think that it was solid. I really did. I did commit personally to saying I'm going to take this seriously. I did the two practicums. I got a wide range of experience...I dealt with personnel, then I dealt with transportation. I did some athletic stuff. I did some teaching and learning stuff. So I really tried to touch a lot of the different administrative positions. It was a semester.”

### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 had two summer internship experiences. He found both to be very hands on. He stated, “We had 2 internship experiences. I could look back to see how exactly how many hours they were. In my particular case I did both of my experiences in the summer. One summer I did my initial one and that was more of a project based. So, I actually created a project here in the school, and it was more of a summer leadership institute for students that we ran with some faculty here. I invited particular students to participate over the summer and do some leadership activities, and these were students

that we knew were going to be you know officers in clubs and captains of sports teams, and things like that. So that was one, and my second one was more experiential. You know, walking through what a leader does, and that was in our freshman summer academy. We have a program where 8th graders, if they're coming in below a particular score on the EXPLORE test we require them to attend a summer academy. And it's about 6 weeks long, and focused in both literacy and math. Some of the students have to attend both sessions, some just one or the other, depending on their scores. So I worked with the administrator of that program for the 6 weeks."

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 did not value his internship experience. He stated, "It was minimally engaging: self-selected activities, cursory supervisory meetings and outlines- not very intensive, whatsoever. My practicum or field experience did not prepare me for being a principal. Did it prepare me for being an administrator? Yes, but not a principal."

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 described his interview as well organized, but noted some areas where improvement was needed. He shared, "The practicum was supposed to be like a 6 month process...and they state specifically what we needed to do to fulfill certain parts of our portfolio and what sort of activities would suffice in those areas of need. It was very well laid out as far as what we needed to do, and the number of hours we needed. I will say this though, I can't remember how many hours, but there were a certain number of hours that were needed towards supervision of events going on at the school. So then someone could essentially get, if they wanted to, get as many as 100 hours or maybe 150 hours.



Essentially a person could use one-fifth of that just on supervision of different events at the school. I don't know if that was an effective use of our time on that matter.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 received varied training during his year -long internship. He stated, “My internship was a year long while I was teaching. I spent every other day in our student services office, with our deans, and during that internship, I worked closely with the four deans... Then the other couple of days a week, I would work in the athletic office. And I would work on special projects for the Athletic Director. So, even developing a proposal for an artificial turf field and doing all of the background research for that, and doing that, putting price proposals and everything together. That lasted one year. So as far as the amount of time, I spent my planning period that entire year as an intern basically. So an hour or 50 minutes everyday, I was spending. And then there were special projects outside the school.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 found his internship experience to be very meaningful. He stated, “So the length was a full academic year... We had to have 10 journal reflections on specific activities that we did under the guidance of the principal or whoever our mentor was, and then also we had to have an internship project that we took ownership of and it was a much more extensive project. The quality of it I think was pretty good in terms of the number of hours; it was 160 hours that you had to have across those areas, standards-leadership standards. That actual internship project that I did was around family engagement... That was a very meaningful experience for me in working with families. I

think the internship experience was pretty good.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 appreciated the organization of his internship process. He shared, “I did like the way the internship process in my program was embedded within each class. So instead of having a big 200 or however many hours experience at the end, each class had an internship experience associated with whatever the topic was for that class. I found that to be relatively meaningful.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 described her internship process as high quality and felt that she benefited from the process. She stated, “The quality was excellent because I got to work with a principal who was very, very good, and who I actually, ended up, three years later, being her assistant. But throughout the time of my official internship, I pretty much was given one thing after another to do. I wasn’t treated like I was in an internship so much as more like I was a member of the administrative team at that building. Then really from that time on, when I was still teaching, I still continued to be given administrative tasks to do and tasks to run and things like that, you know just as a way to grow myself. So I would say that that part of things was excellence.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 did his internship in the building where he served as a member of the administrative team. He stated, “It was a semester, and...the project that I did and the journals that I did were fascinating and fun for me. But I was able to have access directly to the high school that I did my internship in because I was working in it at the time as a

building leader. So there was a direct correlation between the work that I was doing on a day-to-day basis and the work of the internship. And I don't know if that was the best way to go or not, but I found it very useful.”

Table 19

*Describe the Length and Quality of your Internship/Practicum Experience*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Describe Quality of your Internship/Practicum Experience</b>
Principal 1	Two semesters	Beneficial, excellent
Principal 2	One semester	Valuable, solid
Principal 3	2 internship experiences (Both in summer sessions)	Hands on, experiential
Principal 4	Two semesters	No value
Principal 5	One semester	Needs improvement
Principal 6	Two semesters	Varied experiences
Principal 7	Two semesters	Meaningful
Principal 8	4 internship seminars (Embedded throughout entire program)	Meaningful
Principal 9	Two semesters	High quality
Principal 10	Two semesters	Fascinating, direct correlation to work, useful

Table 19 shows the length and quality of the internship/practicum experience as perceived by the participants. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants had a semester-long internship/practicum. Sixty percent (n=6) of participants had internship/practicum for two semesters. Ten percent (n=1) of participants had an internship/practicum experience over the course of two summers. Ten percent (n=1) had an internship/practicum that was embedded over the entire program through each course.

In terms of how participants perceived the quality of their internship/practicum experience, only one participant, 10%, (n=1), stated that he perceived the practicum/internship experience as having no value. Ten percent (n=1) of participants stated that the quality of the practicum/internship experience needed improvement. Eighty percent (n=8) of participants found the practicum/internship experience to be beneficial, hands on, meaningful, and valuable. In particular, Principal 10 described the experience as fascinating and having a direct correlation to his work. However, as a group of respondents, there was no relationship to length of internship and perceived value.

#### **Question 24**

**What evidence have you seen that your principal preparation program's faculty engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance?**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 believed that his preparation programs engages in self-assessment, but has not seen evidence of this in action. He stated, "I don't know that I've necessarily seen that. I'm sure that they do it. I've heard things from professors about how they're looking to retool and shape the department there, but I haven't seen like, I haven't seen it in action, and I haven't seen them like create a new class or throw out an old class and create a new class that's more specific to the times or the way things are going in education."

##### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 could not recall evidence of his program engaging in continued self-

assessment and improvement of its performance. He stated, “I don’t know that I have evidence for that.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 could not state that he observed his preparation program engaging in self-assessment beyond course evaluations. He stated, “I mean beyond the evaluations that you get in each course, I probably didn’t see any evidence of that.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 described his preparation program’s engagement in continued self-assessment as “Very minimal.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 did not describe his program’s approach to self-assessment, but discussed rather how he developed the practice of self-assessment through the program. He stated, “You know we talked about taking surveys... there are different processes that they told us to set up and have in place to do an initiative...what people to get on your side to try to help you get it going. Once you get it going, how to assess it, doing piloting of certain initiatives in the school, or with certain influential people in the school, to get things going...to continually self assess what we’re doing and check to see what the outcomes were of it. I wouldn’t say that they improved me to make what would be a SMART goal as we say nowadays. SMART goals are a way to assess things, looking at what’s the percentage of students who have passed up until this point. You know, this is the initiative that we’re doing, and about how many students are passing the bar, and have we actually raised those standards? So they did a good job of letting us know how

to self-assess what our initiative were, how we're doing in schools, and how to get those self assessments."

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 believed that his program engaged in self-assessment based on what students say who attended the program after him. He says, "I would say as a program that yes, they did...the people that I've seen since that have been in the program say they have self-assessed and improved their program in areas of weakness."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 stated that he sees evidence of his program engaging in self-assessment, but doesn't see evidence of improvement. He said, "I think the program does read the evaluations that students give the faculty. They do ask questions about how to improve the program structure and those sorts of things. I haven't seen evidence of improvement."

*Principal 8*

When asked if he has seen evidence of his principal preparation program's engagement in continued self-assessment and improvement, Principal 8 responded, "I have not."

*Principal 9*

When asked the same question, Principal 9 stated, "I have not seen any evidence of that."

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 believed that his preparation program engaged in self-assessment and he mentions evidence of improvement. He stated, “You know it has changed a lot since I went through it, and they did ask me to come back a few years after I was in the program to give them formal feedback....It was a focus group of graduates who they asked to come back and give them feedback on the quality of the program....I do see evidence of those changes.”

Table 20

*How Have You Seen Evidence of Your Principal Preparation Program’s Faculty Engaging in Self-Assessment and Continued Improvement?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How Have You Seen Evidence of Your Principal Preparation Program’s Faculty Engaging in Self-Assessment and Continued Improvement?</b>
Principal 1	No evidence
Principal 2	No evidence
Principal 3	No evidence outside of course evaluations
Principal 4	Very minimal
Principal 5	n/a
Principal 6	Yes, based on current students’ comments
Principal 7	Yes, evidence of self-assessment but not of improvement
Principal 8	No evidence
Principal 9	No
Principal 10	Yes, evidence of changes noted when visiting campus

Table 20 above shows the evidence that participants have observed, that their principal preparation programs’ faculties engaged in self-assessment and continuous improvement. Fifty percent (n=5) of participants perceived no evidence of self-assessment or continued improvement. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants perceived

evidence of self-assessment and improvement. Ten percent (n=1) of participants perceived evidence of self-assessment but no improvement. Ten percent (n=1) noted very minimal evidence of self-assessment and continued improvement. Ten percent (n=1) of participants did not comment.

### **Question 25**

#### **How were students engaged in the university's ongoing assessment of the principal preparation program?**

##### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 stated that student engagement in the university's ongoing assessment varied depending on the student's advisor. He stated, "I know for sure it depends on the advisor. Mine for sure was very hands off. Others, I know were very hands on...It's varied."

##### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 was engaged in his university's ongoing self-assessment through the completion of student survey. He stated, "The only thing I can say for certain is that they did send out frequent surveys."

##### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 recalled being engaged in his program's self-assessment at the end of each semester, "through the course evaluations".

##### *Principal 4*

Principal 4 only recalled being engaged in the program's self-assessment through the use of end-of-course survey, but he desired more. He stated, "Well other than the



standard end of the course survey, that was all. You know, really to get to that work, to get those answers they want, where you hope that they'd have an exit interview, that they'd do some longitudinal studies, that they'd identify highly effective principals and administrators and come back and differentiate those- ask those people you know, what did we do to put you in this position... and I'd have told them, You did very little to prepare me for the job that I have now.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 described the process in which he was engaged in his program's ongoing assessment. He stated, “You know basically at the end of class we filled out a form to let them know how the class was going: what we got out of the class, any kind of recommendations that could be made, the perks of the class, what was good about it, what was bad, how could things be done better. There was an assessment done at the end of each class and the teacher had to leave the classroom, and the students all performed the assessment and put it in an envelope and one person in the class delivered it to a place on campus.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 recalled his program's dean engaging the students in the self-assessing process. He stated, “I would say having gone through that program that you did have opportunities to provide feedback. I would say the dean of education being an active part of that process, coming in and doing those assessments and getting open and honest feedback from students, I think was an important piece of assessing the program and seeing where we were at as a program. That was powerful. It's a little different when you

have an office person coming in versus having the actual dean of the program coming in and doing an assessment of the instructors. And being able to have a conversation directly with them, without the instructor being there, I think that is a strong assessment tool of how effective your program really is. So I think that was very beneficial.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 does not recall the students being engaged in the program’s ongoing assessment beyond the course evaluations, “No, I think that was it. Just the course evaluations.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 described the level of student engagement in his university’s ongoing assessment as extremely lacking. He stated, “It was non-existent.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 shared how students were engaged in her preparation program’s ongoing assessment. She stated, “At the time when I participated in the program, the typical sort of class instructor evaluations that were given out periodically or at the end. or whatever...Occasionally someone would ask us to do a survey, and that would have more to do with if we were able to translate what we were getting immediately into our current positions as teachers or help establish something new in our building.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 stated that students were not involved in the program’s ongoing self-assessment. He shared, “They were not engaged at all in the process when I was there.”

Table 21

*How Were Students Engaged in the Principal Preparation Program's Ongoing Assessment and Improvement?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How Were Students Engaged in the Principal Preparation Program's Ongoing Assessment and Improvement?</b>
Principal 1	Not really
Principal 2	Through student surveys
Principal 3	Through course evaluations
Principal 4	Through course evaluations
Principal 5	Through course evaluations
Principal 6	Dean of the interviewed students
Principal 7	Through course evaluations
Principal 8	Non existent
Principal 9	Through course evaluations and student surveys
Principal 10	No engagement in process

The table above shows that 50% (n=5) of participants was engaged in their principal preparation programs ongoing assessment and improvement through course evaluations. Twenty percent (n=2) were engaged through taking student surveys. Twenty percent (n=2) were not engaged in the process. Ten percent (n=1) was interviewed by the Dean of the program to provide feedback about the program.

### **Question 26**

**Describe a time in which you, as principal, were prepared to lead through a challenging situation. How did you do it?**

#### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 shared a situation that he felt prepared to lead through, during his first year as principal. He stated, "Well, because I've only been a principal since July 1, I

don't really know if I've had a super challenging one... Things like, one that happened recently is that we have a black out period where folks can't take vacation or personal days during specific times, and we have some that have. So we have to talk about that. And I know that may seem that these are like fundamental things you deal with, but having a tough conversation never gets easy, and so I think I've had a lot of those and feel comfortable doing that, and how to treat people with dignity and respect even though sometimes there's bad news. I think just going through similar situations like that as an assistant principal has prepared me for ones I'm sure I'm going to have as a principal."

#### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 described a practicum experience that prepared him for a very similar experience during his principalship. He recalled, "One of my practicum experiences was to run an assembly, which a lot of people think oh, those are so easy. You know, you see them in the gym for 45 minutes. But the reality is that all the work for an assembly is behind the scenes. And it happens prior to that assembly, so you know, people would say well that's not really that challenging. Well, when you have 1,500 students in one place and 125 staff members, there are some challenges to that, and I think the practicum allowed me to walk through something as basic as making sure there's enough seating and making sure there's garbage cans and making sure you have emergency personnel there. I actually did this in practice."

#### *Principal 3*

Principal 3 described a time when he was prepared to lead due to planning and forethought. He stated, "I'm only about 4 weeks into my tenure, so luckily it hasn't been

too challenging... There have been changes that we've made as a school. We went one-to-one this year. So all of our students were given a laptop... That's a little unique and something brand new. So I think it could have been very challenging at the beginning of the year if that didn't go well. I think for the students and probably more so for the staff. I think it was something that was very concerning for many of the teachers at the beginning of this year... I think that was challenging coming into the year like this, but I was very involved in going back to last year when we made this decision. So I think what made me feel better it, sort of what I did to cope with that, we did a lot of preparation. We had a lot of professional development last year. We had a conference that we put on the first two days of the summer, so teachers that were working on curriculum all summer, kind of used that information all summer long. Then we put a class in place that helps with the technology side of things, so we have a student-run help desk essentially. And those students were bought in over the summer, because we trained them because the busiest time was the first couple of days with all of the issues and questions that they had. So I think it went really well, but I think that's because of all the work we did before. I mean we didn't just say, ok, let's give everyone a laptop and then see what happens. We put a lot of forethought into it, I think."

#### *Principal 4*

Principal 4 felt prepared to lead through a challenging situation due to his reliance upon an external framework. He shared, "I think one of the most important things, that I see even in the development of other administrators, certainly because I've only been a principal here for two years, and bringing their skill sets up to speed, is the reliance upon

an external framework and standards, which provided the best preparation in leading our building in school improvement. So for example, if you knew nothing about schools, and you say what are highly effective practices that we should be engaging in to lead our schools? It's not a matter of going to a shelf and choosing your checklist, it's about using your framework in an assessment to find out where you're at and then where you need to go on a continuum. And I think relying upon the CEC, which you know if you looked at the top 30 schools in Illinois school districts, 25 of them are CEC members, Consortium for Educational Change members. Relying upon that framework, and being trained in the Baldrige model for improvement, that was the single biggest jump, because it really tied in a lot of discipline, (i.e. relying upon data, evidence based decisions, um the identification and application of highly effective practices). It was done through the work at CEC. I could take a non-educator and put them through that sequence, and maybe they'll miss the culture piece and some of the fundamental elements at ground zero, but you would not steer a building in the wrong way. Right? A good rubric, anybody can apply. You know a Special Ed. teacher that knows nothing about English, but is given a clear rubric, can evaluate their students using that rubric. What we're saying is true for organizations.”

#### *Principal 5*

Principal 5 described himself as having challenges with time management. But he shares that he has experienced success in delegating tasks, and also credits a bit of his success to his predecessor who left him an overview of the work that she had previously done as principal. He states, “So she did leave me what she had done in the past, which

is helpful, but you know I don't know if that necessarily gave me a real clear cut kind of idea of how necessarily I should do things. But you know the biggest challenge is being prepared for the time constraints of the job. And so far that's just been a matter of me thinking the time into it and just trying to become more proficient in that manner. Quite possibly even handing off some of the duties that come up to my assistant principals, to the teachers, to various people who are on staff, who probably should be taking some of those duties. Delegating..."

