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PRINCIPALS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE NEED FOR FORMAL PRINCIPAL
MENTORSHIP: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

by

Kimberly N. Quinn

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Major: Educational Leadership & Policy Studies

The University of Memphis

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DEDICATION

To my children, Channing and Josiah. This is proof that you can do anything you set your mind to do! Mommy completed this task to set an example for you two.

To my mother, Doris. Thank you for your love, support, and belief in me. I live to make you proud.

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Above all, I want to thank God. At the start of this journey, I prayed for strength and balance, and He granted it. It is because of him that the angels mentioned in the rest of these acknowledgements were sent to help me in the process.

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I would also like to thank Denmark Elementary School's faculty and staff for allowing me to study and lead simultaneously, encouraging me along the way. I am especially appreciative of Mrs. Crystie Austin, who willingly spent some of her leisure time proofing multiple sections of this work.

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ABSTRACT

Although 21 states are currently designating a portion of their Every Student Succeeds Act funds specifically for novice principal induction and support, Tennessee is not currently one of these states. This dissertation uses a qualitative case study approach to interview Tennessee principals serving in years four to five, who did not have formal mentorship support during their novice years, to gather their experiences and support needs during this time. The researcher reviews the current literature on novice principal mentorship programs across the country through the lens of Kram's Mentoring Model and Suchman's Program Theory before connecting the literature with the perceived needs of principals in this study. This study aimed to use data from principals' interviews to make implications for practice and future district level formal mentorship program development in Tennessee schools. Findings from this study identified the problems faced by novice Tennessee principals as well as suggested inputs, processes, outputs, and potential outcomes if the implicated program were implemented. Using the principal participants as stakeholders in development, a program theory mentoring model, needed to help new Tennessee principals transition into and thrive in the role, is presented. The study concludes with recommendations for multiple stakeholders including state education officials, directors of schools, district leaders, human capital, professional development leaders, district leaders, and selected principal mentors.

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Introduction

After an exhausting day filled with facilitating teachers' collaborative planning, conducting teachers' observations, redirecting disruptive students, addressing non-compliant teachers, and calming angry parents, I can recall contacting a fellow principal with more years of experience for moral support. I shared my day, and the fellow principal encouraged me by saying that the job does get easier. As the phone call ended, I sat at my desk looking at an untouched stack of papers and thought this job seemed so much easier for my previous principal. Shortly after, I received an email requesting that I meet with my supervisor regarding several disgruntled teachers. Without an assistant principal to lighten the load, I, realized in late September, the role of novice principal could be overwhelming, and I felt like I was slowly sinking without a lifeguard on duty. Overwhelmed by people, paperwork, and the position, and isolated in a school away from my same level peers, I wished for someone who was available to give me ongoing support in this first year.

At the beginning of each school year, newly hired teachers are inducted into their schools and districts with well-planned specifically designed training sessions. Often these teachers are assigned a coach or mentor, who is a highly effective teacher, responsible for coaching, supporting, and meeting with them regularly in a non-evaluative fashion. This relationship also allows time for reflective practices during novice teachers' beginning years in the profession (Lunenburg, 2011; Mathur, Gehrke, & Kim, 2012). Despite how successful these new teachers may have been at the university level, many districts acknowledge that these novices could benefit from continued support and mentorship (Ronfeldt & McQueen, 2017; Warsame & Valles, 2018). On the contrary, in many districts, such as the one in which I work, novice principals are expected to meet the same expectations as their peers the first day in the field

without such support (Robinson & Alvy, 2004). Yet, a recent study that interviewed 20 newly appointed principals suggested a need for an onboarding process for these principals to orient them to their new role. It was found that although all principals receive some form of training, the ones with deep knowledge of the school context have better experiences, and general training does not afford this opportunity (Marshall, 2018).

In 2013, our newly appointed superintendent hired several new principals. As a part of this new cohort of principals, I was both eager and anxious about assuming a position that I, for many years, aspired to hold. In addition to being hired to lead a school, I was also expected to restaff it, shift its climate and culture, and improve its student achievement. Although I had teacher leadership experience and had been an assistant principal for seven months alongside an effective principal, navigating the role alone was far more overwhelming than I anticipated. As a teacher and assistant principal, my perception of my principals' responsibilities, although many, seemed far less complex. Spillane & Lee (2014) note that, like me, many assistant principals face a reality shock once in the actual role of principal.

Due to the increasing complexity of the principalship, however many effective teachers avoid entering leadership roles (Fink & Brayman, 2004; McAdams, 1998; Metzger, 2003; Normone, 2004), and many assistant principals avoid entering the principalship (MacCorkle, 2004). A study of a large sample of Ohio teachers showed that these teachers viewed the disadvantages associated entering the principalship outweighed the rewards (Howley, Andriavano, Perry, 2005). Yet, I embraced the opportunity, and my novice years were a turning point in my professional story, building this interpretive biography (Denzin, 1989).

Although my district did make an effort to assign each novice principal a more seasoned principal as a mentor, she was not trained and there was no set schedule of sessions for the fully

employed veteran principal assigned to me to help me strengthen my leadership skills. Instead, I was tasked with calling my “mentor”, previous principal, or a principal friend in a neighboring district when I needed guidance. I once requested my mentor meet at a local Starbucks to review how I had scored a teacher’s observation before holding a post conference. She gladly attended and affirmed my thinking, but due to her own responsibilities, she never reached out to me to see if I was in need of help. However, there were a few calls from my district office’s instructional leadership director when teachers did not agree with my expectations. My instructional leadership director’s reactive responses often made me question whether I was fit to carry out the role they hired me to fulfill. However, I committed myself to my school and completed my first year as principal.

In my second year, the district hired retired part time principal coaches, who were assigned to several new principals. Coaches visited twice a semester to collect data to complete the principals’ evaluations by asking questions about indicators on the Tennessee Instructional Leadership evaluation rubric. The Administrator Evaluation Rubric includes a set of indicators and detailed descriptors that provide a clear set of expectations to schools and districts. The rubric’s descriptors help instructional leaders develop leadership practices related to gains in student achievement (TN Administrator Evaluation Rubric, 2016). During these visits, coaches spent the majority of their time talking with the principal to gather answers to pre-determined questions that aligned to the rubric. This occurred, despite Barrett and Mahoney (2008) finding that mentorship is compromised when mentors cannot take a non-judgmental stance or do not have adequate time for the relationship with the mentee to develop. Often my answers to the principal coach’s questions highlighted the positives of my school, and I did not elaborate on my struggles or ask for lots of help, as I knew this information could negatively impact my

evaluation. According to Robbins & Alvey this is common as (2004), “Principals may feel that asking for help may be perceived as a sign of weakness” (p. 229).

During my first three years, many of the new principals hired were not retained in their positions. I often wonder how many of them also felt the lack of structured mentoring support. In 2017, a new superintendent was selected, and he began to place a high emphasis on principals coaching teachers to be effective deliverers of instruction. Additional new principals were hired to replace those who were not retained or who had retired. While the district office did build an initiative for the superintendent and his team to conduct walkthroughs with all principals to better coach teachers, there is still not a different initiative to help principals navigate their first years in the profession.

As a principal in my fifth year, not too far removed from my novice years, I am uniquely qualified to conduct a study on the formal mentorship needs of novice principals in Tennessee. Often novice principals in my district seek me out to ask for guidance in the same manner that I once did those with more experience than me. I listen to their voices and mentor unofficially. The knowledge gained through research methods courses at the University of Memphis has prepared me to engage in the qualitative research process to hear the voices of novice Tennessee principals as they share their stories and needs. I have also engaged in extensive reviewing of literature on the formal mentorship initiatives that districts across the nation are implementing to support their novice principals. Additionally, I have received the Human Subjects-Social Behavioral Research Certification through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative.

Background of the Study

Dhuey and Smith (2014) acknowledged that improvement in the quality of principals is indirectly associated with improvements in student achievement; therefore, quality leadership has an impact on student achievement. Thus, the quality of even novice principals must be improved. This is especially the case seeing that two third of principals surveyed by the Wallace Foundation (2016) responded that their college experiences did not prepare them for the realities of the job, and 41 percent of superintendents concurred that these novice principals were not well prepared (New Leaders, 2014). To support this claim, 50% of novice Tennessee principals surveyed on the Tennessee Educator Survey responded there was not a single area of the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards they were prepared for when they entered the principalship (Tennessee Research Education Alliance, 2018).

It is noted that in 2016, efforts towards supporting new principals were made when the Tennessee Department of Education awarded one million dollars in leadership development principal pipeline grants to multiple districts. These districts included Bedford, Blunt, Dyersburg City, Gibson Special School District, Hamilton City, Haywood, Hickman, Knox, Lauderdale, Lincoln, Maury, Marshall, Obion, Putnam, and Washington County and multiple educational partners and included funding for principal residency, a bridge from university to workplace, and an induction program for new leaders (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017). Even with this initiative, there still remains a lack of consistent state-wide novice leadership support. This data is relevant seeing that there is a decline in student achievement in the first two years under a new principal's leadership (Miller, 2013), and it takes approximately five or more years to see increases in student achievement after a new leader takes the reigns (Branch, Hanushek, & Rivkin, 2009; Clark, Martorell, & Rockoff, 2009; Fullan, 2001).

At the turn of the twenty-first century, formal mentorship for principals began to gain policy attention, yet not all states have made mentorship for these new leaders a requirement (Archer, 2006; Hernandez & Menchaca, 2011). Formal programs presented in the context of an organization are common in workplaces and involve senior mentors who are purposefully matched with novice mentees (McDonald, Erickson, & Gatlin, 2009). Yirci and Kocabas (2010) acknowledge the need for mentorship of principals because principal preparation influences whether students are adequately educated in schools. Mentorship also offers support from an experienced and effective principal. This is necessary as effective principals are developed, and preparation at the university level may not adequately prepare one for leadership. Celoria and Roberson's (2015) qualitative study examined the impact new principal coaching had on novice principals' emotional state. New principals credited their coaches with listening to their concerns, helping them to think through decisions, and preventing them from feeling isolated and from leaving the profession when overwhelmed.

Gettys, Martin, and Bigby's (2010) qualitative study of six Missouri novice principals indicated the need for novice principal mentorship to be a more formal structured process. Although novice in this study were engaged in a district centered and state-wide administrator program, these programs were weak in providing instructional leadership support. Interview findings revealed the need for regular communication, proper matching to build trusting relationships, specified amounts of time allotted to mentoring, established guidelines, and techniques for observation and feedback. To support this claim, Gumus' (2014) qualitative study of seven novice principals and seven experienced principal mentors found that due to regular scheduled formal school visits and phone calls trust was built between the pairs. While both mentors and mentees expressed mentorship was a crucial part of the novice professional

development, the novices credited their mentors with being supportive partners who gave them guidance and helped them become accustomed to their jobs.

Statement of the Problem

When a classroom teacher or assistant principal is promoted to the principal position, these educators are often presented with the rigorous demands (Akinbode & Al Shuhumi, 2018; Wells, 2013). These demands present novices with challenges such as receiving more negative input than positive, having their actions misperceived, having to clearly think through what we will say to stakeholders, and having a wealth of data but being unsure of how to manage it all (Bohn, 2013). According to Tyre (2015), “The new role, though, has come with new expectations, pressures, and risks...By year 3, more than half of all principals leave their jobs” (para. 9). A more recent national sample of both private and public-school principals indicated 6% of principals moved to a new school and 12% left the profession (Goldring & Taie, 2018). To support this claim, although less than the national average, in Tennessee, by their third year, nearly a third of principals leave their schools, and seven percent of principals leave the profession each year (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018).