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 stated that his preparation program prepared him to lead through some of the challenges in his first years as principal. He stated, "I would say it was my first year as a principal, and one of the first years that the state of Illinois really struggled with making payments, and we were asked to make budget cuts. I think that it was midyear because as a district we were short a few million dollars, and back general state aid payments. And being able to react on a fly and being able to handle that situation because of the background that I had received from the principal preparation program at AU, that was an area that I felt very confident in. I was able to communicate with the staff very openly, I was able to be very open in the communication as well as effectively manage the process."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 felt prepared by his preparation program to evaluate teachers. He states, "I always go back to the most successful class that I had--the staff, teacher evaluation course, and how to have those difficult conversations with teachers who are

struggling. But also how to differentiate your staff evaluations with teachers based on tenured or non tenured, doing very well or struggling--how to have those difficult conversations. Previously to this position I was our district's director of bilingual and ESL programs and I evaluated staff and teachers in that role as well. So stemming back to that and this year already. How do you have conversations with teachers that are at the level that they need to be for that individual teacher? So if a teacher is doing really well how do you take a more passive role in guiding and questioning and getting teachers to really do the thinking and critiquing of themselves, in comparison to teachers who are struggling and you have to provide more guidance and be more direct with them in terms of here are the issues that I'm seeing, here's the evidence, that I've gathered to say that you're struggling with classroom management or your relationship with students is struggling because of X,Y,Z. So I think that aspect of my job, I was prepared pretty well for."

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 doesn't feel that his preparation program prepared him to lead through a challenging situation. He stated, "I don't think that anything in my preparation program prepared me for any difficult situation that I was in, at all."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 described a time when she was prepared to lead through an extremely challenging situation. She shares, "I think one of the most challenging situations I've ever been in was actually when I first became an assistant principal... of this high school ...knowing that we were going to close the school. And during the course of that year, the



school board voted in September that, that was going to be the building that was closing, and you can imagine it was a big controversy in the community, because it was kind of turned into a competition between two schools and created a lot of hard feelings, a lot of negative emotions throughout the course of that year because we were closing. The principal was often gone for trainings or various things that had to do with that. So I think that as opposed to more into that, getting people past the hurdles the emotional hurdles, the bitterness and hurt that people were feeling was probably the most challenging situations that I faced. I do think that I was prepared to do it. You know I said before, one of the instructors I had, it was a recently retired superintendent. And I think really between the graduate program that I had done...combined with what I learned with what I learned about basic administration through my principal preparation program, did prepare me to be a driving force in leading that change, and leading people through that time. And I think that in its simplest form, the way that I did it is kind of the way I do everything, which is to put people first, and that people matter and if you can respect the human resource and deal with that then the other things tend to fall in place behind it.”

#### *Principal 10*

Principal 10 used the knowledge of research and resources from his preparation program to lead through a challenging situation in his school. He stated, “We are currently in the middle of changing our grading practices here at our high school, moving towards standards based grading practices for all of our courses. Right now it’s going 9-10. And, being able to explain the advantages of doing this to a variety of audiences: parents, students, teachers who are skeptical about the changes, other people in the

community, other people in the district, administrators that work above me in the district as well. Being able to do that meant that I had to pull on a lot of information, that there's no doubt I didn't pick up in the U of I. A lot of the stuff that I wrote about myself about assessment: standardized assessment, the usefulness of classroom measures that are more immediately useful for teachers, all that stuff I was able to pull from quite a bit in these conversations with stakeholders. So that's just immediately practical. I don't think that I would have been able to garner so much immediate credibility to do so much of a big change if I didn't have a useful body of information to immediately pull from. The U of I was a big deal with that, at least the work I did at the U of I. The professors there have been hugely helpful. So that's one example."

Table 22 illustrates the areas where participants felt they were prepared to lead. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants felt prepared to lead in challenging Human Resources situations. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants felt prepared to lead through challenges of Operations and Logistics. Ten percent (n=1) felt prepared to lead through Instructional Leadership. Ten percent (n=1) felt prepared to navigate the challenge of Time Management. Ten percent (n=1) felt prepared to lead through a challenging situation dealing with Budget and Finance. Ten percent (n=1) felt prepared to lead through the challenges of Supervision and Evaluation of staff. Ten percent (n=1) felt prepared to lead through issues of Curriculum and Instruction. Ten percent (n=1) felt generally prepared as an administrator.

Table 22

*Describe a Time in which you, as Principal, Were Prepared to Lead Through a Challenging Situation. How Did You Do It?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Gained Knowledge from Principal Preparation Program</b>
Principal 1	Human Resources	Having difficult conversations	No
Principal 2	Operations/Logistics	Planning an assembly	Yes
Principal 3	Operations/Logistics	Implementing a new process in the school	No
Principal 4	Instructional Leadership	Leading building through school improvement	No
Principal 5	Time Management	Delegating tasks to assistant principals	No
Principal 6	Budget and Finance	Communicating budget cuts to staff	Yes
Principal 7	Supervision and Evaluation	Evaluating teachers	Yes
Principal 8	General Administration	Principal 8 did not encounter a challenging situation in which he felt that a skill gained from his principal preparation program better equipped him to lead.	No
Principal 9	Human Resources	Communicating with and supporting staff through a school closing	Yes
Principal 10	Curriculum and Instruction	Changing grading practices	Yes

In terms of what actions principals took during these challenging situations, 30% (n=3) of principals engaged in difficult conversations with staff members. Topics included budget cuts, school closings, and taking time off for personal and vacation days. Twenty percent (n=20) of participants led changes of processes in their schools. Ten percent (n=1) of participants led a school improvement initiative. Ten percent (n=1) of participants felt prepared for teacher evaluations. Ten percent (n=1) of participants felt prepared to delegate tasks to his administrative team. Ten percent (n=1) of participants planned an assembly. Ten percent (n=1) of participants stated that his principal preparation program did not enhance his ability to lead in a challenging situation.

Half of the participants, 50% (n=5) felt that their principal preparation programs prepared them with the skills to lead through challenging situations. Fifty percent (n=5) felt that their principal preparation programs did not prepare them with the skills to lead through challenging situations.

### **Question 27**

**Describe a time in which you, as principal, were not prepared to lead through a challenging situation. How did you do it?**

#### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 did not feel prepared to lead in an emergency situation that could have resulted in a security lock down of his school. He recalled, "I'll give you a good one. Last year we found two bullet shells, shells of ammunition in an auto class. Fell out of a box during a locker clean out during the last days of school. So, our current principal was out so I, of course, was the next person in charge – talk about a position to be in. I mean

you're never really prepared for this stuff, but I did feel prepared in terms of the logic that we were taking. The teamwork that we displayed that day to where we had to go to a soft lock down and had to make some really tough decisions on whether we should conduct school, cancel school, what to say to press, etc.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 did not feel prepared to lead through situations dealing with personnel. He stated, “The only thing I think they leave completely out of a principal preparation program are the personnel issues that they obviously cannot bring in. You know, it never dawned on me how many surgeries and student, I should say, student-parent-teacher issues that arise in the area of personnel...I don't know that a program could have done a better job at that. Maybe do some brainstorming or some scenarios.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3, new to his position, had not yet experienced any circumstances in which he felt unprepared. He stated, “It's a little tough, because I haven't really had a really challenging situation yet (knocks on wood and laughs).”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 did not feel prepared to lead through his first budget reduction, but he sought out support from external organizations to increase his knowledge and skill base. He stated, “The first time I led a building through a budget reduction. I wasn't given any external framework or approaches. The district didn't have a philosophy or guidelines for how to make those decisions, or more importantly, how the decisions are made will impact the culture. I wasn't given any skills for that. What I did was rely upon external

organizations. The one that I relied upon was the Illinois Association for School Business Officials, and said how am I going to lead a team of 130 staff with a 12 million dollar budget? How do we lead budget discussions and certainly budget reductions? And so those external groups and supports, you know, the one thing I will say about principals, is it's not just about what we know, it's just as much about who we do know. I mean, what relationships do we have outside the building that we can rely upon when we need assistance because we don't know everything, but we better know how to find who does."

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 did not feel prepared to lead through a situation where a Special Education student's needs were not being met according to her IEP. His situation involved working with the union, another area in which he was unprepared. He shared, "We have a young lady here who has an IEP...She takes one class off campus at a college...I'd been told that this person is going to fulfill these needs and this is how it's going to be fulfilled. I thought everything was in place for me...At the beginning of this school year, to talk to that person about the matter, and that they were going to be doing this, they were unaware of the situation. They had some kind of idea that it was going to happen, but they were somewhat unaware of it. So then it became a matter of well this doesn't fall underneath my job description duties...And it became a matter of interpretation on the contract, and trying to work with both the union leader as well as the superintendent in trying to get this matter fixed. Luckily we have a pretty good relationship with our union, and it took a couple of weeks to get all of the particulars hammered out on the situation, but we did finally come to a happy medium. It took us a

couple of weeks. You know, I was definitely not prepared for that. I had to put a lot of time into the beginning of the school year to deal with that situation that should have been taken care of ahead of time, and that's probably the first big challenge that I've had as far as the union, trying to work with the union, certain things processes set up to be able to accommodate the needs of the students."

*Principal 6*

Principal 6, felt unprepared to lead through a time when he had to reduce his staff due to budget cuts. He stated, "Being able to have conversations with teachers that I was reducing. Having to RIF (Reduction in Force) terrific teachers in that time, I wish I had been able to do a little role playing in the program to have some of those conversations, whether it was having to fire a staff member, having to discipline a staff member, investigating situations about staff members. That first year having to RIF 2 to 3 teachers, and having those conversations with terrific teachers, but because they were newer in the profession and newer in the district, they were being let go. If it's performance, it's easy, and it's easy to justify, but when they are good people that you have to let go for financial reasons those are tougher conversations to have. Being able to handle those situations was something I felt I was not prepared for. Maybe you never really are and you just have to live through it a little bit, and as you gain some experience you know how to better communicate in some of those areas."

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 viewed emergency situations as an area in which he is not yet prepared to lead. He stated, "I think emergency situations. I was not prepared. So for example, if

you have to go into lockdown or a bomb threat or something like that. We never ever talked about something like that as far as I can recall about how to respond as building leader, when you have an emergency situation. And so I haven't had to deal with an emergency situation yet. Luckily the way I've dealt with this so far to prepare for that, is at a high school level, you're a little bit more fortunate to have assistant principals, depending on how big your school is. I have 3 assistant principals here. One of them directly oversees emergency drills and emergency situations, so he pretty much had it all laid out and ready to go. And we've had two drills, so I feel more confident in it now, on how to react. But I don't think we even looked at emergency drills, how to create an emergency plan, evacuation of sites. None of that, we talked about in the program."

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 was not prepared to deal with navigating cultural aspects of his school and some of the political aspects of the principalship. He recalled, "I've been unprepared lots of times; I've been prepared lots of times, but I don't know that either one has to do with the preparation program. So, an example for not being prepared is, I came from the city. I accepted a principalship at the age of 27 in a rural high school that needed a lot of change, and so I implemented change, and I had no semblance of understanding that there is a cultural medium that needed to be met as well, as opposed to just a technical skill based deficiency addressed. So I had no idea about the political capitol that I was losing. I had no idea about the impact I was having on the climate and the culture, based on some the decisions I was making. And so, while those decisions ended up being beneficial in the long run, our school was not a very pleasant place to work for a while. And I could



have made those same changes in a much softer, more politically savvy and more staff-supporting way, with a little more additional training, which was the impetus in me trying to write a book.”

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 had never felt unprepared. She felt that there are times when she has to be a quick learner and make tough decisions under tense situations, but she has never felt truly unprepared. She shared, “I can’t say that I really ever felt unprepared. There are times when I feel that I need to learn something quickly or quickly develop a solution, but I really can’t think of a time when I felt like I just don’t know what to do. And there are times when I call colleagues or friends or something like that. But I can’t think of something that I have yet to devise a solution to. There are times that I reflect on it and wish that I had done something differently, but I don’t ever really feel like there’s been a situation where I just kind of had no feeling but to throw my hands up. You know, I don’t think that’s what we do.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 did not feel prepared to deal with some of the cultural elements of school leadership, such as managing multiple personalities within a staff and cultivating positive student behavior. He stated, “When I think about not being prepared for something as a classroom teacher and then as an administrator what immediately comes in my mind is the stuff that doesn’t exist at the U of I, like simply managing differing personalities and behaviors and all of that stuff, right? I mean, I actually think it is a strength. The U of I never spent any time talking about how you work to build positive

student behavior in your building. And that is hugely significant, because how you talk about student behavior in your building matters a whole lot for how teachers perceive the students in their buildings. And we didn't discuss this information at all, in any of the courses I took, about framing student behavior and what they can do versus a deficit model, stuff they can't do well at all. I really think that's a glaring oversight of the program. Not helping future administrators think and talk and structure systems around thinking about our students in positive ways.”

Table 23 outlines the areas where participants did not feel prepared to lead and where they felt they needed more preparation. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants felt they lacked preparation in the area of Safety and Crisis. Twenty percent (n=2) lacked preparation in Budget and Finance. Ten percent (n=1) lacked preparation in Human Resources. Ten percent (n=1) lacked preparation in Special Education Law. Twenty percent (n=2) lacked preparation in School Culture. Twenty percent (n=2) felt that they have not yet encountered a situation where they feel they lack the skills to effectively lead.

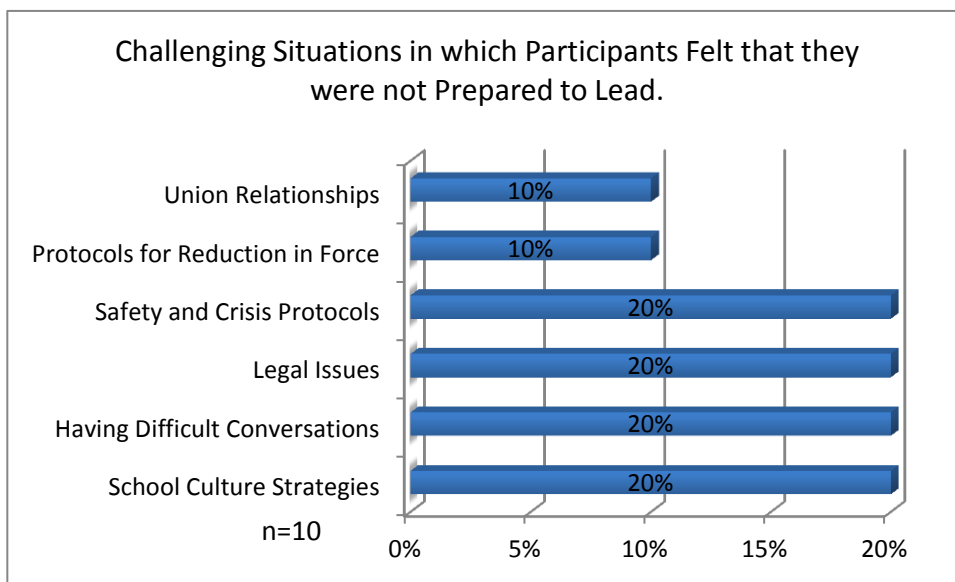
In terms of preparation, Figure 9, depicts that 20% (n=2) of participants needed more preparation around establishing a positive school culture. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants felt that they needed more preparation for engaging in difficult conversations with staff. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants believed that they needed more preparation to deal with legal issues, specifically around Special Education laws and Reduction in Force. Twenty percent (n=2) of participants felt that they lacked preparation around safety protocols. Ten percent (n=1) needed more preparation around

issues with Reduction in Force. Ten percent (n=1) of participants needed more preparation for navigating union dynamics.

Table 23

*Describe a Time When You, as Principal, Were Not Prepared to Lead Through a Challenging Situation. How Did You Do It?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>Lack of Preparation In</b>
Principal 1	Safety/Crisis	Needed protocols for response, relied on team members
Principal 2	Human Resources	Needed practice in having difficult conversations
Principal 3	Hasn't experienced any situations yet that he doesn't feel prepared to lead through.	
Principal 4	Budget	Needed protocol for RIF, sought outside counsel
Principal 5	Special Education Law	Needed protocol, legal counsel, and help navigating union dynamics
Principal 6	Budget	Needed practice in having difficult conversations for RIF
Principal 7	Safety/Crisis	Needed protocols for response, relied on veteran team members
Principal 8	School Culture/Community Dynamics	Needed to consider school community's response to abrupt change
Principal 9	Hasn't experienced any situations yet that she doesn't feel prepared to lead through.	
Principal 10	School Culture	Needed preparation around establishing structures to support a positive school culture for students and adults



*Figure 9.* Challenging Situations in which Participants Felt that they were not Prepared to Lead

### **Question 28**

**Describe a time when a skill you learned in professional development enabled you to cope with the demands of the first three years of the principalship**

#### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 believed that the skill of reflection is what helps him cope with the demands of his role as new principal. He stated, “Reflection is the biggest thing. Finding time, and I live...out west, so it takes me about 30 minutes to get back home but that gives me time to reflect and think of new ideas, and make sure that I’m looking back on the day and thinking what do I need to get better at, what do we need to get better at. Again the messaging standpoint, and that’s something that was kind of echoed in all my coursework and while in those courses you’re usually writing it down, this thinking about stuff is an important thing. And sometimes you just need to clear your head and take a

deep breath, and go back to square one, and ah, you know take the next step based on all the factors, but reflection time is a big thing that I feel like I learned, not necessarily developed initially when I started off teaching.”