An empirical qualitative study of 62 novice principals found few principals planned to have long-term careers in the position due to instructional, managerial, community, political and parental challenges. Implications for professional development including mentoring of these principals were made (Shoho & Barrett, 2010). Levin and Bradley (2019) noted that inadequate professional development such as the lack of support through mentoring and coaching as one of five major reasons these principals leave. Additional studies conducted on principal turnover showed that when a principal succumbs to pressures of the position, this can have adverse effects on the school impacting both teacher turnover and investment in efforts that will impact student

achievement (Beteille, Kalogrides, & Loeb 2012; Fuller, 2012). Because these principals are presented with a large quantity of new knowledge and demands, yet have little time to process what is learned, it was found they need both formal and informal continuous mentorship (Jaarsveld, Mentz, & Challens, 2015).

When surveyed, fewer than half of superintendents acknowledged that their districts had formal mentoring programs for beginning principals. Therefore, novice principals either succeed or fail due to the lack of support provided to prevent their failure (National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) & National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), 2003). Acknowledging the gap new leaders continue to face, Dr. Debra Boyd and Dr. Lance Forman said:

Aspiring leaders, often, experience some gap of time between graduation and leadership employment. To bridge this gap, some level of mentoring and coaching support is needed during the induction phase of a new leadership position. Authentic learning through residency, mentorships, and induction support, though, are budget-intensive to local school districts, which may present a barrier to districts seeking to develop or strengthen a leadership pipeline. (Dammu, 2018)

Studies also indicate novice principals are often assigned to low performing schools with the expectation of turning around the school's performance (Baroody, 2011; Kirton, 2014). Kirton's (2014) study goes on to say these novices are not given support that aids them in learning how to work with and build relationships with resistant teachers, parents, and students. The study also indicated a lack of trusting relationships between the novice and district staff (Kirton, 2014). Because of these factors, novice principals of urban schools leave the profession in higher rates than those in rural schools (Superville, 2015). Those who do remain experience

burnout, which results in absenteeism, presenteeism, illness, and problems in social and personal relationships, ultimately affecting their productivity and the well-being of those the school serves (Beusaert, Froehich, Devos, & Riley, 2016). Queen and Schumacher (2006) noted that additional personal tolls of burnout include the principal experiencing physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion resulting in conditions such as fatigue, irritability, insomnia, and depression.

Due to principal turnover, however, some districts such as Bartlett City Schools are beginning to embrace the idea of formal mentoring. According to L. Kight, Director of Teaching and Learning (personal communication, June 18, 2019), Bartlett City Schools had not seen turnover in principals until this year, so mentoring is formally beginning with two new elementary principals. Other districts, such as Lexington City Schools acknowledged that such programs are not available for their current principals; however, formal mentorship is offered to current employees seeking leadership certification (C. Olive, Personal communication, June 11, 2019).

Research acknowledges the need for socialization into the role of principal (Bengtson, 2014; Parylo, Zepeda, & Bengtson, 2012; Spillane & Lee, 2014). In the state of Tennessee, one widely used method to move the beginning administrator to professional administrator is enrollment in Tennessee Academy for School Leaders (TASL). During involvement in the year-long academy, beginning administrators attend three to five face-to-face meetings, complete bridgework assignments, and design and implement an individualized Problems of Practice that supports that supports goals related to the best practices for administrators found within the Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model (TEAM) administrator rubric (Tennessee Department of Education, 2020). However, different state level educational leaders facilitate these sessions, there are not any visits to the novice principals' schools for individualized mentoring or

coaching, and there is not a follow up to the Problem of Practice submission. This practice still leaves the void of individualized formal mentorship support and feedback, and although there are formal mentorship programs in some districts such as Bartlett City Schools, who started a program in the 2019-2020 school year (L. Kight, Personal communication, June 18, 2019)., there is no consistency in mentorship for novice principals across the state.

Tennessee was the second recipient in the first round of states to receive funds from President Obama's Race to the Top initiative (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). One of the initiative's four goals was to support and develop both teachers and school leaders in becoming more effective in their practices (Horsford, 2017; White House, 2016). As the country transitioned to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), funds were still designated to implement evidence-based leadership development programs that lead to increases in effective teaching and learning. Funds can also be used to train those who will provide this support. A review of ESSA implementation references many states who are reimagining on the job principal support and offering guidance in the novice years. As of 2018, 21 states were investing funds into induction for novice principals, yet TN is not one of these states (New Leaders, 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study is to capture the voices of novice Tennessee principals to assess the support they need in terms of formal mentorship in their novice years. This study also aims to use data from principal interviews to make implications for practice and future district level formal mentorship program development in Tennessee schools.

Research Questions

This qualitative study was developed to answer the following overarching question: What are the perceived individualized support needs of novice principals in Tennessee? The study was guided by two questions:

1. What are the perceptions of support needed to meet the challenges presented in the novice years of the principalship?
2. What are principals' perceived outcomes for themselves, their students, and their districts as a result of implementing formal mentorship and ongoing support for novice principals?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will redound to the benefit of society seeing that principal leadership, although indirect, is a key school factor related to student achievement (Day, Gu, and Sammons, 2016; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom, 2004; Louis, Leithwood, Anderson, & Wahlstorm, 2010; Shannon & Bylsma, 2007). With TN being the 29th in ranking in Pre-K 12 education (US News & World Report, 2018), there is a great demand for increased student achievement, which justifies the need for strengthening school leadership. Because only half of novice principals acknowledge being prepared to meet Tennessee Instructional leadership Standards (Tennessee Education Research Alliance, 2018), there is a need to assess the needs of these new leaders. Literature indicates novice principal mentorship is positively impacting novice principals' leadership practices across the nation (Augustine & Liang, 2016; Bauer & Brazer, 2013; Bloom et al., 2003; Celoria & Roberson, 2015; Gill, 2019; Gimbel & Kefor, 2018; Hansford & Elrich, 2006; Larwin, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). However, it is not known what ongoing individualized formal mentorship support is needed for Tennessee novice principals to impact their career success.