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 stated that the two skills he learned in professional development which help him cope with his role as principal are preparation and time management. He stated, “I think those two skills in particular helped meet the demands of the principalship because if you’re not managing your time and prioritizing, you’re going to be drowned.”

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 noted that the most important skill he’s learned in professional development is networking through technology. He stated, “Bar none. The most important things to me is what I mentioned before, being connected to the web. The absolute most important and most helpful thing to me has been building an online presence and having connections to a lot of other instructional leaders. So, I think without a doubt that has been the most advantageous thing to me. So I have a twitter, a number of people I’m connected to through a lot of blogs and I communicate with people that way. So I have about ten principals from around the country actually and a couple in Canada that I call or we do a Google + hangout with all the time, where we kind of go over things and share what we’re doing uh, so that’s been the most important part of my professional development.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 stated that a useful skill learned in professional development was the

skill of verbal de-escalation. He explained, “Being a certified crisis intervention trainer, having the ability to teach verbal de-escalation skills, not only to teach them to staff, but to use them effectively with the staff. I said of all the training I do, we use de-escalation skills every single day in some format. Whether it’s with a staff member, at a minor level they’re upset about such and such, you know, learning how to help them manage their feelings and acknowledge them, support them, all the way up to the angry parent, threatening a school teacher, and not creating a bigger issue out of it, than necessary. So that’s an example of a highly effective training that uh I use every single day.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 discussed the skill of organization as a useful tool he enhanced through professional development. He shared, “I actually took a class here recently on time management and being organized and there’s just a lot of things from that class that ended up helping me out. I keep notebooks of all of my conversations that I have whether it be on the phone or through meetings. I try and write everything down and keep a log of it. And having, I think they called the tickler files. I put things in to kind of have dates to get things done by, and each month you know, and that’s what I’m going to use next year to know when to get things done.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 discussed his struggle with timely responses and follow through of communication with various stakeholders. He currently has a retired administrator as a mentor and his professional conversations with his mentor have been helpful. He stated, “I remember one of the professors always talking about always returning phone calls and

emails right away and that was something that I still struggle with. But that would be kind of one of those tidbits that I gained along the way. So that would be a communication piece that I still struggle with I guess. What helped? Boy. I would guess that some of the communication pieces that I had in the program. Being able to communicate with staff in an effective way I guess that that probably helped me get through situations, and just having other principals and central administrators to be able to talk to about it. When you're the only administrator in the building..., you struggle at times in being able to have people to go to for advice... One of the best resources I had my first year, was actually...the regional office provided mentor, and he was a retired administrator, but he was a terrific support, because I could call him anytime and bounce ideas off of him...because he had no vested interest except in me. He wasn't a district administrator if you showed weakness or inadequacies that you would be judged on, and he wasn't a colleague in the building, he was probably the most beneficial piece to my first year...I wouldn't say that was due to the principal preparation program though."

#### *Principal 7*

Principal 7 described professional development around staff supervision as being most helpful. He stated, "Thinking back in terms of my professional development, I'll just go back to that same course again. You know, I think one of my strengths is supervision and evaluation, because I think that's one of the best ways to have influence over teaching and learning...individual conversations with teachers around classroom observations, student work, student learning, drop ins, formal and informal observations. That's ongoing professional development too. I think that's an area that's been very

beneficial to me, and I think teachers benefit from it when you have an evaluator who is committed to the process and it isn't just the dog and pony show. It becomes meaningful for the teacher and it becomes meaningful for the student with student learning.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 mentioned the most valuable professional development that he has received has come from the lessons learned through a coaching/mentorship model. He stated, “So the most valuable professional development I received was through a coaching model with my superintendent, who is wise and smart and has helped me facilitate my growth professionally and personally. The pd, which I have found the most beneficial in my life has probably been that coaching. The secondary one is just personal reading. Reading a lot of things that had nothing to do with school and everything to do with leadership...I wholeheartedly believe, that if there is a school intensive focus professional development program, but then also a leadership development portion, I think that would benefit candidates a lot. And that's how I try to teach my courses when I work through the university now. My belief was that I could outwork, outsmart, or out-read anyone and be as successful as I wanted to be in this industry, and that's just not the case. That would make me a great manager, but a very poor leader. So, I've had to really change and adapt a lot of readings outside of the education world.

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 discussed the professional development around school improvement as being impactful on her current work as principal. She stated, “That's kind of been my whole life the past two months, really. You know being in a large district, an urban



district that had a lot of grant money, sometimes the required things we were made to do seemed like a hassle, and we didn't feel like they were worth it and had frustration about that. However, in the building I'm in now, I'm taking all of those things and putting it together and making my own little mini pd's when I need them. You know one of the biggest things, I did a survey here a few weeks ago of teachers and just asked them several questions, what needs to change, what can not change here, what is our culture right now, you know all these things, what do you attribute our lack of student achievement to? And as I look through that and start looking through the things that I really need to do and put them in the school improvement plan, I'm realizing all of the pd's I sat through on RTI, all of the pd's I sat through on Charlotte Danielson, and all of those things that at the time didn't seem like they were ever going to mean that much to me, all of a sudden are like right at the forefront of what I'm trying to do."

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 found professional development around student achievement data to be helpful. He stated, "I have gone to professional developments that have given me models for how to organize student data that comes in meaningful ways: professional development on constructing good early warning systems for when students first show signs of struggle, for example. That has been helpful, there's no doubt, in helping me organize all the information that we have at our fingertips about our kids. You know I needed some system to help frame that and that helped a lot."

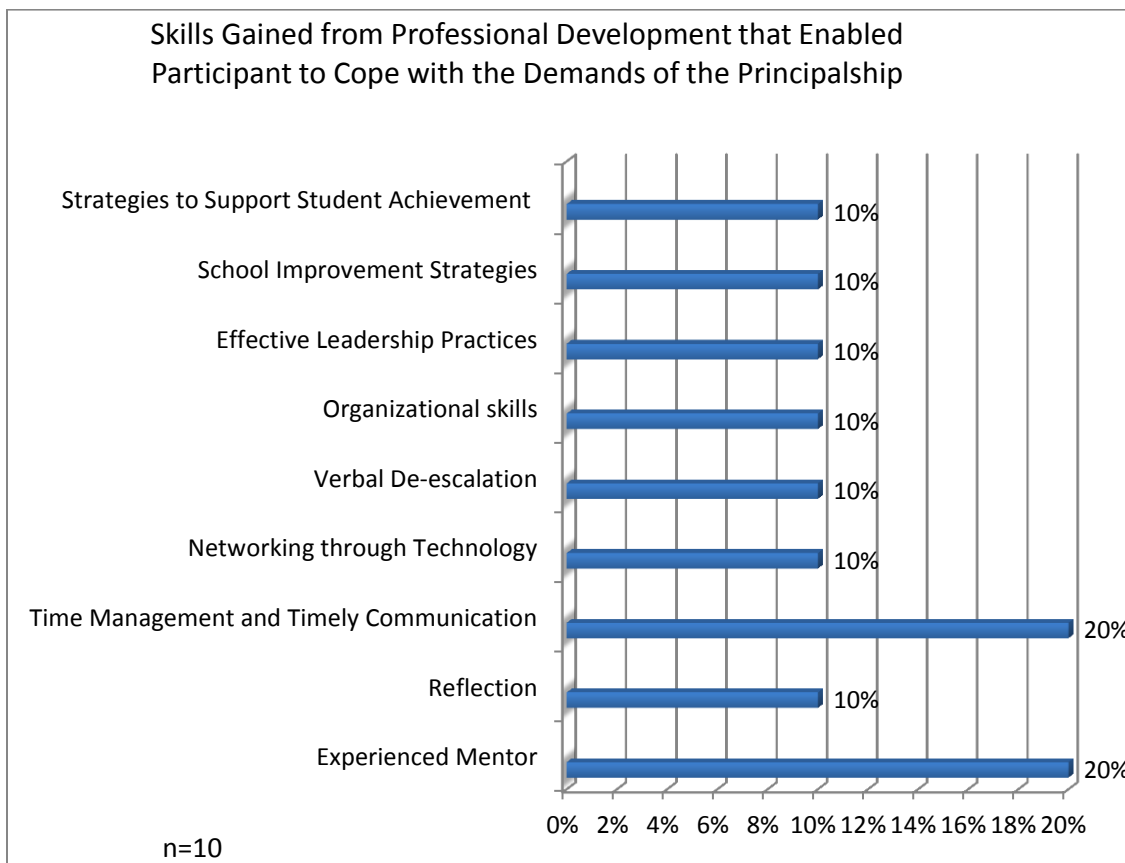
Table 24 and Figure 10 above describes the skills that participants gained through professional development that were beneficial to them during their principalship. Twenty

percent (n=2) of participants mentioned the benefits of having an experienced administrator as mentor. Ten percent (n=1) benefited from the skill of reflection. Twenty percent (n=2) mentioned the skill of time management and timely communication as enabling them to cope with the principalship. Ten percent (n=1) benefitted from the skill of networking with colleagues through technology. Ten percent (n=1) stated that verbal de-escalation was a beneficial skill especially in crisis situations. Ten percent (n=1) stated that organization skills learned in professional development were helpful. Ten percent (n=1) mentioned the benefits of reading literature about effective leadership practices. Ten percent (n=1) stated that professional development about school improvement was helpful. Ten percent (n=1) found professional development about student achievement helpful in establishing structures for student achievement in his school. The percentages in Figure 10 are greater than 100% due to the fact that participants may have noted more than one skill.

Table 24

*Describe a Time When a Skill You Learned in Professional Development Enabled You to Cope with the Demands of the Principalship*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Skill Learned in Professional Development that Enabled Participant to Cope with the Demands of the Principalship</b>
Principal 1	Reflection
Principal 2	Time Management
Principal 3	Networking through technology
Principal 4	Verbal De-escalation
Principal 5	Organization
Principal 6	Timely Communication and Coaching/Mentorship
Principal 7	Supervision and Evaluation
Principal 8	Coaching/ Mentorship and Literature about Effective Leadership
Principal 9	School Improvement
Principal 10	Student Achievement Data



*Figure 10.* Skills Gained from Professional Development that Enabled Participants to Cope with the Demands of the Principalship

### Question 29

**Describe a time when you felt you lacked the skills necessary to deal with the demands of the first three years of the principalship.**

#### *Principal 1*

Principal 1 felt that his Curriculum and Instruction background outweighed his skills in the area of student behavior and discipline. He stated, “There are definitely areas that I know I need to get better at. For example, because I came out of Curriculum and Instruction, I feel honestly really solid working in that area, but out of my comfort zone is

the area of student discipline, the area of suspension for students. The suspension of students- we haven't had expulsions in years here, which is really good. We have a strong alternative education program to find a home for the students if it's not here. But those types of things are out of my comfort zone, and I have to rely heavily on my assistant principal that oversees that area, my department heads, and deans. So those are challenges for me right now that I'm still learning about...I'm open to hearing other people's feedback, I trust what they're doing. I'll ask questions for clarification and making sure I have my whole head wrapped around the issue, but I trust what they're doing and if it's in the best interest of kids, you know usually your decisions go in the right direction. But those are the skills that I definitely need to work on throughout my first year here and on to the future. I know I'll get strong at it, but I'm conscious of it and I'm trying to evolve in those areas strategically to better myself."

*Principal 2*

Principal 2 cannot pinpoint one area in which he lacks the skills to lead. He stated, "If I don't have that skill...I find that skill or go out and seek that skill...I think you just have to use your skills appropriately, but if you do not have that skill, use others."

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 mentioned a need to build his softer skills when dealing with sensitive situations. He stated, "I think there's a lot to be said for just the experience that you get by going through situations. I think it's some of the softer skill areas, you know when you just have a staff member come in and their spouse is going through a medical crisis. You know that's just something that you're not ready to deal with until you go through it a

couple of times. So, I mean, I just had that the other day, Where I had one of our department chairs come in and his wife is going through some really scary medical things, and at that point it's just being a friend, and being there to support them. That's gonna take a while for me to build that response—ok what exactly do they need? And it's according to each individual. Each person is expecting something different I think, or needs something different at that moment, but I think I need to build that through experience.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 saw engaging the constituents in his school community as an area where he needed more support and professional development. He explained, “One particular piece that I had a struggle with is that we service 8 municipalities over 240 square miles, so I had 8 different communities, and 100 % of our students are bussed or drive in. We're in the middle of nowhere and we service large towns. Engaging the community in a meaningful way. Not communicating with, but engaging the community. No framework. Nothing really teaches you how to do that in a meaningful way. That's something that you learn and I think you develop those skill sets and the uniqueness with every organization and the constituents in which you're working with, extremely unique. I don't think there's anything preparing you for that except time on task. But that's an example. I always feel unprepared. Maybe there is a framework that I'm not accustomed to, or there's training that I'm not aware of but I never feel prepared about that- that entry plan so to speak. I think if I'm summing it up... I would say entry plan with community engagement. That's the area I don't feel prepared on.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 saw the areas budget and finance as areas where he needed continued professional development. He stated, “That’s probably where I’ll go along with the budgetary issues, because there is no equation to say this is what your school needs, this is where your funds should go. You know every school ends up doing things differently. So trying to look through that budget and continuously keep up with: am I staying within my budget? Do I have enough there? Am I going to have enough there to last me through the year? You know that’s where I really feel like I’m lacking.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 felt that he needs to improve upon his responsiveness to parents. He stated, “Yeah I think that’s an area where I can continue to improve on. You know, phone calls from parents and a lot of times they get a whole lot madder if you don’t contact them within 24 hours. It’s a lot easier to bite the bullet and communicate with them early. So those are things that I think you learn a little bit through practice. But that’s an area that I continue to look for ways to improve on.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 stated that he lacked professional development around special education law, requirements, and processes. He stated, “I guess, you know, I had mentioned there wasn’t much on the area of bilingual education in the program. There wasn’t much on Special Education either. And that’s an area that I’ve had to learn on my own. What are the legal requirements around running Individual Education Plan meetings, IEP meetings, what are the requirements for all of the ins and outs of that? So

when special education questions come up, I have to refer to either books that I've bought on my own, or the special education faculty and administrators in the district. I think maybe that's one of the gaps in the program, those special areas. I think they talk a lot about leadership across those areas, but if you don't contextualize the leadership into specific situations, I think that's where it becomes difficult. So, I think just those conversations around special education, IEP meetings, those sorts of things.

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 felt that he lacked the skills around areas that could significantly impact his school culture. He stated, "I think the relationship, the culture, and the political aspects of being a principal were some things that I was not prepared for."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 stated that she needed to increase her knowledge of the Common Core standards among other things. She stated, "There are times right now when I feel like there is some professional development that I really need, particularly around Common Core. You know, in the past three years as an administrator it just wasn't my role. I tended to be pigeon-hold into things like discipline and operational things because those are my strengths, but there are definitely some things that I know I need to kind of up my game on, and get myself current on, and one of the things in this building is that I'm kind of getting the feeling that because there is not much money and maybe one of the superintendents doesn't believe we need to provide some of the pd that the teachers are needing, I'm kind of getting the feeling that I'm gonna have to become an expert on everything. You know?!"

*Principal 10*

Finally, Principal 10 discussed the skill of knowing how to manage anxiety or the feeling of being overwhelmed as a new administrator. He said this was an area where he lacked skills. He stated, “I don’t know if it’s a matter of lacking the skills, but I think the most overwhelming fear that you have as being a first year administrator is just the feeling of being overwhelmed, right? Not enough time to get everything done, and then figuring out how to prioritize everything that comes into your face, because everything seems urgent right? You know you’re supposed to be talking about student learning and you know you’re supposed to be learning about positive behavioral focused students, and all of those good things that we can quickly identify, and you have significant facilities issues that are staring you down, that need to be focused now, that need your attention right now. Figuring out how you are going to delegate all those roles to figure out what you care about most is tough. And I’m not quite sure that, that was something that I was able to do the best.”