Determining a solution for this problem is critical. Support for Tennessee novice principals in the beginning years of their career could provide these leaders time to strengthen their leadership skills, socialize them into the field, retain them, and potentially have an impact on student achievement. Thus, Tennessee districts that apply the recommended approaches derived from the results of this study may be better able to equip novice principals to meet the demands of the profession through ongoing formal mentorship support. This support will have the potential to increase their leadership skills, counteracting the decline and slow rise seen in student achievement in their novice years (Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, Gina, & Ikemoto, 2012; Fullan, 2001; Miller 2013). The study will provide guidance to school human capital officers, professional development personnel, and directors of schools on what should be emphasized by their departments in order to socialize novice principals into the field while increasing their leadership capacity. Subsequently, these findings will be used to make implications for formal mentorship program implementation in Tennessee districts.

Across the nation, numerous studies have been conducted on novice principal mentorship programs, their components, and benefits. However, there has yet to be a study on the mentorship needs of novice principals in Tennessee. Structured programs of this nature are not common practice in this section of the state. In this study, the researcher shifts the focus to assessing the formal mentorship needs of novice principals in Tennessee as well as perceived outcomes in order to add to the existing body knowledge in the field.

With the need to continue to increase student achievement in Tennessee schools completing such a study could make implications for a program with the potential to strengthen Tennessee school leaders. The findings of this study can be used to develop a formalized mentorship program theory for novice principals in Tennessee. Although I am no longer a novice

in the field, actions taken as a result of this study could benefit the state of education in my district and state because strengthening the leader impacts not only their school but the entire organization.

Overview of the Theoretical Frameworks

Hoy and Miskel (1987) note a theory is needed to guide research and the analysis of phenomena. In addition, theory helps the researcher predict what is likely to occur as a result of the study. In developing a theoretical lens for this study, both Kram's (1983) Mentorship Model and Suchman's (1977) Program Theory were utilized to review the literature on existing novice principal mentorship programs across the nation. This review of literature was then used to develop interview questions to assess the needs of Tennessee novice principals.

Befitting this study, Kram's Mentorship Model (1983) suggests that mentorship has the capability to enhance one's career development. This theory implies that mentorship serves both career and psychological functions for the novice, helps them learn the organization, and has the potential to advance their career. Additionally, the framework emphasizes four phases of mentorship, which include initiation and cultivation in the early years of one's career and separation and redefinition in later years. Additional researchers support Kram (1983) idea that mentorship serves specific psychological and career functions (Cohen, 1995; Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, & McKee, 1978).

Although Kram and Higgins' (2008) later work suggested that mentorship should not be limited to the support from one person and urges membership in larger career networks to further develop one's skills, the authors continue to urge the novice to seek out their assigned mentor.

Literature reviewed on novice principal mentorship is viewed through the lens of Kram's work and interview questions are also developed through this lens.

As an additional framework, this study also utilizes program theory as it pertains to the assumptions about how a program works, which activities lead to certain outcomes, and why these results occur. This theory also asserts that if resources, activities, and services are offered through novice principal mentorship programs, then the resulting changes in skill and behavior for these principals can have a lasting positive outcome on their leadership and the schools they serve (Wilder Research, 2009; W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, & Knowlton & Phillips, 2013). After program theory is introduced, a review of literature is presented using this theory to explore situations suggesting the need for novice principal mentorship programs as well as activities, process, outputs, and outcomes of existing programs.

Overview of Research Design

This qualitative inquiry-based study used a case study approach to interview Tennessee principals about their perceived ongoing individualized support needs in their novice years. In order to ensure participants experienced the phenome of being a novice principal, a purposeful sampling of nine Tennessee principals was used (Creswell & Plano, 2011). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial sampling began as non- probability convenience sampling with novice principals who were close in geographic location, easily accessible, available, and willing to participate in the study (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). To expand the sample to participants from across the state, additional participants were selected through another form of convenience sampling, snowball sampling as the initial study participants recruited future subjects from among their acquaintances (Kirchherr & Charles, 2018; Naderifar, Goli, & Ghaljaie, 2017). A

verbal script was used (see Appendix A) or email was sent to secure participants once their name was recommended (see Appendix B).

Participating principals were interviewed one on one using open ended questions to assess the challenges faced, support received or needed, and perceived outcomes of this support in their novice years. Participants were also offered an opportunity to share their thoughts on establishing formal mentorship programs for novice Tennessee principals in the future. Interview notes were used to develop themes that aligned to the research questions and descriptive coding was used to analyze data within the theoretical framework. A detailed narrative was written based on the data compiled to illustrate the experiences and individualized formalized mentorship support needs of novice principals in Tennessee. A case analysis was developed based on the three studied districts, one in each region of Tennessee.

Study Overview

Chapter one of this dissertation introduces the reader to the author's interpretative biography (Denzin, 1989) written from the perspective of her experience as a novice principal in a Tennessee school district. To support the author's experience, data from the Tennessee Leadership Survey data suggests that many Tennessee novice principals, unlike novice teachers in the same area, are not given the same level of support in their beginning years (Tennessee Education Research Alliance, 2018). From a broader scope, the author references many superintendents who acknowledge that principals under their leadership do not receive the same level of support as new teachers (NAESP & NASSP, 2003). Moving from a broader national perspective, the author focuses the reader on the more local problem faced by Tennessee principals and schools.

This study proposes that the voices of novice principals in Tennessee be heard in order to assess their needs for ongoing direct support in their novice years. The results of this study will be used to make implications for future practices and program development to address these needs. An overarching research question regarding what the perceived individualized support needs of novice principals in Tennessee are and how this individualized support potentially can impact these leaders and their schools is presented along with three supporting questions. The study's significance of influencing these principal's early practices and eventually their schools is notated. Additionally, the theoretical frameworks by which the relevant literature is reviewed is introduced, and a brief synopsis of the qualitative research methodology is revealed.

Chapter two of this study introduces the reader to two theoretical frameworks, Kram's Mentorship Model and Suchman's Program Theory. Using these frameworks, literature on existing nationwide structured novice principal mentorship programs is reviewed. Kram's (1985) mentorship model, which regards the psychological and career functioning of the mentorship relationship those progresses through four phases over the course of a person's career, is used as a lens to review the processes used by districts across the nation in the initiation and cultivation phases of mentorship. Program theory, which suggests any program is a theory (W. K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004), is used to examine the situations that lead to the need for such programs as well as the inputs, activities, processes, outputs, and outcomes of existing programs. The review of literature on the program theory and previous studies on established novice principal mentorship programs through this frame aided the researcher in developing the research conducted in this study.