Table 25 and Figure 11 above depict areas in which the participants felt they needed additional skill enhancement. Thirty percent (30%) of participants stated that they needed to enhance their communication skills when dealing with various stakeholders: employees, community members, and parents. Ten percent (n=1) of participants needed to build skills in the areas of Behavior and Discipline. Ten percent (n=1) needed to build skills in the areas of Budget and Finance. Ten percent (n=1) needed to build skills around Special Education law, requirements, and processes. Ten percent (n=1) needed skill development around issues of School Culture. Ten percent (n=1)

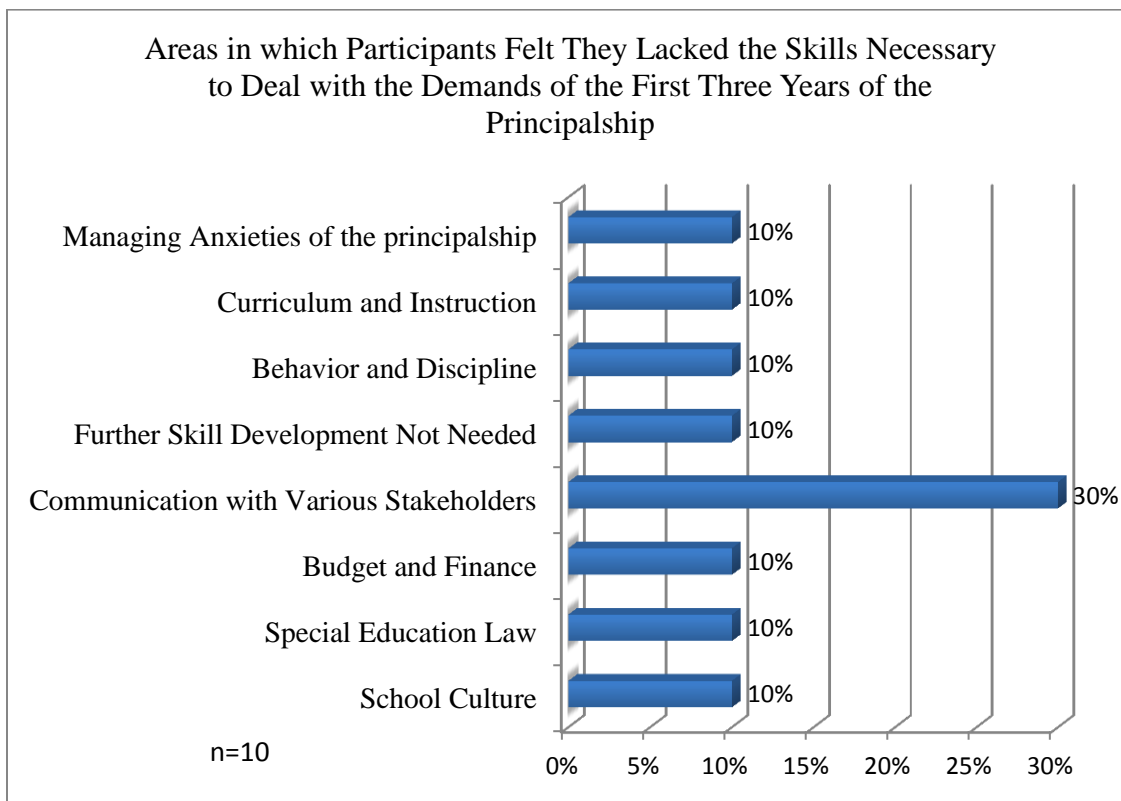


needed to build skills in the areas of Curriculum and Instruction, particularly around the Common Core standards. Ten percent (n=1) needed to enhance his ability to manage anxieties of being an overwhelmed new principal. Ten percent (n=1) felt that he could not identify an area where he lacked the skills to cope with the demands of the first three years of the principalship.

Table 25

*Describe a Time When You Felt You Lacked the Skills Necessary to Deal with the Demands of the First Three Years of the Principalship*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>Areas Where Skill Development Was Needed</b>
Principal 1	Behavior and Discipline
Principal 2	The principal felt that his no additional skills were needed.
Principal 3	Communication- Needs to build softer skills when communicating about sensitive Human Resource issues
Principal 4	Communication- Needs to build skills in communicating with and engaging the community constituents
Principal 5	Budget and Finance
Principal 6	Communication- Needs to build skills in responding to parents
Principal 7	Special Education- law, requirements, and processes
Principal 8	School Culture
Principal 9	Curriculum and Instruction- needs to build skills around the Common Core standards
Principal 10	Managing anxieties of being overwhelmed as a new principal



*Figure 11.* Areas in which Participants Felt They Lacked the Skills Necessary to Deal with the Demands of the First Three Years of the Principalship

### **Question 30**

**How do you believe you as the principal affect student achievement?**

*Principal 1*

Principal 1 believed that he has a tremendous affect on student achievement. He stated, “Tremendously. I think people watch to see what the principal thinks is important, and I’ve been talking a lot about messaging and vision and stuff, and so if you believe that we’re preparing students for college and career which has kind of been our theme, what are you doing to back that up? Do we have displays celebrating students getting into colleges? Do we have displays celebrating student achievement and student honors? Do

we, you know, simple things like display cases? Do we talk about how our students are achieving or what grades they're getting in their classes? What grades they're getting on our tests? What scores they're getting on the ACT? If we talk about those things, then it's obviously important, because people watch and see what you value. So if you value student achievement and that's the first thing that you're going to focus on, then what are you doing to show that you're focusing on that? And so that's what we've been trying to craft as a team.

So if we're going to focus on college and career readiness, then what are we doing to celebrate that, and ensure that that's occurring? You know, so we talk about is our curriculum aligned with college and career? What are our student achievement levels on the ACT- In the classroom with their grades? What are their participation rates outside of school, because we know that there's a connection there. And then what is the education that we're providing the kids and to parents on how to get to college, how to get into careers? And so, those are kind of the three strands that we're looking at and trying to focus our teachers on. So I think the principal is the leader in all of that and the more that we can convey and focus on it, the more the staff is going to focus on it, because you're talking the talk and walking the walk."

### *Principal 2*

Principal 2 felt that he impacted student achievement through the teachers. He stated, "If I boiled it down to one thing, the reality is the power in a building relies or lands with the students. So for me, how am I going to affect that? I have to hire inspired teachers. That's really my challenge...I have to hire the best teachers for students, and

then I have to inspire them to continue to want to be there for their kids. So for me, student achievement- the only way I'm going to touch that, because I'm not going to go physically teach those courses, is to hire inspired teachers."

*Principal 3*

Principal 3 described his role in impacting student achievement as setting the vision. He stated, "I think it's a huge impact. By being part of setting the vision, and that's an important distinction, because I think if you just go out and set the vision yourself, no one's going to follow it. So you have to be part of building that collaboratively within your organization. We do everything really distributed wide. So it's not like we're doing something really unique from other high schools. So we do everything by working together, uh, but if you're not an integral part of that, and if you don't lead that and make sure that's what we're focused on, then I think you can be really detrimental to student achievement. If you're out in front of that, and you're always keeping the focus and bringing back the school's focus to those specific areas that you as a school think are important, then again I think you can have a really big impact on what you're doing. So it's not telling people how to do things. It's just really refocusing them a lot of times and redirecting their energy. A lot of times in schools we have individuals doing great things, but the arrows are going in all sorts of directions. I think what we need to do is think ok, if you just shift your arrow this way, and you just shift your arrow this way, then we're doing great things together, and we can have that synergy really come into play, where we can be greater than the kind of sum of our parts. So, I think that's really the key to it. That you are aware of what's going on in your building and

then you have the ability to really redirect and refocus people as needed.”

*Principal 4*

Principal 4 saw himself as having a great impact on student achievement on multiple levels. He stated, “Well I think we impact student achievement on many levels. I think it’s the leading of staff, and through school improvement efforts, it’s the communication and engagement of parents, it’s establishing a culture of high expectations, with high expectations related to, in my instance, post secondary outcomes. Establishing a culture of college-going students and college-wanting families. In simple terms, I think it starts and ends with us. I think the number one indicator of a highly effective school is the leader, and highly effective leadership teams. We’re responsible for establishing the tone and nature of those teams.”

*Principal 5*

Principal 5 viewed student achievement as a collaborative effort. He explained, “I feel as though I have a fairly big impact on student achievement. I will say this much. You know obviously, the teachers and the students are the two biggest factors. Well, I shouldn’t even say that. Really, student achievement comes as a team effort, and there are four parts to that equation. There are the students, the teachers, the administration, and the parents, and really if either of those four components are lacking on what they have to put into the equation, then we’re really missing out on maximizing the educational experience.”

*Principal 6*

Principal 6 saw himself as an instructional leader, but realized that he has to maintain focus on that role. He felt that he best supported student achievement by supporting the staff in their various roles. He stated, “I think that your motivation with the students, your support of the teachers, your professional support in looking at assessments and driving the instructional strategies that are used in the classroom, that is our biggest job. Unfortunately, a lot of the managerial pieces get in the way, but our role is as instructional leader. And sometimes I need to be refocused on that at times. Because we can get bogged down by a lot of the managerial pieces and we lose focus on the real reason that we’re there and that’s to help students master skills and at the high school level prepare them for college or professions, careers and having more kids that believe in that. So half of it is being that instructional leader and I think that you don’t have to know everything but you have to be able to help organize those people within you building or district or outside that can help you support that and support your teachers... There are so many ways that we can help support student achievement but I would say supporting our staff to do their job is our most important role.”

*Principal 7*

Principal 7 viewed his role as principal as the guiding force for student achievement in every aspect of the school. He stated, “I think principals effect student achievement in every way. The principal sets the vision; you know it’s a collaborative vision with the staff, the community. The principal kind of sets the framework for how we do schooling and that sort of thing. If the principal is unorganized in a certain area,

the school is going to be unorganized in a certain area, if the principal doesn't take ownership of student learning and assessment and the importance of staff evaluation and supervision, then there is going to be a lack of engagement in those areas or lack of improvement in those areas. If the principal isn't addressing issues of equity and social justice on a consistent basis, issues of inequity and social justice are going to continue to be a big piece of the school. And that piece is always going to be there, but if the principal isn't addressing it explicitly, it's going to become major issues of color blindness and color muteness and those sorts of things will be pervasive. You know, student voice in student improvement and policy and everything, the day to day operations of the school, the principal has to spearhead that to get students involved in those decisions and those discussions, and um, and instructional leadership. The principal has to have a solid grasp of curriculum and instruction to make those decisions around when to open up a new course, when not to, when to address issues of overrepresentation or misrepresentation.

I think the teacher is probably the most important factor for student achievement in that classroom, but across the school the principal is the most important factor for student achievement across the school. So for all students to be able to, to be growing and learning, ah, so, the principal is essential for student achievement.”

*Principal 8*

Principal 8 saw his role as supporting teachers to support students. He also viewed his role as cultivating student-centered systems within the school community. He stated, “I believe that I have a tremendous amount of leverage in moving student

achievement forward. I believe that my number one outcome that determines my success is student achievement. My number one role in getting there is to support the professionals in my building and support their own professional growth so that they put a better path down in front of our kids. So everything, well the majority of what I do is to support the professionals in my building and support their growth on that individual and coaching level. And secondarily to find systems and policies, which are student centered as opposed to adult centered and to change those, and now what I've learned is that I can't just go in and fix those. There is a process that I need to work through. The culture of the building and the political nature of the principalship in order to help the staff realize that those need to be changed as opposed to just fixing the problem."

*Principal 9*

Principal 9 viewed her ability to impact student achievement as related to her ability to support teachers. She explained "I think that the most direct affect that I can have is by the support that I provide to teachers and/or lack of...My goal is to intentionally have a positive effect, as opposed to not know about the negative effect that I'm having. And some of that I think is my push since coming into this position, because I've seen that one of the things that my teachers are struggling with is that they truly don't have the resources they need. Now I keep providing that and also providing the professional development that will help them come along with really just what's current, not even what's cutting edge. They've not really been exposed to rigor here; they don't really have an understanding of differentiation. The other thing that I'm working hard on right now is a shift in our culture to the belief that we do owe each student our best all of



the time. And there is no choice, but for them to be successful, and to some degree that doesn't exist here right now. So I think if I can get those things under control, then that will have an impact on student achievement in this building.”

*Principal 10*

Principal 10 viewed his effect on student achievement as setting the tone for a shared ownership for student achievement in his school. He stated, “There’s no doubt that it should be distributed. I don’t have a direct linear effect on student achievement, so I have to embrace the fact that I can’t control that directly, which is hard for me because I like to control things. What I can do is work with other people to have the conversations with them about how to do it and then encourage them to set up systems and structures so that those conversations are also happening elsewhere in the building. You know in ways that are best for students.

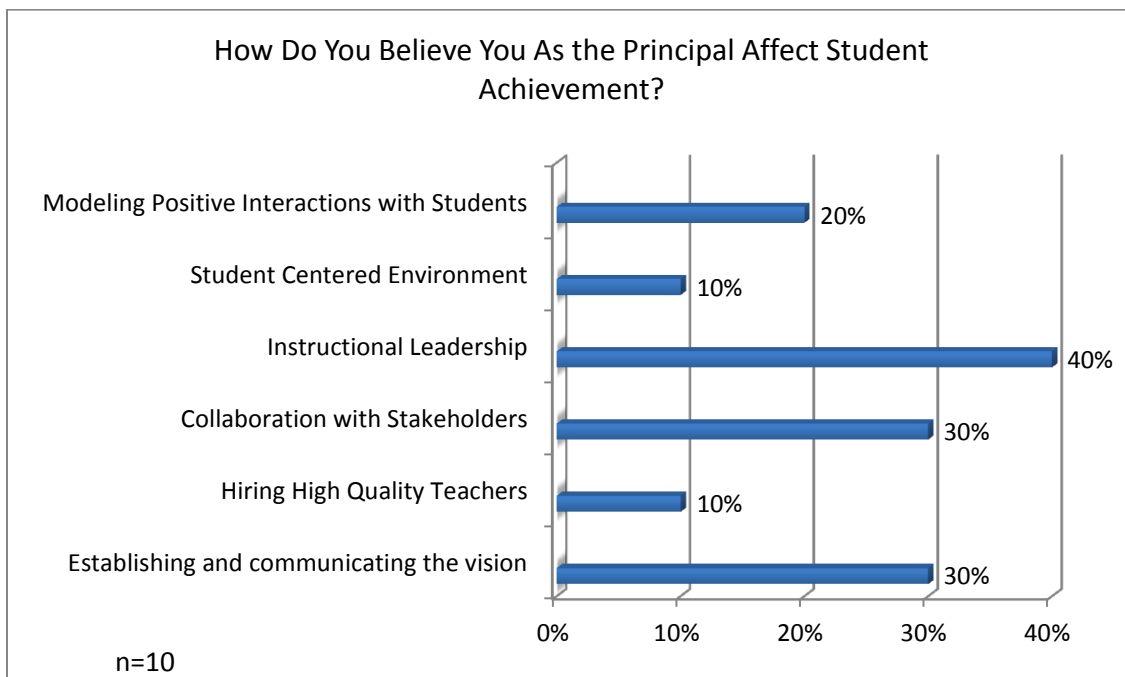
What I should share though is that if I have more of a direct role in anything as an administrator, it’s in the environment of the school. I really think principals attitudes: how he or she projects himself to students and to faculty. How a principal models interactions with students in the hallways and when he or she sees them in classrooms matters a lot in how the staff also constructs conversations with students. So I think modeling that is honestly really important. Unfortunately, there is no easy daily way to really model good instructional practices for your staff with students. But interactions with kids, you can do that. And so I think that’s a big deal. So you affect it directly more through behavior and through a much more distributed way through conversations about achievement.”

Table 26 and Figure 12 above display how the participants perceive themselves as affecting student achievement. The sum of the percentages in Figure 12 is greater than 100% in that some participants noted multiple ways that they perceive themselves as affecting student achievement. Thirty percent (n=3) believe that they affect student achievement by establishing and messaging the vision of the school around student achievement. Twenty percent (n=2) state that they affect student achievement by modeling high expectations and promising practices for the staff. Thirty percent (n=3) of participants believe they affect student achievement by collaborating with stakeholders, including: students, staff, parents, and the community. Forty percent (n=4) of participants stated that they affect student achievement by supporting teachers through instructional leadership. Ten percent (n=1) believes he affects student achievement by creating a student-centered environment. Ten percent (n=1) believes he affects student achievement by hiring high quality, inspiring teachers.

Table 26

*How Do You Believe You as the Principal Affect Student Achievement?*

<b>Participant (n=10)</b>	<b>How do you believe you as the principal affect student achievement?</b>
Principal 1	Establishing and messaging the Vision, Modeling for staff
Principal 2	Hiring inspiring, high quality teachers
Principal 3	Establish and messaging the Vision
Principal 4	Collaborating with stakeholders, Supporting teachers and staff through instructional leadership
Principal 5	Collaborating with stakeholders
Principal 6	Supporting teachers and staff through instructional leadership
Principal 7	Establishing and messaging the Vision
Principal 8	Supporting teachers and staff through instructional leadership, Creating a student-centered environment
Principal 9	Supporting teachers and staff through instructional leadership
Principal 10	Collaborating with stakeholders, Modeling for staff



*Figure 12.* How Do You Believe You as the Principal Affect Student Achievement?

### **Summary**

In this chapter, the researcher presented the findings from interviews of ten Illinois high school principals, belonging to Generation Y, with five years or less experience as a principal. The participants were interviewed regarding their perception of the effectiveness of their principal preparation program in preparing them to meet the demands of the principalship in their first five years. Each interview was held at the participant's school and lasted between 20-46 minutes.

In the next chapter, the researcher will use these data collected to discuss common themes and answer the following research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational

leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?

2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

## CHAPTER V

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### **Overview**

This study examined the perceptions of 10 Generation Y (born between 1975-1985) high school principals (nine men and one woman) in order to better understand their perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. The principals in this study discussed how they perceived the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs and what types of subsequent professional development were necessary in order for them to successfully cope with the demands of the principalship. They shared circumstances in which they encountered successes as a novice principal and experiences that proved to be challenging for them.

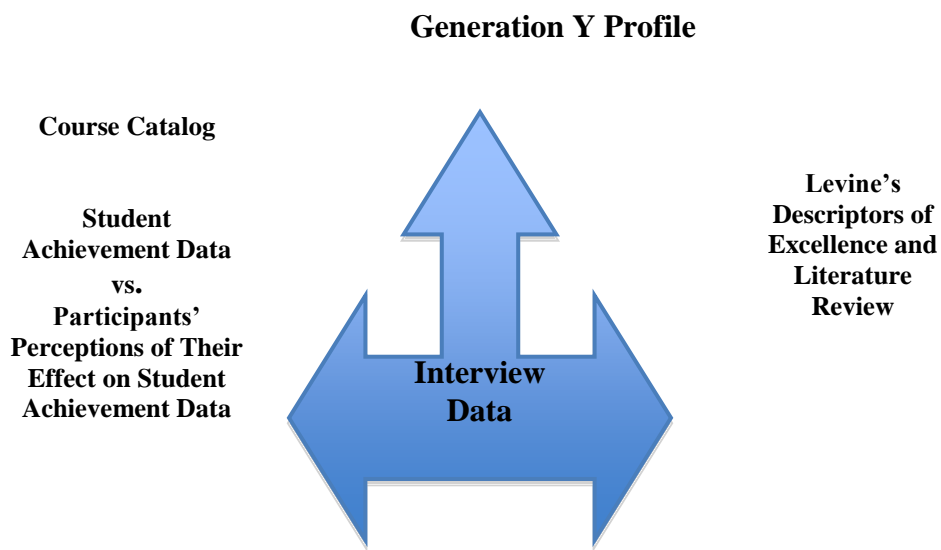
Through the use of qualitative research methodology, the researcher interviewed 10 Illinois high school principals, with five years or less experience as a principal, from eight counties: DuPage, suburban Cook, Kane, Boone, Kendall, Champaign, Ogle, and Peoria. This chapter presents the analyses of data, interpretations and conclusions in response to the following research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new leaders to lead in today's schools?

2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

This chapter presents the analyses of data, interpretations, links between these data and related literature, and conclusions in response to the research questions. As depicted in Figure 13 below, these data were triangulated with the literature review from Chapter II, with Arthur Levine's Descriptors of Excellence, the Generation Y Profile, the Course Catalog from the universities' principal preparation programs, and the student achievement data from each participant's school in comparison to the participants' perceptions of their affect on student achievement data.

Data were analyzed to uncover themes that emerged from the interviews. Finally, the researcher will discuss the limitations of this study, suggestions for further research, and the implications this study has on educational leadership preparation.



*Figure 13.* Triangulation of Interview Data

### **Overview of Levine's Descriptors of Excellence**

Arthur Levine's Descriptors of Excellence (2005b) served as a nine-point template that the researcher used as a conceptual framework when developing the interview protocol. The nine-point template includes:

1. **Purpose.**  
The program's purpose is explicit, focusing on the education of practicing school leaders; the goals reflect the needs of today's leaders, schools, and children; and the definition of success is tied to student learning in the schools administered by the graduates of the program.
2. **Curricular coherence.**  
The curriculum mirrors program purposes and goals. The curriculum is rigorous, coherent, and organized to teach the skills and knowledge needed by leaders at specific types of schools and at various stages of their careers.
3. **Curricular balance.**  
The curriculum integrates the theory and practice of administration, balancing study in university classrooms and work in schools with successful practitioners.

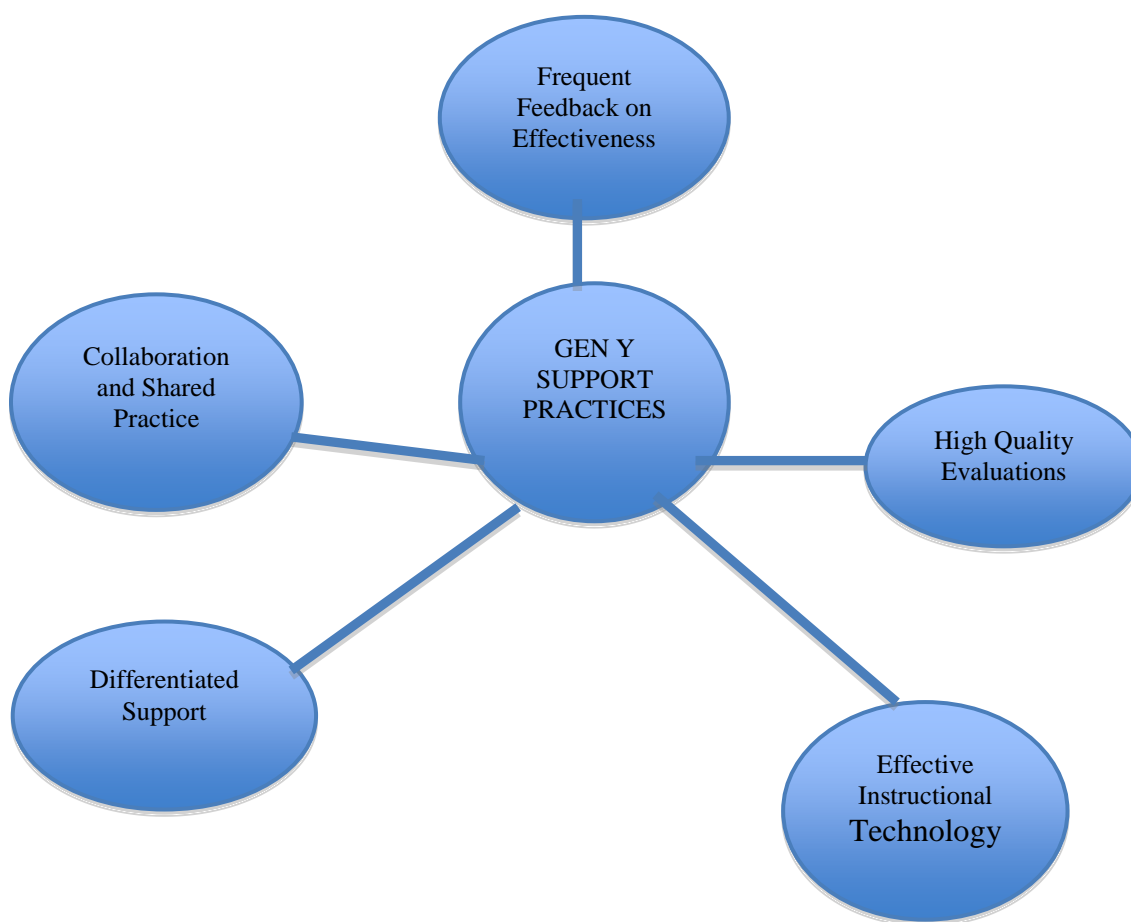
4. **Faculty composition.**  
The faculty includes academics and practitioners, ideally the same individuals, who are expert in school leadership, up to date in their field, intellectually productive, and firmly rooted in both the academy and the schools. Taken as a whole, the faculty's size and fields of expertise are aligned with the curriculum and student enrollment.
5. **Admissions.**  
Admissions criteria are designed to recruit students with the capacity and motivation to become successful school leaders.
6. **Degrees.**  
Graduation standards are high and the degrees awarded are appropriate to the profession.
7. **Research.**  
Research carried out in the program is of high quality, driven by practice, and useful to practitioners and/or policy makers.
8. **Finances.**  
Resources are adequate to support the program. For the purpose of this study, the researcher did not ask participants to discuss the financial state of the university, as the participants may not have known this information.
9. **Assessment.**  
The program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance. (Levine, 2005b, pp. 12-13)

### **Overview of the Generation Y Profile**

The 10 participants in this study can be characterized as Generation Y, in that they were born between the years 1975-1985. The researcher compared the participants' interview responses to the Generation Y profile in order to determine how closely the participants' perceptions, experiences, and needs concerning principal preparation and subsequent professional development mirror the general characteristics of Generation Y. In Figure 14 below, The Workplace Needs of Generation Y (Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Drill, 2011), members of Generation Y are characterized by:



1. desiring frequent feedback on their effectiveness;
2. engaging in high quality evaluation processes;
3. desiring differentiated and individualized support in the form of professional development;
4. desiring multiple opportunities for professional development; and
5. desiring current and efficient use of instructional technology.



From: Cogshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Drill, 2011, p. 3.

*Figure 14.* Workplace Needs of Generation Y Teachers

### Themes Emerging from Data

The researcher has identified eight main themes that emerged during this qualitative research study concerning Levine's Descriptors of Excellence (2005b). The eight themes are:

- 1. Purpose:** The ten participants perceived that their university principal preparation programs made the purpose of the programs and the programs' goals clear to students and relevant to students' needs, but they expressed room for improvement in this area.
- 2. Curricular Coherence:** Participants desired more practice than theory in university principal preparation courses, and generally did not perceive their programs as exhibiting rigor, coherence, and organization. Rather most participants felt that their programs exhibited some, but not all, of these components.
- 3. Curricular Balance:** Participants perceived their principal preparation programs as either effectively balancing theory and practice, or focusing more on theory than the practice of administration. Participants felt better prepared when they were given opportunities to problem solve.
- 4. Faculty Composition:** The participants perceived their faculty composition to be mostly adjunct professors. Though the participants felt that the sizes of the faculties were appropriate, the participants perceived that the faculties lacked in areas of expertise and how up-to-date they were in their fields.
- 5. Admissions:** The participants generally did not perceive their principal preparation program's recruitment efforts and admissions process to be rigorous. Most participants' application process included multiple steps, but none involved an on-campus interview.
- 6. Degrees:** Graduation standards were communicated to students in a variety of ways: advisors, university publicly displayed documents, and introductory courses.
- 7. Research:** The majority of participants perceived their university principal preparation programs as placing an emphasis on high quality research by providing students with foundational principles of research, preparing students to discern reputable and scientifically based research, allowing for the reading, discussion, and critiques of high quality research in courses, and preparing

students to apply high quality research to their roles as principal.

8. **Assessment:** Half (n=5) of the participants perceived no evidence of the principal preparation programs' engagement in continued improvement. Yet, the majority of participants recalled participating in course evaluations, student surveys, or interviews concerning the program's ongoing assessment and improvement.

**Finances.** The researcher did not ask participants any questions about the university principal preparation programs' finances, because the participants may not have had sufficient knowledge about this topic. Therefore no themes emerged on this topic.

The researcher identified two themes concerning the principals' perception of their impact on student achievement. These themes are:

1. **Data-Based Decision Making:** In order to impact student achievement outcomes 100% of participants (n=10) use student assessment data in the following ways: (1) to make data-driven decisions through student assessment data (2) as a diagnostic tool to determine the health of initiatives, and, (3) as part of a holistic approach to improve student outcomes.
2. **Articulating Student Achievement:** One hundred percent of participants (n=10) perceive themselves as impacting student achievement outcomes mainly through: (1) instructional leadership, (2) the establishment and communication of the school's vision, and, (3) collaboration with stakeholders.

The researcher has identified two themes concerning professional development that seemed relevant to these Generation Y participants in contrast to the five themes mentioned within the literature. The following themes developed from the participants' discussion of what subsequent professional development is needed in order to cope with the demands of the first three years of the principalship:

1. **Collaboration and Shared Practice:** Participants viewed communication with various stakeholders, particularly difficult conversations with faculty/staff as being an area where increased professional development is needed.

2. **Frequent Feedback on Effectiveness:** Participants perceived time spent with administrative mentors as valuable.

### **Themes Based on Levine's Descriptors of Excellence (2005)**

**Theme 1: The ten participants perceived that their university principal preparation programs made the purpose of the programs and the programs' goals clear to students and relevant to students' needs, but they expressed room for improvement in this area.**

The principals in this study acknowledged that their university principal preparation programs made the program's purpose and goals clear to students and relevant to students' needs, but improvements were needed in this area. Principal 1 stated, "I think that the focus of it was on being a leader...what leadership is all about...Obviously there are some courses that did that better than other courses." Principal 3 stated that his program's focus was always made clear to him. He shared, "...that was always characterized by the standards for administrative leadership." Principal 8 stated that although the goals were made clear to him as a student, "the goal was really more about preparing us for a test and state requirements and less about effective leadership." Principal 9 stated that the goals were made clear in writing, but not always in the instruction that he received.

The Rainwater Leadership Alliance (RLA) noted the importance of articulating the mission, vision, culture, and expectations of the preparation program early on, not only when recruiting students, but during the course of the preparation program in order to provide a sense of cohesion throughout the entire process, from recruitment, to

preparation, to supporting principals in practice (Chaney et al., 2010). In Illinois, the Principal Preparation Program Scoring Guide requires that principal preparation programs provide evidence that the design, implementation, and evaluation of its program align to the 2008 ISLLC standards. Additionally, Illinois principal preparation programs must provide evidence of how it will ensure that the ISLLC standards are met in the candidate experiences (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012).

**Theme 2: Participants desired more practice than theory in university principal preparation courses, and generally did not perceive their programs as exhibiting rigor, coherence, and organization. Rather most participants felt that their programs exhibited some, but not all, of these components.**

The principals in this study desired more practice than theory. Principal 1 stated, “I wanted more of a practical focus...time to work through real issues from our schools.” Principal 2 noted that, “The coursework was not valuable, but the practicum was very valuable...The practicum was the most important part.” Principal 3 stated that he, “...wanted more practice than theory...reality-based situations, and opportunities for problem solving.” Principal 8 stated that his preparation program, “Gave me the knowledge, but not the skills necessary to lead.” Principal 10 stated, “Curriculum alone is not enough to prepare a new principal.” In terms of rigor, coherence, and organization, only 20% (n=2) of participants perceived their programs as exhibiting all three of these components. Most participants noted that the level of rigor varied from professor to professor.

A number of scholars support the notion that principal preparation programs, partnerships, and initiatives should attempt to bridge the gap between the university principal preparation programs and the daily responsibilities of the school principal, seeking to improve the ability of principals to actualize these daily responsibilities through increased support from district employees as well as university professors (Browne-Ferrigno & Barber, 2010; Principal Preparation Programs at the University of Denver, 2011; The Highly Qualified Leaders Project, Rhode Island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2006; The Wallace Foundation, 2011). The RLA believes that school leadership training should be experiential, allowing for each leader in training to develop an Individual Learning Plan (ILP) that takes into account the candidate's strengths and weaknesses (Chaney et al., 2010). In Illinois, the Principal Preparation Scoring Guide requires principal preparation programs to provide evidence that candidates are engaged in instructional activities involving teachers at all grade levels, the observation, supervision, and evaluation of faculty and staff, the development of professional development plans, and other leadership opportunities (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012).

**Theme 3: Participants perceived their principal preparation programs as either effectively balancing theory and practice, or focusing more on theory than the practice of administration. Participants felt better prepared when they were given opportunities to problem solve.**

Nearly half of the participants believed their principal preparation program to have successfully balanced the theory and practice of administration. Principal 3 stated,

“I think in most cases it did a really nice job... I recall we always had to bring back specific information from our schools or examples that would work within that framework...At the same time we were introduced to the theories, we were applying the theories to our reality.” Principal 7 noted that he viewed the internship requirement as providing practice to balance out the theories covered in the coursework. In terms of how the principal preparation program prepared them as practitioners, 30% of participants (n=3) mentioned the emphasis on problem solving and decision making as being very beneficial in their work. Principal 3 stated that he felt his program helped him to consider “the possible consequences and how we are going to deal with each one of the possible consequences as they come about.”

Browne-Ferrigno and Barber (2010), note that one of the criticisms of principal preparation programs is that they are not in touch with the realities and challenges that practicing principals must face each day. Partnerships between universities and pre K-12 districts seek to bridge the gap between the everyday happenings at schools and the university principal preparation programs. These partnerships seek to improve the ability of the principal to actualize these daily responsibilities (Browne-Ferrigno & Barber, 2010). Browne-Ferrigno and Barber go on to say that such partnerships are beneficial in that through the shared commitment across institutional boundaries, the theory-practice integration of school leadership is strengthened.

In Illinois, the Principal Preparation Scoring Guide requires preparation programs to provide candidates with experiential preparation around instructional leadership for teachers in all settings: general education, special education, bilingual education, and

gifted education. Additionally, the Illinois Principal Preparation Program Internship Assessment Rubric outlines the standards for the internship or practicum experience. Students must provide evidence that they meet the standards in the areas of Human Resources, School Improvement, Hiring, Evaluation and Supervision, Professional Development, and Data Analysis (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012; Illinois Principal Preparation Program Internship Assessment Rubric, [www.illinoisschoolleader.org](http://www.illinoisschoolleader.org), February 2013).

**Theme 4: The participants perceived their faculty composition to be mostly adjunct professors. Though the participants felt that the sizes of the faculties were appropriate, the participants perceived that the faculties lacked in areas of expertise and how up-to-date they were in their fields.**

The principals in this study classified their professors as mostly adjunct. Nearly half of the participants viewed their professors as being up to date in their fields. Principal 2 recalled the faculty for his cohort. He stated, “I think there was a little disconnect between what they were presenting in front of us and what was actually occurring in the field... I think it was staffed with who’s around, as opposed to who’s qualified.” Principal 3 perceived his adjunct professors as having less time to prepare for courses than full-time professors, since they were current practitioners. He also noted that he hopes there is an increase in the use of technology in his principal preparation program, since he completed the program. The use of technology was an area where he did not feel his faculty was up-to-date. Principal 7 felt that “one major gap in the areas of expertise was there was no one among his professors, who knew anything about



leadership for bilingual education...or English language learners...and they really didn't talk about new leadership theories around leadership for social justice or transformative leadership.”

One of the 13 Critical Success Factors (CSFs) of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) is that “the school leader is able to create a school organization where faculty and staff understand that every student counts and where every student has the support of a caring adult. Certainly issues of social injustice and bilingual education are relevant to today's school leaders' experiences. Principal preparation programs must be intentional about preparing new principals to combat issues of social injustice and engage in transformative leadership (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011).