Chapter three describes the methodology used to conduct this study's research. A qualitative inquiry research design was utilized to address a purposeful convenience and then

snowball sampling of novice Tennessee principals. Using a case study approach, the study's selected frameworks were used to develop interview questions. These questions were then used to interview nine principals about their experiences and needs as novices. An explanation of the data analysis process, which includes the coding of interview responses and the identification of emerging themes, is also detailed.

Chapter four details the study's findings based on two guiding research questions. Themes that emerged based on the data are presented and are accompanied by qualitative data from participants. The findings of the study's guided questions are then used to present an answer for the study's the overarching question, which addresses the perceived individualized support needs of novice principals in Tennessee. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the findings and addresses how this data aligns with the research found in the review of literature.

Chapter five is an interpretation and discussion of the results, as it relates to the existing body of research related to novice principal mentorship programs. In this chapter, the study's findings are related back to the literature. Findings are also used to make implications for both Kram's Mentoring Model and Suchman's Program Theory. Implications are also made for practice as a program theory for Tennessee Novice Principal Mentorship Programs is presented. A visual logic model for the implicated program accompanies the theory. The chapter is concluded with recommendations for policy, practice, and future research.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This review of literature will explore formal novice principal mentorship programs across the United States, their program components, processes, and influence on novices' performance. In order to examine the literature on these programs, Kram's Mentorship Model (1983) and Suchman's (1977) Program Theory are used as theoretical frameworks. As the concept of novice principal mentorship is explored, it is important that both the terms novice and mentoring are clearly defined. Literature defines novice principals as school leaders in their first three years in the profession (Shoho & Barnett, 2010).

Scholars of modern mentorship practices, such as Emelo (2015) and Guptan (2018) define mentorship as a relationship or association focused on developing people, where there are benefits for both parties, but more so the mentee. Researchers Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, and Wilbank's (2011) review of 40 definitions of mentorship concluded the process involved reciprocity, developmental benefits, and regular interactions between the mentor and mentee. Arnesson & Albinson (2017) go on to say mentorship is the voluntary meeting of a more experienced and less experienced professional for the purpose of reflecting and discussing professional practice. Mentorship is not synonymous with supervision in the fact that it is a non-evaluative. For the purpose of this research, novice principal mentorship programs provide new principals with the support needed to transition into the profession, become socialized into the field, and develop leadership skills needed to increase student achievement (Hernandez & Menchaca, 2011). This chapter examines literature on nationwide mentorship program efforts and impacts for novice principals.

The decisions made by novice principals have a significant impact on their school's academic success (Burkhauser, Gates, Hamilton, & Ikemoto, 2012). Principals' decisions in the first two years often lead to declines in academic achievement (Miller, 2013). Whereas more than 30 states have mentoring programs for their new teachers, when surveyed fewer than half of superintendents acknowledged that their districts have mentoring programs to support beginning principals (NAESP & NASSP, 2003). A report reviewing all 50 states' policies on new educator induction and mentoring found while 85 percent of new teachers are required to participate in induction and mentorship programs, only 20 states have the same requirements for novice principals. While 20 states provide some kind of support for first time principals, only six states (California, Delaware, Hawaii, Missouri, New Jersey, and Vermont) require induction or mentoring for every first- and second-year school administrators (Goldrick, 2016). Of the six aforementioned states, New Jersey, Vermont, and Hawaii find themselves amongst states whose students outperform others academically in the nation in reading and/or math (National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 2019). An additional eleven states have a one-year induction mandate for beginning administrators; however, Tennessee is not amongst these states (Goldrick, 2016). This is despite the fact that various bodies of research show peer to-peer interaction offered through mentorship improves the leadership skills of beginning principals, which could result in higher student academic achievement (NAESP, 2013, Jones & Larwin, 2015; Saban & Wolfe, 2009).

Problems such as those faced by novice principals help establish the need for structured mentorship programs to help these principals transition into the profession. Also, to be considered is what is likely to happen if nothing is done and potential costs to develop such programs that would effectively correct the problem. Other factors in program development

include stakeholders' interests and if there are other programs in existence that address the issue (McCawley, 2001). Additionally, knowledge of the mentorship process is needed. What follows is an explanation of the mentoring model and program theory. Also highlighted is how this model and theory are present within previously developed novice principal mentorship programs.

Models of Mentoring

Whereas the traditional form of mentorship, dyadic mentorship, involves a senior more experienced peer and a novice, mentorship has evolved to include more diverse forms of support (Haggard et al., 2011; Montgomery & Page, 2018; McDonald et al., 2009). Emelo (2015) argues organizations that limit mentorship to the traditional form of place mentoring in a box, limit learning opportunities, and should move towards more modern forms of mentorship. McDonald et al. (2009) elaborate on this idea arguing that mentorships are not always hierarchical, but instead can be lateral with peers and sometimes with those not working in the same organization.

As additional approaches, Montgomery & Page (2018) suggest triad mentoring, which includes both a senior more experienced mentor and a closer peer mentor to guide the mentee, and group mentoring allows multiple mentors to support multiple mentees. Haggard et al. (2011) found that group mentoring reduces the hierarchical relationship allowing for learning from multiple perspectives, yet it can decrease the opportunities for individual attention (Haggard et al., 2011). Additional mentoring formats such as network mentoring allows a single mentee access to multiple mentees and multiple resources, and nested mentoring takes a more community-based approach of many mentors cultivating multiple mentees (Montgomery & Page, 2018). Cross organizational mentoring that allows mentees from outside the organization and offers a more objective perspective and the opportunity for mentees to speak more freely with their mentee (Haggard et al., 2011; Postlethwaite & Harwell-Schaffer, 2019).

These advances in mentorship structures support the idea no one person should be responsible for mentorship and a mentor is not always an executive (Emelo, 2015). Scandura and Pellegrini (2007) also note that an organizational leader can also mentor multiple members of a team. Mentoring can also be offered through electronic means, such as email, social media, and instant messaging, in the form of E-mentoring (Haggard, 2011; Montgomery & Page, 2018; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007). The precursor framework to these various methods of mentoring follows.

Theoretical Frameworks

Kram's mentoring model. The theoretical framework that grounds this research is Kram's Mentoring Model. Kram (1983) suggests that adults desire relationships that help them to navigate challenges presented early in their career. As the novice transitions in a new career, guidance is needed to help them transfer knowledge gain through training programs into practice ((McKimm, Jollie, and Hatter, 2007). For this reason, mentoring serves a variety of purposes for novices. According to Kram & Isabella (1985) mentors serve a functional role due to their superior characteristics and accomplishments in the field, but it is also important for the mentor to possess affective traits that show concern for the novice's emotional and mental states. Changes in the organization's expectations and the mentee's individual psychological needs determine movement from one stage of the mentorship relationship to the next.

Two distinct functions of mentorship. According to Kram's (1983) mentoring model, mentorship serves two distinct functions, career and psychological (American Psychological Association, 2006; Kram, 1983; Kram & Isabella, 1985; Mathisen, 2008). Kram defines career functioning as coaching, help with socialization, protection, promotion of visibility in the organization. These processes help with navigation of life in the organization and career

advancement. On the other hand, psychological functioning provides the mentee with a role model, affirmation, confirmation, support, and counseling (Kram, 1983, Kram & Isabella, 1985). The Presidential Task Force of the American Psychological Association (2006) found psychological functioning can only occur after the mentoring pair has established an interpersonal relationship, and Cohen (1996) explains that trust must be built before comments of comfort or critique can be given. In support of Kram's (1983) argument that mentorship has a dual purpose, Mott (2002) suggested novices benefit from the connection with an experienced mentor, who encourages, counsels, and uses shared experiences to critically question the mentee. As a result of this process, reflection and growth occur. Essentially, mentorship provides both practical and emotional support (Lauvas & Handal, 2015).

Kram (1983) noted that both the mentor and the mentee benefit from mentorship. While the mentee develops skills that lead to success in their career, the mentor gains respect amongst their colleagues for developing new talent and experiences personal satisfaction knowing they have helped a younger colleague learn to excel in the organization (McKimm et al., 2007). It is also noted that those mentored experience greater job satisfaction, higher salaries, and progress through their career at a faster pace than those who are not mentored (American Psychological Association, 2006). While mentorship has the potential to benefit the mentee both professionally and psychologically, the relationship's limitations could also cause it to be less than productive and even destructive (Kram, 1983). Kram (1983) suggested limitations in cross-sex relationships, while Daresh (2001) explored limitations in supervisory relationships that may limit open communication and trust because the supervisor also functions in a supervisory role.

Phases of mentorship. Kram's (1983) model identifies four predictable developmental phases of mentorship: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. This study will focus

on the first three phases, initiation, cultivation and separation. During the initiation phase, which lasts six months to one year, mentor and mentee are matched using various methods (American Psychological Association, 2006). As a part of initiation, fantasies of what qualities a mentor provides are developed and these fantasies become positive realities. Both parties begin to explore the relationship learning each other's potential. The mentor begins to see the mentee as coachable and capable of receiving transferrable knowledge. On the other hand, the mentee begins to admire the positive attributes of the mentor and feels supported by a respectable partner in the field (Kram, 1983). During this bonding stage, trust is built, and an alliance is formed resulting in the start of a positive and productive mentoring relationship (Hay, 1995; Kram, 1993; Lewis 1996).

If the mentorship proceeds past the initial stages, the second phase of relationship, cultivation, can last from two to five years (Chao, 1997; Kram, 1983). During the cultivation phase, fantasies from the initial stage are challenged when opportunities to meet increase and the emphasis on developing the mentee becomes the focus (Kram, 1983). Career and psychological functioning of the mentor's role also heightens as the mentor serves as a role model, coaches the mentee, assigns challenging tasks, and ensures the mentee is visible to others in the organization (Kram, 1983; American Psychological Association, 2006). Cultivation empowers the mentor, who supports the mentee and has major influence on the future of the organization. Because psychological and career functions are combined in this phase, the mentee gains self-confidence, and critical thinking skills relevant to the profession. Mentees are also confirmed in their roles as they identify with their mentor (Kram, 1983). While processes in the cultivation phase can be beneficial for both mentor and mentee, most mentorship research focuses on issues within this phase (Scandura, 1998).

If the relationship is successfully cultivated, the mentorship enters a third phase, separation, which lasts from six months to two years. Separation tests the mentee's ability to function without the close supervision of their mentor. In this phase, the stability of the cultivating relationship ends, and the relationship changes structurally and psychologically. Timely structural separation prepares the mentee for the emotional separation that follows. (Kram, 1983). However, emotional separation before structural separation can cause resentment on behalf of mentee if their needs are not met due to things such as personality clashes, inappropriate matching, and failure to fulfill commitments (Kram, 1983; McKimm et al., 2007). Separations may also result from promotions (Kram, 1983) and geographic relocation of the mentee (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Despite the cause, when both parties are not ready for the relationship to end, feelings of abandonment, anxiety, and unpreparedness may develop (Kram, 1983; Presidential Task Force (APA), 2006). Disappointment may also occur when the mentor does not fulfill the wish of the mentee to continue to respond to their needs (Kram, 1983; McKimm et al., 2007). Although the impact of this trauma may subside, this period of adjustment disrupts the mentorship because psychological and career functions cease to continue in the previous form (Kram, 1983).

Twenty-first century critiques of Kram's model. According to Kram & Higgins (2008) although recent developments in mentoring suggests the novice seek out a network of mentors, the researchers still suggest it is common for those new to the profession to turn to their assigned mentor. Kram & Isabella (1985), who conducted a study to compare professional peer relationships to mentorships, advocated for peer relationships through a person's entire career but continued to place emphasis on mentorship relationships in the beginning years. To support this stance, McDonald et al. (2009) also note the increase in articles written on mentorship over

the last 20 years, which note the effectiveness of mentorship in the early years of a person's career.