Furthermore, the faculty and internship supervisors of principal preparation programs must meet standards as well. In Illinois, the Principal Preparation Program Scoring Guide outlines requirements for Faculty Supervisors for the internship, including: (1) Three years of successful experience as a building principal as evidenced by relevant data, including data supporting student growth in two of the principal's previous five years, (2) formal evaluations or letters of recommendations from former supervisors, and (3) valid and current administrative certification endorsements. Additionally, the faculty of the Illinois principal preparation programs must provide evidence of faculty training to rate candidates on the CSFs, and the faculty must meet the requirements detailed in Section 30.60 of the scoring guide, pertaining to staffing requirements, which include completing online training to successfully complete the

state-mandated teacher evaluation through an online program, participating in a collaborative online trainer network, and tracking trainer effectiveness through online course evaluations (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prepareval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prepareval/default.html#prin), June, 2012).

**Theme 5: The participants generally did not perceive their principal preparation program's recruitment efforts and admissions process to be rigorous. Most participants' application process included multiple steps, but none involved an on-campus interview.**

The majority of the participants did not perceive their principal preparation program's admissions process to be rigorous. Many of the participants noted that they were not recruited to their programs. Principal 7 recalled, "I wasn't really recruited. I applied on my own." Principals 2 and 8 both noted that the extent of the recruitment efforts for their programs included an emailed invitation or a flier in a mailbox to join a cohort. Although the recruitment process was not rigorous, eighty percent (n=8) of participants recalled that the admissions process included multiple steps, although none of the participants were involved in on-campus interviews.

The Rainwater Leadership Alliance (RLA) (2010) seeks to put forth a model for increasing the rigor of the recruitment and admissions process. The RLA strategically recruits candidates by articulating the mission, vision, culture, and expectations of the program early on. Also, the RLA seeks to recruit candidates that have the ability to lead adults and remain resilient in the face of obstacles and challenges. The RLA has a multiple step recruitment process and deliberately recruits amongst a variety of

professional pools to reach a diverse, qualified group of candidates (Chaney et al., 2010).

In the state of Illinois, the Principal Preparation Program Scoring Guide outlines requirements for candidate selection in section 30.70. The rubric requires that candidates for admissions:

1. participate in an in-person interview with no fewer than two of the program's full-time faculty;
2. hold a valid and current Illinois teaching certificate (or the equivalent for another state);
3. received passing scores on the Basic Skills test;
4. successfully complete an on-site written response to a scenario; and
5. submit an admissions portfolio highlighting achievements.

The Scoring Guide provides a rubric for the principal preparation program faculty to use in assessing candidate's achievement through analysis of the admissions portfolio (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012).

**Theme 6: Graduation standards were communicated to students in a variety of ways: advisors, university publicly displayed documents, and introductory courses.**

One hundred percent (n=10) of participants noted that the graduation standards were communicated to students. The standards were communicated in a variety of ways, ranging from program advisor, to handbooks and other university publicly displayed documents, to introductory courses and meetings outlining the graduation standards.

Principal 3 stated, “Each faculty member communicated throughout the graduation standards of his program...That was throughout and often.” Principal 4 stated, “It’s part of the student handbook at the university level.” Principal 9 shared, “I remember sitting down with an advisor...and looking at scheduling and where I could fit things in.”

In the State of Illinois, newly redesigned principal preparation programs must meet the requirements of a rigorous process. University representatives must provide evidence that their program meets the requirements according to the rubric, which addresses general program requirements, internship requirements, guidelines for assessment of the internship, coursework requirements, and staffing requirements, all of which must be easily accessible through both print and electronic media (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011).

**Theme 7: The majority of participants perceived their university principal preparation programs as placing an emphasis on high quality research by providing students with foundational principles of research, preparing students to discern reputable and scientifically based research, allowing for the reading, discussion, and critiques of high quality research in courses, and preparing students to apply high quality research to their roles as principal.**

More than half of the participants believed their programs to place an emphasis on high quality research. Principal 3 stated, “That was a huge emphasis.” Principal 5 shared, “It was a foundational principle that we needed to use practices that were researched based and had been proven to be effective. They gave us the skills to discern between different approaches to studies and taught us to be critical thinkers.” Principal 6 stated,

“They were supportive in that area and that’s something that I feel pretty adequate about- that I can find the information that I need to present something or that I need to make better, informed decisions.”

Research shows that as institutions are redesigning principal preparation programs they are placing emphasis on high-quality research. Western Carolina University’s Graduate School of Education had as one of its principal preparation program redesign objectives, to “include current research on administration preparation programs in its model” (Buskey & Topolka-Jorissen, 2010). In Illinois, the Principal Preparation Program Scoring Guide places emphasis on high quality research, in terms of how principals will apply research in their schools as they assume the role of instructional leader. The scoring guide lists as one of its program coursework requirements, that candidates must engage in a process, that determines how students in a school respond to scientific, research-based interventions (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011).

**Theme 8: Half (n=5) of the participants perceived no evidence of the principal preparation programs’ engagement in continued improvement. Yet, the majority of participants recalled participating in course evaluations, student surveys, or interviews concerning the program’s ongoing assessment and improvement.**

Fifty percent (n=5) of the participants perceived no evidence of the principal preparation program’s engagement in continued improvement. Principal 1 stated, “I don’t know that I’ve necessarily seen that. I’m sure that they do it. I’ve heard things from

professors about how they're looking to retool and reshape the department there, but I haven't seen it in action." Principal 6 stated, "I would say yes, they did... the people that I've seen since I have been in the program say they have self-assessed and improved their program in areas of weakness." Principal 7 stated, "I think the program does read the evaluations that students give the faculty. They do ask questions about how to improve the program structure and those sorts of things. I haven't seen evidence of improvement." Half (n=5) of the participants were engaged in their principal preparation programs ongoing assessment and improvement through course evaluations. Principal 10 highlighted a time when the Dean of the program interviewed him in order to provide feedback about the program. Twenty percent of participants (n=2) also engaged in the universities ongoing assessment by taking student surveys.

The Illinois Principal Preparation Program Scoring Guide outlines expectations for continued assessment of the principal preparation program. Section 30.30, General Program Requirements, lists that partnership between the principal preparation programs and one or more public school districts or non-public schools are required. The program must provide evidence of design, implementation, administration, operation, and evaluation of the partnership. Both the principal preparation program and the partnering school district(s) must document evidence of ongoing program evaluation (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011).

### **Themes Related to Student Achievement**

**Theme 1: In order to impact student achievement outcomes participants use student assessment data in the following ways: (1) to make data-driven decisions through student assessment data, (2) as a diagnostic tool to determine the health of initiatives, and, (3) as part of a holistic approach to improve student outcomes.**

All participants (n=10) noted that they use student achievement data in a number of ways in order to impact student achievement outcomes. The most frequent use of student achievement data was for the purpose of making data-driven decisions. Forty percent (n=4) of the principals stated that they use the students' assessment data to drive decision-making, and 30% (n=3) of the principals use data as a diagnostic tool to assess the health of school-based initiatives. Thirty percent (n=3) of the principals use a holistic approach to improving student outcomes, by using a variety of data to create interventions and incentives for student performance both academically and behaviorally. These data equal to more than 100% because some participants noted more than one way that they use student assessment data to impact student achievement outcomes.

The 13 Critical Success Factors (CSFs) of the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), the framework now used by Illinois, include the following points concerning a school leader's use of data to impact student achievement outcomes: the school leader is able to use data to initiate and continue improvement in school and classroom practices and student achievement, and the school leader is able to keep everyone informed and focused on student achievement (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011). Therefore in addition to using student data to

increase student achievement outcomes, the principal must be able to articulate to multiple audiences the goals for student achievement and a plan to achieve the goals.

**Theme 2: The participants perceive themselves as impacting student achievement outcomes mainly through: (1) instructional leadership, (2) the establishment and communication of the school's vision, and, (3) collaboration with stakeholders.**

Four out of 10 participants view themselves as having an impact on student achievement through instructional leadership. Principal 6 stated that he felt he best supported student achievement by supporting the staff in their various roles. Principal 8 sees his role as supporting teachers to support students. He stated, "I believe I have a tremendous amount of leverage in moving student achievement forward. I believe that my number one outcome that determines my success is student achievement." When speaking of her teachers, Principal 9 stated, "I keep providing resources and also providing the professional development that will help them come along with really just what's current, not even what's cutting edge...I'm working hard to shift our culture to the belief that we owe each student our best all of the time...I think if I can get those things under control, then I will have an impact on student achievement in this building."

Hess and Kelly (2005) state that there is research that suggests principal preparation programs have very little impact on a principal's ability to impact student achievement. However, DiPaola and Hoy (2008) describe the principal's instructional leadership as having to define and communicate shared goals, monitor and provide feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promoting school-wide professional



development, all which impact student achievement. The Illinois School Leader Task Force examined data from a number of resources and in its 2008 report to the general assembly, it recommended that because school leaders do have an impact on student achievement outcomes, state policies must set high standards for school leader certification that aligns principal preparation, early career mentoring, ongoing professional development, and master principal recognition with those standards (Illinois School Leader Task Force, Report to the Illinois General Assembly, 2008).

### **Themes Concerning Professional Development for Generation Y Principals**

**Theme 1: Participants viewed communication with various stakeholders, particularly difficult conversations with faculty/staff, as being an area where subsequent professional development is needed.**

Concerning communication during difficult conversations, Principal 3 stated, “I think there’s a lot to be said for just the experience that you get by going through situations. I think it’s some of the softer skill areas...that you’re not ready to deal with until you go through it a couple of times...It’s gonna take a while for me to build that response of ok what exactly do they need? And it’s according to each individual.” Principal 4 needed professional development around authentically engaging the community. He stated, “Nothing really teaches you how to do that in a meaningful way.” Principal 6 needed professional development to improve his communication with parents. He shared, “That’s an area that I continue to look for ways to improve on.”

Zapeda (2003) states that principals have to be willing to address various kinds of human resource issues and perform conflict resolution as needed. Principals are

responsible for having difficult conversations with staff and students, and making difficult decisions based on the outcomes of these conversations.

This phenomenon of discomfort in having difficult conversations may be a concern for Generation Y because this generation characteristically thrives in a culture of collaboration. They were born into a culture that, because of technology, allows them to engage in constant collaboration with peers locally and globally. They have instant connections to the world around them, and there is constant access to virtual friends. Working collaboratively with others is the norm, not the exception. The use of technology may also account for Generation Y's discomfort with face-to-face difficult conversations. In social networking, for example, if there is a conflict between two people, no conversation is necessary. One simply has to press a button to unfollow or unfriend a person. As a Generation Y principal, unfriending a staff member is not an option. The Generation Y principal may feel discomfort for lack of authentic practice in the area of effective communication during difficult times (Gravett & Throckmorton, 2007; Martin & Tulgan, 2001).

**Theme 2: Participants perceived time spent with administrative mentors as valuable.**

Four of the 10 participants stated that they sought outside help or counsel from veteran school leaders when faced with challenging situations. Principal 3 networks with other principals and has established relationships with other principals and veteran principals using technology and social networking. He stated, "I call or we do a Google+ hangout...where we kind of go over things... that's been the most important part of my

professional development.” Principal 6 shared that he has a retired administrator as a mentor and his professional conversations with his mentor have been helpful. He stated, “When you’re the only administrator in the building you struggle at times...One of the best resources I had was the regional office provided mentor, and he was a retired administrator, but a terrific support.”

The RLA model provides ongoing coaching and professional development to principals (Chaney et al., 2010). Illinois instituted the mandatory New Principal Mentoring Program in order for new principals to be coached by experienced principals and benefit from their expertise (Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program 2007-2008).

Generation Yers characteristically want to be successful, and desire constant feedback and affirmation that they are performing in ways that will achieve their goals. They thrive in settings where they can be hands-on or experiential, but they also characteristically benefit from the advice and guidance of more experienced mentors. Codington and Grant-Marshall (2005) describe Generation Y as placing high value on the interaction with older generations. A novice Generation Y principal, therefore, may recognize the potential to learn valuable lessons from an experienced principal that has a shared experience (Cogshall, Behrstock-Sheratt, & Drill, 2011).

## Research Questions

**Question 1: How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program's capacity to sufficiently prepare new school leaders to lead in today's schools?**

Based on the participants' interview responses in comparison to Arthur Levine's Descriptors of Excellence (2005b), the participants perceived their principal preparation programs to be effective in three of the nine areas and ineffective in six of the nine areas. According to the nine-point template describing Levine's Descriptors of Excellence, the participants of this study described their principal preparation programs as sufficiently preparing them to lead by demonstrating excellence in the following areas:

- Faculty composition- having an appropriately sized faculty;
- Degrees- communicating graduation standards; and
- Research- emphasizing high quality research.

According to Levine's nine-point template, the participants of this study described their principal preparation programs as needing improvement in the following areas:

- Purpose- communicating the purpose and program goals;
- Curricular coherence- having a rigorous, coherent, and organized curriculum;
- Curricular balance- balancing the theory and practice of administration;
- Faculty composition- having a faculty whose area of expertise is up-to-date;

- Admissions- having a rigorous recruitment and admissions process; and
- Assessment- having evidence of continuous self-assessment and improvement.

The participants of this study did not discuss the topic of their principal preparation program's finances because the researcher did not include a question pertaining to finances in the Principal Oral Interview Protocol. The researcher assumed that participants would not have been made privy to the details concerning the principal preparation program's finances.

These data from the participants, who each completed their principal preparation programs prior to the state of Illinois' implementation of the new requirements for principal preparation, suggest that newly redesigned programs should communicate the purpose and program goals to students on an on-going basis, being mindful to align each course and preparation process to the 2008 ISLLC standards and the Critical Success Factors (CSFs). Principal preparation programs must conduct ongoing assessments of its curricula to ensure that the courses are relevant to students' needs, and are rigorous, coherent, and organized in a manner that prepares students with the skills and knowledge needed by school leaders. They must ensure that the curriculum balances the theory and practice of administration, offering students opportunities to problem solve and apply the theories of educational administration. Principal preparation programs must ensure that the faculties are up-to-date and teaching in their areas of expertise, and that they have balanced course loads. Additionally, the faculties of principal preparation programs must engage in continued professional learning. Principal preparation programs must employ

a strategic, multi-faceted, rigorous admissions process that allows programs to recruit leaders that, as the Rainwater Leadership Alliance states, “have the ability to lead adults and remain resilient in the face of obstacles and challenges” (Chaney et al., 2010). Finally, principal preparation programs must develop and implement plans for ongoing self-evaluation to assess improvements of the newly redesigned programs.

**Question 2: How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?**

The perceptions of the participants of this study align to the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs. According to Cogshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, and Drill (2011), those characterized as Generation Y are most satisfied in the workplace when:

1. They receive frequent feedback on their effectiveness.
2. They engage in a high quality evaluation process.
3. They receive differentiated and individualized support in the form of professional development.
4. They have multiple opportunities for collaboration.
5. They have access to current and efficient instructional technology.

The participants of this study compare to the Generation Y profile because:

1. *They enjoy constant feedback on their performance, which allows for constant reflection.* - Principal 1 stated that he would have enjoyed feedback in his

principal preparation classes based on decisions that he made or would have to make in his school.

2. *They appreciate high quality evaluations that will challenge them, push their thinking and professional growth.* Principal 7 desired more theoretical conversations and more rigorous courses to push his thinking as a school leader.
3. *They appreciate differentiated and individualized professional development and seek opportunities for professional development when they believe it to be lacking.* Principal 4 sought out professional organizations and external frameworks when he felt that his district-provided professional development did not meet his needs.
4. *They enjoy multiple opportunities for collaboration.* Principal 3 started regular Google+ hangouts to collaborate and brainstorm with other school leaders
5. *They have access to current and efficient technology.* Principal 5 purchased software for his faculty to more effectively manage student achievement data.

These data suggest that the Illinois Generation Y principals will flourish under the new Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, (IPEP) (2012) for improving professional performance. The new IPEP is comprised of features the Generation Yers, including the participants of this study, deemed necessary to experience success in the workplace. The new plan includes: frequent feedback on effectiveness of principal performance, a high quality evaluation process, individualized and differentiated support in the form of professional development, multiple opportunities for collaboration, and efficient use of

instructional technologies. In short the new plan for principal evaluation, as well as the newly redesigned Illinois Principal Preparation Programs, are fully aligned to the Workplace Needs of Generation Y Principals (Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Drill, 2011).

The new plan calls for districts to establish an evaluation for school leaders that combines professional practice and student growth to rate the principal. IPEP suggests that the principal's professional practice (aligned with the 2008 ISLLC standards and the Illinois Performance Standards for School Leaders) account for 75% of the principal's evaluation and student growth account for 25% of the principal's evaluation. Other factors that will be considered in the principal evaluation are self-assessment, surveys about the instructional environment, formal observations, feedback, and individualized professional goals and plans.