To elaborate on Kram's model, Brockbank & McGill (2012) suggest there are four approaches to mentoring, which include performance, engagement, developmental, and system's change approaches. Whereas the performance and engagement approach focus on productivity for the organization, the developmental and system's change approaches, further develop the cultivation phase. In the developmental approach, a mentee seeks to transform themselves through internal and external coaching. This approach engages the mentor and mentee in reflective dialogue about learning new concepts, applying them, and their feelings in the process. The development approach also emphasizes respect for individuality while the mentor offers high levels of empathy. Because of this, the mentee takes ownership of the learning. The authors note that effective mentoring of individuals will also impact the entire organization through a system's change approach.

McDonald et al. (2009) find that the life experiences of the mentor and mentee impact their relationship and the learning that takes place. Therefore, mentorships provide support that is more comprehensive when the pair is of the same sex, race, or possess socially similar habitus. Otherwise, there may be misunderstandings and the mentee may reject the advice of the mentor or the mentee. It is also essential that in the initiation and cultivation phase that the mentor identifies the needs of the mentee. This study focuses on Kram's mentoring model and the advances in the theory as it relates to mentoring the novice principal into a professional in the field, particularly in the initiation and cultivation.

Program theory and logic model. In order for a formal mentoring program to be successful, Postlethwaite & Harwell-Schaffer (2019) suggest that the approach used to develop and launch a program is critical. As a part of the development and implementation process the program's objectives must be identified, available resources and constraints must be considered, the program must be designed, and a method for evaluating the program to determine its success must be created. Therefore, the theoretical framework that further grounds this research is Suchman's (1977) Program Theory, which states a planned program must have specific intent, an objective goal, and method to measure whether that outcome was accomplished.

Suchman (1967) found the explanation for a program's goals being achieved or not depend largely on the condition of the problem prior to implementing the program, the intervention between the start and end of the program, and the program's consequences. W.K. Kellogg Foundation's more recent work on the theory (2004) noted in the evaluation field, logic model and program theory are interchangeable concepts. Both explain how a program works and why. Wilder Research (2009) agrees both are similar in concept yet differentiate the two. While logic models are a visual representation of a theory presented in the form of a flow chart, program theory provides details and evidence for why it is believed one component will lead to the next.

Originally used to identify performance measures in the evaluation field, the logic model has evolved to become used for program planning (McCawley, 2001; Suchman, 1967). In its simple pictorial form, logic model is likened to a roadmap that describes the sequence of events that lead to the desired outcomes (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Knowlton & Phillips, 2013). Using a sequence of cause-and-effect relationships, the logic model, visually communicates the path towards the desired results (McCawley, 2001). Because it is a snapshot of a program at a

given time, logic model is not definitive in nature. Therefore, it can change as the program continues to develop (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Although this model is typically linear and simple in fashion, it is more complex when communicated (McCawley, 2001). The model, however, does not have to be linear nor a single image and may appear in the form of a concept map used to communicate complex programs (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Essentially, logic models are used to illustrate a program theory (Wilder Research, 2009). A specific type of logic model, the program logic model, serves as the proposal for an idea and then becomes operational. Accounting for the program's efforts from beginning to end and varying in detail (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013), this model includes information that is useful in planning, developing, monitoring, and evaluating the program (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; McNamara, 2017).

Program theory, on the other hand, is the conceptual foundation of a program. This conceptual foundation focuses on developing the theory of the program, including how it works and how it will be evaluated (Sharpe, 2011). At the time of its inception in 1967, program theory, introduced by Suchman, suggested that a theory would be the hypothesis to an activity (Bossen, Dindler, & Iversen, 2018; Suchman, 1967). By 1970, additional program theory pioneers Carol Weiss, Michael Fullan, and Chen began to use the program theory to both design and evaluate programs (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012). Sometimes referred to as theory based, theory driven, or program theory evaluation, program theory is a series of statements that detail how, why, and under what conditions the effects of a program will occur. The theory also acknowledges the outcome of the program and the required steps to arrive at the outcome (Sharpe, 2011).

Purpose. Logic models bring the concepts of programs to life (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004) resolving the issue of where to begin in the program design process (Knowlton & Phillips,

2013). Wilder Research (2009) agrees with this idea, finding the model helps both plan services and determine what resources need to be allocated. In addition to this, the model helps planners see the relationship between actions and results (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013) as well as explore different scenarios that could result in reaching the intended outcomes (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

Although logic model and program theories should be developed prior to the start of a program, if this is not done, the theory can be developed during the course of the program. Development requires extensive energy, is not immediate, and is refined as evidence from the program is gathered (Sharpe, 2011). Neither the model nor theory are recommended for use with one-time events, but instead they are to be used for reoccurring programs (McNamara, 2017). Suchman (1967) found, “Thus no program is an entity unto itself, but must be viewed as a part of an ongoing social system” (p. 51).

Evaluations of the program can be used to determine if the program or components are successful and should be implemented elsewhere (Sharpe, 2011). Evaluations can also determine if the program should continue, be refined, or conclude. Examining casual relationships within the program can determine if the program’s success or lack thereof is due to theory or implementation (Bossen et al., 2018). Ongoing assessments of the theory also allows components to be adapted to ensure a better program (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

Construction. Before building a logic model or program theory, a clear vision for the program must be established, implementation capability should be confirmed, and there must means to monitor and evaluate (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013). In addition to this, there should be an explanation as to why resources should be invested (McCawley, 2001). Developers should determine what the results would be for the program’s participants if a certain activity were

provided. After identifying each major service activity and outcomes for the participants, the needed resources or inputs need to be determined (Wilder Research, 2009). Once a model reflecting the complexity of the program is drafted, logical links displayed as arrows can be drawn to connect the problem to the inputs (McCawley, 2001). Inputs are then linked to the activities, activities to outputs, and outputs to the termed of outcomes. (Wilder Research, 2009; McCawley, 2001).