The research states that Generation Y principals enjoy constant feedback on their performance. The multiple opportunities for feedback provided by IPEP will provide Generation Y principals with a number of indicators of observable principal behaviors, and how they are meeting the expectations of the standards according to an indicator rubric. The IL IPEP provides a high-quality evaluation that will challenge Generation Y principals and push their professional growth. Through the plan, principals will engage in thought-provoking reflection and presentation of evidence of their leadership performance. The IPEP involves the creation and utilization of individualized professional goals and plans, a workplace element desired by Generation Y principals, according to Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, and Drill (2011). The plan calls for multiple



opportunities for collaboration around goal setting, between the principal and the district evaluator. Finally, the IPEP allows principals to use current and efficient technology in the forms of webinars, online meeting spaces, reflection tools, and as a means to document evidence. Each component of the IPEP is aligned to what research states the Generation Y principal needs in order to experience success in the workplace. Therefore, the researcher suggests that IL school districts implement the IPEP with fidelity, particularly those districts that have an increasing percentage of Generation Y principals (Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, <http://www.ilprincipals.org/resources/principal-performance-evaluation>, retrieved February 14, 2013).

**Question 3: What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?**

In terms of Levine's Descriptors of Excellence (2005b) the two main areas in which these Generation Y principals seek subsequent professional development are a more rigorous curriculum and more reality-based practice. These types of professional development can be achieved through a curriculum that is rigorous, coherent, and organized, as well as curriculum that effectively balances the theory and practice of administration. The participants noted repeatedly that they appreciated a rigorous curriculum that was aligned to the real issues that they face each day. They voiced the desire to have more time to practice administration or think through scenarios that they might face in their role as principal. They stated that they would have appreciated the opportunity to receive feedback from their professors as well as their colleagues

concerning real issues. Principal 3 stated, “I think as often as possible, if your program asks you to make decisions within a particular situation...anything that’s discussed in class needs to be situation based.” Principal 4 perceived his program as being, “Poor quality, disconnected, disjointed, and not particularly aligned with any standards or framework for leadership. There was theory, but not a lot of practice.” Principal 5 viewed his preparation program as being, “coherent and well organized, but lacking rigor...I didn’t feel necessarily that I was challenged academically.

Additionally, the participants believed that in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship professional development around communicating with a variety of stakeholders is essential. Multiple responses were given about the desire to have more practice having difficult conversations with staff, especially around sensitive issues such as evaluations, reduction in force, legal matters, and school closings. Principal 1 stated, “...we have a black out period where folks can’t take vacation or personal days during specific times, and we have some that have. So we have to talk about that. And I know that may seem that these are like fundamental things you deal with, but having tough conversations never gets easy.” Principal 6 stated, “Being able to have conversations with teachers that I was reducing. Having to RIF terrific teachers in that time. I wish I had been able to do a little role playing in the program to have some of those conversations.” Zapeda notes, “The principal must be aware of the legal implications of his or her actions (being knowledgeable about just cause and due processes) and making the appropriate decisions regarding the discipline of staff and students (Zapeda 2003).

The participants also noted the importance of professional development in the

form of the mentorship. The Critical Success Factors (CSFs) supports this approach to professional development as it includes the following as a success factor: The school leader is able to continuously learn and seek out colleagues who keep them abreast of new research and proven practices (networking and mentorship) (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011). Principal 6 states, “One of the best resources I had my first year, was actually...the regional office provided mentor, and he was a retired administrator, but he was a terrific support, because I could call him anytime and bounce ideas off of him.” Principal 8 stated, “So the most valuable professional development I received was through a coaching model with my superintendent, who is wise and smart and has helped me facilitate my growth professionally and personally.”

These data suggest that principal preparation programs and subsequent professional development should provide multiple opportunities for candidates and novice principals to role play in a variety of situations, especially those that result in the principal having to have difficult conversations. The Generation Y principal desires for professional development to push his/her thinking, and enhance his/her ability to communicate in difficult situations. Role-playing would allow the principal opportunities to problem solve through a mock-situation based on challenging situations that occur every day in schools, and receive feedback from instructors, peers, and mentors. Furthermore, these data suggest that school districts should invest in a mentorship program for novice school leaders. Given that the budget for state funded mentorship was eliminated, districts should allocate funds in their budgets to support mentorship for

novice principals. These Generation Y principals perceived the guidance of a mentor as extremely valuable.

**Question 4: How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?**

The Generation Y profile is characterized as

- seeing the workplace as an opportunity for collaboration with others locally and globally;
- enjoying interaction with older generations and learning in a hands-on manner;
- being challenged through problem-solving; and
- integrating technology into work (Stambuck, 2009; Westman, 2010).

The participants in this study align to the Generation Y profile concerning professional development in that they:

- Naturally adapt to a community-based problem solving approach such as PLCs in order to positively impact student achievement. Principal 6 described how his PLCs use student achievement data to impact student outcomes. He stated, “We use it all the time here...our departments and PLCs...They have, every other day, time available for common planning time within their department, but we meet as large groups at least once a week...looking at data.”
- Easily adapt to the project/evidence-based evaluation system for new school

leaders. Generation Y principals will thrive with an evaluation system that requires them to complete projects and/or provide evidence to the indicators of success. These participants had similar experience in their practicum, in which they had to complete tasks associated with the 2008 ISLLC standards. Principal 10 stated, “There was a direct correlation between the work that I was doing on a day-to-day basis and the work of the internship...I found it very useful.”

- Connect with colleagues locally and globally in order to interact with and brainstorm solutions to problems concerning transformative leadership. Principal 3 described the multi-faceted, community-based approach to using student achievement data, which included parents, community members, faculty/staff, and students. He stated, “It works on student motivation on the students’ side because this is something they can achieve, but it also takes a more global view of student achievement as a school. There are eight different categories that we ask students to achieve in order to earn this excellence award.”
- Adapt to and welcome the mentorship requirements of the state of Illinois for new principals, in that Generation Y typically enjoys interacting with and learning from older generations. Principal 6 stated that his mentor was, “one of the best resources I had my first year...he had no vested interests except in me.” Principal 8 stated of his mentor, “The professional development which I have found the most beneficial in my life has probably been that coaching.”

- Address problems facing today's schools head-on, possibly thinking of innovative ways to overcome challenges. Principal 5 described how he dealt with the challenge of getting his work organized. He stated, "I actually took a class recently on time management and being organized and there's just a lot of things from that class that ended up helping me out."
- Integrate technology into work in order to connect with varied stakeholders: students, parents, community members, and global society. Principal 3 described, "The most important and most helpful thing to me has been building an online presence and having connections to a lot of other instructional leaders....I have a Twitter, a number of people I'm connected to through a lot of blogs, and I communicate with people that way. So I have about ten principals from around the country actually and a couple in Canada that I call or we do a Google+ hangout....We go over things and share what we're doing and that's been the most important part of my professional development."

These data suggest that subsequent professional development for Generation Y principals should allow for the continued development and enhancement of problem solving and critical thinking skills through project-based or evidence-based opportunities. Ongoing professional development for Generation Y principals should allow for frequent collaborative opportunities with local and global colleagues. The ongoing professional development for novice Generation Y principals should include opportunities for mentorship from a more experienced administrator. The ongoing professional

development of Generation Y principals should be personalized and individualized to the needs of the principals. Finally, ongoing professional development for novice Generation Y principals should include opportunities for connections with the global community through technology.

### **Limitations of the Study**

While this research served to be informative for principal preparation programs, there were limitations due to the design of the research: These limitations include the following:

1. The sample of participants (n=10) did not adequately represent all of the Generation Y principals in the state of Illinois. Principals from District 299, Chicago Public Schools were excluded due to the difficulty in conducting timely research. However by limiting the amount of participants the researcher was able to have richer conversations with the participants that described their experiences as novice principals in more depth.
2. The sample of participants (n=10) was less diverse than the researcher desired, both by ethnicity and gender. The participants were all Caucasian. Nine of the ten participants were males. The researcher attempted to interview a more ethnically diverse pool of participants; however, the researcher had difficulty in finding principals of color that fit the criteria: Illinois High School Principals born between 1975-1985, with five years or less experience as a principal, in DuPage, suburban Cook, Kane, Boone, Kendall, Champaign, Ogle, and Peoria counties. The researcher originally planned to interview five

males and five female participants, and hoped that they would represent diverse ethnicities, but the researcher only found three women high school principals, and only one woman was willing to participate in the research. These circumstances suggested that the pool of Generation Y High School Principals in DuPage, suburban Cook, Kane, Boone, Kendall, Champaign, Ogle, and Peoria counties, is limited. Additionally, the pool of Generation Y high school principals that are women, and the pool of Generation Y high school principals that are people of color were limited. These phenomena implied that there is a need for principal preparation programs to recruit Generation Y high school principals that are women and people of color. It also suggests that there may be opportunities for further research about the culture of hiring in districts in these counties, given that it appeared that the majority of the high school principals were older Caucasian males.

3. Identification of themes and the interpretation of data is a subjective process. The researcher of this study is a female, woman of color, who is a former high school principal, and belongs to Generation Y. The researcher's point of view and biases limits the ability to provide more generalizable results. In an attempt to eliminate biases from the study, the researcher maintained a journal entitled, "Dancing with My Dissertation," in which the researcher included thoughts, reflections, and opinions that emerged during this study.
4. Each interview was audio-taped and transcribed by the researcher. Transcriptions were provided to the participants for member checking. No



participants clarified responses. The researcher interpreted the lack of clarification of responses to mean that the participants perceived the interview transcripts as an accurate portrayal of their responses.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

While the purpose of this study was to examine novice Generation Y High School Principals' perceptions of the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs and subsequent professional development needs, other questions arose that might have implications for educational leaders. Based on the nature of this study, the following are recommendations for future studies:

1. An in-depth follow-up study could be conducted with a larger sample of Generation Y principals to determine if their perceptions concerning the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs and subsequent professional development needs are consistent with the participants of this study.
2. An in-depth study into the recruitment practices of principal preparation programs, specifically to identify recruitment strategies for diversity of gender and ethnicity among candidates.
3. Given that the researcher did not ask participants questions about Levine's Descriptor of Excellence around Finances, because participants may not have been privy to the principal preparation program's financial status, additional research could be conducted specifically in the area of finances to determine, whether or not resources are adequate to support the program.

4. A follow up study could be conducted with novice Generation Y high school principals in Illinois to determine their perceptions on the effectiveness of the new Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan (IPEP) in terms of improving their professional growth in the principalship.

### **Implications for Educational Leadership Preparation**

New high school principals are faced with the incredibly daunting task of being a transformational leader, charged with leading for school improvement and social justice. Even more daunting, perhaps, is the task of the educational leadership programs, which have the responsibility to prepare these leaders. As can be seen from this study, Generation Y principals are bravely accepting the challenge of the principalship, and they have high expectations for their professional preparation and ongoing development. Additionally, principal preparation programs, specifically in Illinois, have been redesigned, as required by the state, to better prepare principals to assume their leadership roles, and the state has implemented a plan for the ongoing professional development, supervision, and evaluation of principals. The Illinois Principal Preparation Program Score Card outlines in detail the expectations for principal preparation programs to ensure high-quality, evidence-based preparation for principals (IL Principal Preparation Program Application for Approval, 2011). The Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan (IPEP), implemented in 2012 aligns with the redesigned principal preparation program, so that the transition from preparation to practice should be seamless. The Illinois principal candidate is now being trained in an evidence-based, research-based environment, where practice meets theory in the classroom as well as in the internship experience, and the

principal candidate has the guidance of the university supervisor and the on-site supervisor, who is an experienced principal. The state of Illinois has mandated that principal preparation programs partner with one or more school districts in order to ensure the preparation experience is relevant to students' needs and aligned to the district mandates and requirements. Upon completing the program, the novice Illinois high school principal, enters a professional environment in which professional expectations are clearly outlined, articulated, and aligned to the 2008 ISLLC standards, and is asked to demonstrate mastery of the standards by providing evidence of indicators. Under the new plan, the novice Illinois principal has multiple opportunities for collaboration with a mentor and constant feedback.

Illinois has married the two systems: the principals' pre-service preparation experiences with an aligned in-service and on-going professional development experience. Based on these data, the researcher suggests that the principal preparation programs in Illinois and partnering school districts continue to evaluate the preparation program, subsequent professional development, and principal evaluation plan to ensure that alignment of the systems are maintained (Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, <http://www.ilprincipals.org/resources/principal-performance-evaluation>, Retrieved February 14, 2013).

Another implication that this research has for Educational Leadership programs stems from Levine's Descriptors of Excellence, in terms of recruitment. As university principal preparation programs in Illinois are redesigning their programs, as mandated by the state, they should consider the attention given to the recruitment and admissions

processes. This research was informative in terms of highlighting the small number of high school principals of color outside the city of Chicago. Equally alarming, is the small number of women high school principals. There are more women principals at the elementary and middle school levels according to the Illinois State Board of Education's response to the researcher's letter entitled, "Freedom of Information Request," (see Appendix A) but at the high school level, the number is drastically lower. Educational Leadership programs might consider these circumstances when planning a recruitment strategy. The Principal Preparation Program Scoring Guide outlines requirements for candidate selection in section 30.70. The rubric requires that candidates for admissions:

1. participate in an in-person interview with no fewer than two of the program's full-time faculty;
2. hold a valid and current Illinois teaching certificate (or the equivalent for another state);
3. received passing scores on the Basic Skills test;
4. successfully complete an on-site written response to a scenario;
5. submit an admissions portfolio highlighting achievements.

The Scoring Guide provides a rubric for principal preparation program faculty to use in assessing candidate's achievement through analysis of the admissions portfolio (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012).

Additionally, in order to recruit more women and people of color to the principalship, principal preparation programs and high school districts should consider

developing recruitment plans that intentionally target prospective principals that are women and/or people of color. Recruitment plans might include visiting school districts that have larger minority populations among teachers, to host information sessions about the principal preparation program. Additionally, principal preparation programs might partner with historically minority professional and social service organizations, such as fraternities and sororities of the Pan Hellenic Council, urban leagues, and minority networks, to recruit minority educators to the principalship. These organizations consist of incredible networks of minority professionals, and have the potential to greatly increase the applicant pool. Given that principal preparation programs are required to partner with one or more school district or organization, the principal preparation program might consider the demographic makeup of the partnering school districts, targeting districts that are comprised of larger populations of people of color. Given Generation Yers' tendency to frequently utilize various technologies, recruitment efforts might include posting principal preparation program information and job postings for principals on databases, websites, and listserves geared towards teachers of color.

An additional implication for educational leadership would be to consider the types of professional development necessary for the faculties of principal preparation programs to undergo in order to better support Generation Y principals. This research suggests two types of professional development are necessary for faculty to sufficiently support Generation Y principals. The first is concerning the mentorship of Generation Y principals. The researcher suggests that faculty members and mentors of new principals demonstrate the ability to coach novice principals in effective methods of negotiations.

The principals in this study noted that they were challenged by engaging in difficult conversations. Principal preparation program faculties and mentors of novice principals should be skilled in coaching through a number of coaching stances in order to individualize support for the Generation Y principals. Intentional support and development of negotiation skills may build more capacity in Generation Y principals to use diplomacy in one-on-one conversations.

The second area of professional development for faculties of principal preparation programs and principal mentors is in the area of technology. Generation Y has constant access to technology and is constantly connecting, collaborating, and problem solving with peers locally and across the globe through social media and other technological tools. Therefore faculty in Graduate Schools of Education must be equipped with the capacity to use these tools to enhance the courses and practicum experiences in the principal preparation program. Given that these Generation Y principals noted the desire for additional practice in reality based situations, faculty must be able to provide authentic situations in a variety of modes, including through technology and social media. More and more, principals are connecting with colleagues, parents, and other stakeholders through social media. Therefore they must know how to apply negotiation skills and diplomacy even in the conversations that are happening virtually. Principal preparation faculty must engage in professional development to develop their understanding and skillset around the use of various social media technologies in order to ensure that they have the capacity to provide authentic practice situations for their students. The researcher suggests that professional development for faculty in the

principal preparation program is structured in a way that allows them to experiment with various social media tools, engaging in discourse, and problem solving with other faculty members through a virtual environment. The researcher suggests that the faculty integrate the use of social media into principal preparation courses in a manner that does not compromise the quality and rigor of the courses, but allows students to practice and role play through challenging situations in the context of social media.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, data from this study found that Generation Y principals perceived their principal preparation programs to be effective in some areas, and lacking in others. The Generation Y principals perceived their principal preparation programs to be effective in having appropriately sized faculties, clearly communicated graduation standards, and an emphasis on high quality research. However, the participants felt that their principal preparation programs were not effective in the areas of articulating the purpose and program goals, providing a rigorous, coherent, and organized curriculum, balancing the theory and practice of administration, employing a rigorous recruitment and admissions process, obtaining faculty with areas of expertise that are up-to-date, and continuously engaging in the self-assessment and evaluation of the principal preparation program.

Many states have already begun to address the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs, and the state of Illinois is no different. As of September 2012, the state of Illinois required all Administration and Supervision programs that lead to an Illinois principal endorsement to be revised and seek approval according to the new

rubric (Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012). Additionally, Illinois redesigned its principal evaluation tool, and as of September 2012, districts in the state employ the Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan (IPEP), which is aligned to the Principal Preparation Scoring Guide (Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, <http://www.ilprincipals.org/resources/principal-performance-evaluation>, Retrieved February 14, 2013).

Data from this study show that 100% (n=10) of the Generation Y principals in this study align to the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation and subsequent professional development needs. The new standards and frameworks for educational leadership programs in principal preparation require new principals to produce evidence of indicators that are characteristically attributed to Generation Y. In the same turn, the IPEP requires principals to provide evidence of their success in the role of principal. The manners in which these principals should provide evidence are aligned to the new frameworks for educational leadership programs, as well as to the Generation Y profile. Clear course expectations and standards, clear curricular coherence and curricular balance, frequent opportunities for collaboration, frequent feedback, effective use of technology, project-based assignments, and required mentorships are activities that create a leadership preparation climate and an on-going professional climate in which Generation Y principals should thrive (Coggshall, Behrstock-Sherratt, & Drill, 2011; Principal Preparation Scoring Guide, [www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin](http://www.isbe.net/prep-eval/default.html#prin), June, 2012; and Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, <http://www.ilprincipals.org/resources/principal-performance-evaluation>, retrieved February 14, 2013).



The Generation Y principals in this study desired subsequent professional development around enhanced communication with varied stakeholders, particularly in difficult situations. They preferred the mentorship and guidance of a more experienced colleague, such as Principals 6 and 8, who stated that the mentorship was the “best resource” and the “best professional development” that they received. They appreciate and desired on-going and frequent feedback; and the opportunity to problem solve with colleagues both locally and globally (Stambuck, 2009; Westman, 2010). Finally, the Generation Y principals perceived themselves as having an impact on student achievement outcomes through instructional leadership and effective use of student achievement data. The new IPEP suggests that student growth account for 25% of the principal’s evaluation, which would provide another means for these Generation Y principals to ascertain the impact of their leadership on student achievement (Illinois Principal Evaluation Plan, <http://www.ilprincipals.org/resources/principal-performance-evaluation>, retrieved February 14, 2013).

It was the hope of this researcher to contribute to the scholarship in the area of principal preparation by presenting the findings of these data that answered the research questions:

1. How do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, perceive the effectiveness of their educational leadership programs in terms of the program’s capacity to sufficiently prepare new leaders to lead in today’s schools?

2. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their leadership preparation programs?
3. What type of professional development do new high school principals belonging to Generation Y, principals born between 1975-1985, believe they need in order to cope during the first three years in the principalship?
4. How do the perceptions of these Generation Y participants compare and contrast with the Generation Y profile concerning their professional development needs during their first three years in the principalship?

The researcher's goal was to contribute to the empirical scholarship concerning the pre-service training of principals, and its impact on the principals' leadership effectiveness, ability to affect student achievement outcomes, and subsequent professional development needs. Additionally, the researcher hoped to provide some insight into the experiences of Generation Y novice High School Principals, in hopes that the principals' responses would be deemed helpful to principal preparation programs and school districts as they engage with this generation of school leaders.

APPENDIX A  
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Freedom of Information Office  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 72777-0001  
ATTN: FOIA Request

April 19, 2012

Dear Sir or Madam:

I, Chandra D. Sledge, hereby request that the Illinois State Board of Education produce the following public records pursuant to the provisions of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 Ill.Comp.Stat.Ann.140/1 *et seq.* for the purposes of Doctoral research at Loyola University Chicago, which is being supervised by Dr. Marla Israel, Associate Professor in the School of Education.

The name, district name, district mailing address, email address and phone number for all Illinois secondary school principals with five years or less experience as a principal, and born during the years 1975–1985 in DuPage, Will, and suburban Cook counties.

Please produce the requested records to **Chandra D. Sledge, 1255 South Michigan Avenue, Apt. 1703, Chicago, IL 60605** or if provided electronically, to **cdsledge1913@gmail.com** within seven (7) working days of receipt of this request [Ill.comp.Stat.140/3(c)]. If the requested records cannot be produced within seven (7) working days, please notify me in writing of the reason(s) for the delay and the date by which the requested records will be available.

If you do not understand this request, or any portion thereof, or if you feel you require clarification of this request, or any portion thereof, please contact me at 312/810-3334.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Chandra D. Sledge

Sent via fax to 217/782-3097 or via email at foia@isbe.net

APPENDIX B  
EMAILED RECRUITMENT

## EMAILED RECRUITMENT

**Project Title:** Looked After or Left Behind: The Effectiveness of Principal Preparation Programs as Perceived by Generation Y Principals

Hello, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of principal)?

Hello. My name is Chandra Sledge. I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago. I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study that I am conducting for my dissertation, which is under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have been identified as a principal with one to five years of experience, and you were born during the years 1975–1985, referred to as Generation Y.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to examine how principals with one to five years of experience that were born between the years 1975–1985 perceive the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. Additionally, this research will examine the types of professional development participants believe is necessary for them to adequately lead in the role of principal.

**Procedure:**

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to:

1. Sign and return a “Letter of Cooperation” indicating your agreement to participate in this research study.
2. Participate in a 45-minute interview about your perceptions of the effectiveness of your principal preparation program, its impact on your leadership capability, and the types of professional development that you deem necessary for novice principals to effectively lead. The interview will include questions pertaining to your:
  - a) role in the school
  - b) leadership preparation program
  - c) professional development experiences
  - d) perceptions of what types of experiences are most helpful to you in your role as principal.

Most questions will be open-ended and will require you to reflect on your answers thoroughly and respond with as much detail as possible. For example, a sample question is provided below:

“Describe a time when you as principal felt prepared to lead through a challenging situation as a result of your principal preparation program?”

**Risks/Benefits:**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. In order to guarantee the information you provide remains confidential, the interviewer will not refer to the interviewee by name or initials at any time within the research. Instead, the interviewee’s name and school will be assigned an alias that will be used to identify subjects throughout the entire study. The interviewer will also share the notes with the interviewee after the notes have been typed.

At this time, you as the interviewee has the right to remove any quotes or comments that you do not want on record. Also, you will have the opportunity to clarify any statements, as needed, without any consequences.

Regarding benefits, there are no direct benefits to you from participation, but the results will serve to add to a body of literature in leadership and education. Additionally, it is hoped that the information ascertained in this study will benefit current and future principals, as well as educational leadership programs.

**Confidentiality:**

All responses will remain confidential. Each respondent will be assigned a unique identification number and all data will be analyzed/coded using this identification number. Individual names and names of the school districts will not be mentioned in the final writing.

Furthermore, the audio tape recordings of the interview will be kept in a locked file in the researcher’s home. Once the final writing of the research is completed, the recordings will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to. If you decide to participate, please respond to the email. You may elect to answer a specific question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

I hope you will assist me in my doctoral research.

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF COOPERATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH



## LETTER OF COOPERATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Project Title:** Looked After or Left Behind: The Effectiveness of Principal Preparation Programs as Perceived by Generation Y Principals

**Researcher:** Chandra Sledge

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Marla Israel

### **Introduction:**

As we discussed previously by email, you are being invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Chandra Sledge for her dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a principal born during the years 1975–1985, and have one to five years of experience as a principal.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to examine how principals with one to five years of experience and those born between the years 1975–1985, referred to as Generation Y, perceive the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. Additionally, this research will examine the types of professional development that the participants believe is necessary for them to adequately lead in the role of principal.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions of the researcher you wish before agreeing to participate. You may contact the researcher at 312/810-3334.

### **Procedure:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Download this “Letter of Cooperation” onto your personal stationary. Please sign the form and return it to the researcher in the enclosed, self-addressed stamped envelope. Signing and returning this letter of cooperation will indicate your agreement to participate in this research study.
- Participate in a 45-minute interview about your perceptions of the effectiveness of your principal preparation program, its impact on your leadership capability, and the types of professional development you deem necessary for novice principals to effectively lead. At the interview, you will be asked to sign a “Consent to Participate in Research” letter. Furthermore, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. The transcriber hired for this purpose has also signed a confidentiality agreement. Throughout the interview, your responses will be checked for accuracy. You will have the opportunity to suggest revisions to the transcript, if necessary. Once the transcript is in its final stage, all identifiers will be removed.

**Risk/Benefits:**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life. In order to guarantee that all information provided remains confidential, the interviewer will not refer to the interviewee by name or initials at any time within the research. Instead, the interviewee's name and school will be assigned an alias that will be used to identify subjects throughout the entire study. The interviewer will also share the notes with the interviewee after the notes have been typed. At this time, the interviewee has the right to remove any quotes or comments not wanted on record, or can clarify any statements as needed without any consequences.

Regarding benefits, there are no direct benefits to your participation. However, it is hoped that this study will add to the body of research in leadership and education. Additionally, it is hoped that the information ascertained in this study will benefit current and future principals, as well as educational leadership programs.

**Confidentiality:**

All responses will remain confidential. Each respondent will be assigned a unique identification number and all data will be analyzed/coded using this identification number. Individual names and names of the school districts will not be mentioned in the final writing.

Furthermore, the audio taped recordings of the interview will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home. Once the final writing of the research is completed, the recordings will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you do not have to. If you do decide to participate, you may elect to answer a specific question or to withdraw from participation in the study at any time without penalty.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this research study, please contact:

Chandra Sledge at cdsledge1913@gmail.com  
Dr. Marla Israel at misrael@luc.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Loyola's Office of Research Services at 773/508-2471.

**Statement of Cooperation:**

I, the principal, agree to cooperate in the research to be conducted by Chandra Sledge, a Loyola University Chicago Doctoral student. Her project is entitled: *Looked After or Left Behind: The Effectiveness of Principal Preparation Programs as Perceived by*

*Generation Y Principals.* I understand the purpose of this research and the research protocols associated with this project.

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Principal's Signature

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Date

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Researcher's Signature

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Date

APPENDIX D  
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Project Title:** Looked After or Left Behind: The Effectiveness of Principal Preparation Programs as Perceived by Generation Y Principals

**Researcher:** Chandra Sledge

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Marla Israel

**Introduction:**

You are being invited to participate in a research conducted by Chandra Sledge for her dissertation, under the supervision of Dr. Marla Israel in the School of Education at Loyola University Chicago.

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a principal born during the years 1975–1985, and have one to five years of experience as a principal.

Please read this form carefully and feel free to ask questions that you may have before deciding whether to participate in this study.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this study is to examine how principals with one to five years of experience, and were born between the years 1975–1985, referred to as Generation Y, perceive the effectiveness of their principal preparation programs. Additionally, this research will examine the types of professional development that the participants believe is necessary for them to adequately lead in the role of principal.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions of the researcher you wish before agreeing to participate. You may contact the researcher at 312/810-3334.

**Procedure:**

To participate in a 45-minute interview about your perceptions of the effectiveness of your principal preparation program, its impact on your leadership capability, and the types of professional development that you deem necessary for novice principals to effectively lead. At the interview, you will be asked to sign a “Consent to Participate in Research” letter. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed. The transcriber hired for this purpose has also signed a confidentiality agreement. Throughout the interview, your responses will be checked for accuracy. You will have the opportunity to suggest revisions to the transcript, if necessary. Once the transcript is in its final stage, all identifiers will be removed.

**Risk/Benefits:**

There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those

experienced in everyday life. In order to guarantee that all information provided remains confidential, the interviewer will not refer to the interviewee by name or initials at any time within the research. Instead, the interviewee's name and school will be assigned an alias that will be used to identify subjects throughout the entire study. The interviewer will also share the notes with the interviewee after the notes have been typed. At this time, the interviewee has the right to remove any quotes or comments not wanted on record or can clarify any statements as needed without any consequences.

Regarding benefits, there are no direct benefits to your participation; however, it is hoped that this study will add to the body of research in leadership and education. Additionally, it is hoped that the information ascertained in this study will benefit current and future principals, as well as educational leadership programs.

**Confidentiality:**

All responses will remain confidential. Each respondent will be assigned a unique identification number and all data will be analyzed/coded using this identification number. Individual names and names of the school districts will not be mentioned in the final writing.

Furthermore, the audio tape recordings of the interview will be kept in a locked file in the researcher's home. Once the final writing of the research is completed, the recordings will be destroyed.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not wish to participate in this study, you do not have to. Even if you do decide to participate, you may elect to answer a specific question or to withdraw from participation in the study at any time without penalty.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this research study, please contact:

Chandra Sledge at [cgsledge1913@gmail.com](mailto:cdsledge1913@gmail.com)

Dr. Marla Israel at [misrael@luc.edu](mailto:misrael@luc.edu)

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact Loyola's Office of Research Services at 773/508-2471.

**Statement of Consent:**

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understood the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

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Principal's Signature

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Date

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Researcher's Signature

---

Date

APPENDIX E  
PRINCIPAL ORAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL



## PRINCIPAL ORAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Birth year \_\_\_\_\_
2. Number of years as a teacher prior to becoming a principal \_\_\_\_\_
3. Subject(s) taught \_\_\_\_\_
4. Number of years as a principal \_\_\_\_\_
5. Racial/Ethnic group \_\_\_\_\_
6. University attended for Principal Preparation \_\_\_\_\_
7. Degrees earned \_\_\_\_\_
8. What motivated or inspired you to become a school principal?
9. What factors led you to the selection of your principal preparation program?
10. Was the purpose and focus of your principal preparation program made clear to you as a student? Please describe how this was accomplished.
11. Explain how the goals of your principal preparation program reflected your needs as a new principal?
12. How would you describe the effectiveness of your principal preparation program's curriculum in terms of preparing you with the skills and knowledge needed in your role as a new principal?
13. Explain your perception of the level of rigor, coherence, and organization of the curriculum in your principal preparation program.
14. Discuss how effectively your principal preparation program balanced the theory and practice of administration.

15. How did your principal preparation program prepare you to be a successful practitioner?
16. Describe the faculty in your principal preparation program in terms of how up-to-date they were in their fields, and how well they balanced theory and practice.
17. Was the faculty's size and areas of expertise aligned to the curriculum and student enrollment? Yes or No? Can you explain?
18. Did you find your principal preparation program's recruitment efforts and/or admissions process to be rigorous?
19. How were you selected for admission into your principal preparation program?
20. How were the graduation standards communicated to students?
21. How did your principal preparation program emphasize high quality research?
22. How do you use student achievement data to improve student outcomes?
23. How do you believe you, as the principal, affect student achievement?
24. Describe the length and quality of your internship/practicum experience.
25. What evidence have you seen that your principal preparation program engages in continuing self-assessment and improvement of its performance?
26. How were students engaged in the university's ongoing assessment of the principal preparation program?
27. Describe a time in which you, as principal, were prepared to lead through a challenging situation. How did you do it?
28. Describe a time in which you, as principal, were not prepared to lead through a challenging situation. How did you do it?

29. Describe a time when a skill you learned in professional development enabled you to cope with the demands of the first three years of the principalship.
30. Describe a time when you felt you lacked the skills necessary to deal with the demands of the first three years of the principalship.

APPENDIX F

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT PER TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES

## CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT PER TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES

I, \_\_\_\_\_, transcriptionist, agree to maintain full confidentiality in regards to any and all audio tapes and documentation received from Chandra Sledge related to her doctoral study: *Looked After or Left Behind: The Effectiveness of Principal Preparation Programs as Perceived by Generation Y Principals*.

Furthermore, I agree:

1. To hold in the strictest of confidence the identification of any individual that may be inadvertently revealed during the transcription of audio taped interviews, or in any associated documents.
2. To not make copies of any audio tapes or computerized files of the transcribed interview texts, unless specifically requested to do so by Chandra Sledge.
3. To store all study-related audio tapes and materials in a safe and secure location as long as they are in my possession.
4. To return all audio tapes and study-related documents to Chandra Sledge in a complete and timely manner.
5. To delete all electronic files containing study-related documents from my computer hard drive and any back up devices once I've completed the requested services.

I am aware that I can be held legally liable if I break this confidentiality agreement, and for any harm incurred by individuals if I disclose identifiable information contained in the audio tapes and/or files in which I will have access.

Transcriber's name (printed): \_\_\_\_\_

Transcriber's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## VITA

Chandra Sledge is the daughter of Alvin and Catherine Sledge of Warrenton, North Carolina. She was born in Henderson, North Carolina on August 10, 1978. She currently lives in Chicago, Illinois.

Chandra Sledge attended public schools in Warren County, North Carolina. She graduated from North Carolina Central University in May of 2000 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Secondary Education. She received her English 9-12 teaching certificate in North Carolina. In May of 2006, Chandra earned a Masters of School Administration from North Carolina State University. She received her General Administrative License for K-12 in North Carolina. In the fall of 2006, upon moving to Illinois, Chandra obtained the Illinois Type 75 endorsement. She began her doctoral studies at Loyola University Chicago in the fall of 2006.

Chandra Sledge has worked in the field of education for 13 years. She began her career teaching Middle School English/Language Arts at Hyattsville Middle School in Prince George's County, Maryland. She then taught high school English (9-12) at Garner IB Magnet High School in Garner, North Carolina. Upon moving to Chicago, Chandra taught high school English at Austin Business and Entrepreneurship Academy in Chicago, Illinois and later at Bolingbrook High School in Bolingbrook, Illinois. In 2008 Chandra became Assistant Director of the Young Women's Leadership Charter School of Chicago, and in 2009, she became the Co-Director of Young Women's Leadership

Charter School of Chicago. Chandra currently is the Multi-Regional Network Director for Diploma Plus, Inc., an education organization.

Chandra facilitates and participates in ongoing professional development, most recently through her work with Diploma Plus Inc., membership at the Principals' Center at Harvard Graduate School of Education, and the National Equity Project.

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Chandra Sledge has been read and approved by the following committee:

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