A simple program theory includes a single input, a process, and outcome; more complex program theories include multiple inputs, outputs, and outcomes (Bossen et al, 2018). Elements of a logic model, however, can also include the situation that leads to inputs. Program inputs are defined as the human and fiscal resources, such as people, equipment, facilities, skills, curriculum, and the time commitments a program takes requires (McNamara, 2017 & McCawley, 2001). These enabling factors determine the strength of the treatment required to produce the outcome (Sharpe, 2011). Also considered inputs are the limiting factors such as major influences, laws, attitudes, and lack of resources (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004 & McNamara, 2017).

Using inputs, processes or activities are developed to describe the action that will be taken to lead to the transformation (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; Sharpe, 2011; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Sharpe, 2011). The results of these processes are outputs or noticeable quantifiable results, such as the number of people served, activities provided, hours spent, and any resulting product such as manuals or pamphlets (McCawley, 2001; McNamara, 2017). Although outputs do not indicate the success of the program (McNamara, 2017), they do lead to outcomes, which are changes in participants' awareness, knowledge, skill set or behavior that benefit the organization (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; McNamara, 2017; W.K. Kellogg

Foundation, 2004). Intended or unintended outcomes can take place in the short-term, within one to three years, intermediately, within 4 to 6 years, or may have a long-term impact resulting within seven to 10 years. Long-term outcomes effect the community economically, socially, environmentally, or politically (McCawley, 2001; Wilder Research, 2009; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004).

Assumptions. The underlying assumptions about how programs work, which activities lead to certain outcomes, and why this happens are explicitly communicated as program theory and logic model are developed (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Bossen et al., 2018; McCawley, 2001). Both program theory and logic model utilize an if-then system, assuming that if inputs and activities are provided to the participants of a program then there will be a resulting change (Wilder Research, 2009; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Using this chain of reasoning, one can assume if resources are provided, then activities can also be provided. If services result from the activities, then change in behavior or skill occur. Eventually a lasting outcome influences the whole community (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; Wilder Research, 2009). Between the if and then, there must be evidence that the program will support the intended goal (Wilder Research, 2009).

Engagement of stakeholders. The development of a program theory can be an effective way to engage many stakeholders in the planning process (Bossen et al., 2018). Building the logic model as a group affords stakeholders the opportunity to come to a consensus and determine what beliefs they possess about the program, its processes, and results (W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Because program theory is largely based on stakeholder's assumptions about norms of people's behavior, program theory development may become a controversial process (Bossen et al., 2018). However, through critically reviewing and developing program

components with a small group of stakeholders, those involved learn what does and does not work. This process creates systems' thinking. A common language is also created for stakeholders who participate in this learning activity as outcomes are documented, knowledge is clarified, and a credible framework is built.

Program theory leads to better future designing and planning (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013). Those involved in planning of a program are also better able to carry out their duties (Sharpe, 2011). In addition to this, the logic model can be used to train staff on how to implement the program and it keeps stakeholders focused on the program's intended focus (Wilder Research, 2009). When there is a thorough explanation of the components of the program that address relevance, quality and impact, there is buy-in from stakeholders (McCawley, 2001). This study's review of literature focuses on program theory and the mentoring model as they relate to previously established novice principal mentorship programs.

Problems Faced by Novice Principals Suggesting the Need for Mentorship Programs

Multiple studies on novice principals' experiences help to establish a situation statement expressing the need for program theories to develop novice principal mentorship programs (Bayar, 2016; Daresh & Capasso, 2002; Hall, 2008; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Yirci and Kocabas, 2010). According to Hall (2008), "Most new principals are thrown into the job to sink or swim. We must do better if our schools are going to improve, and a well-designed mentoring program is one of the best ways to ensure success" (p. 449). Because of the lack of well-designed programs, many principals reach out to obtain support on their own, but others find themselves overcome by the challenges and responsibilities of the principalship (Hall, 2008). Based on interviews with 17 novice principals at the beginning of the school year and then again at the end of month three, 88% of principals expressed they experienced challenges and an increase in

intensity with regards to task volume, diversity, and unpredictability as they transition into their new roles. Leaders were urged to acknowledge the challenge and provide support in the form of induction or mentoring (Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Findings from an eight-month study suggested novice principals found governance issues from district leaders, characteristics of the job, external demands, internal factors such as teacher demands, and the inability to be an instructional leader, deterred principals from entering or remaining in the field. Without safety nets such as mentorship, educators were less likely to enter the field or the role (Daresh & Capasso, 2002). To support this finding, a survey of 200 novice principals found 74% studied were concerned with the challenges they faced in their profession and 61% were likely to leave. A follow up qualitative study found the challenges faced by these leaders, which included violence, families' negative attitudes towards school, immigrant families, teacher unions, and teachers' attitudes and behaviors towards the principal, were often faced alone (Bayar, 2016). However, as 2006, only five U.S. states had organized mentorship programs, where mentors and mentees meet regularly. Two national organizations, the National Association of Secondary Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals, do however approve effective mentorship programs for training new principals (Yirci and Kocabas, 2010).

Prior to beginning the program, as referenced in the logic model (Knowlton & Phillips, 2012), the district should clearly articulate the skills, behaviors, and dispositions needed by the principal and a system should be established that allows these principals to self-reflect and goal set (Von Frank, 2012). The Kansas Educational Leadership (KELI) Task Force's mixed methods aimed to reduce isolation and address challenges of new principals in and beyond year one. This study determined best practices of leadership mentoring and induction for novice

principals. Using a literature review, district and state leaders constructed and administered a survey for Kansas superintendents and principals to determine current practices of mentorship. The study's findings confirmed a need for new principal mentoring and induction programs, and superintendents indicated community outreach and building capacity in others were not included in their current programs. Results of this study were used to develop a 2-year new principal induction program based on suggested needs (Augustine-Shaw, 2015).

Inputs of Novice Principal Mentorship Programs

Funding. National educational leadership organizations do approve novice principal mentoring programs in the U.S. but acknowledge in order for effective principal mentorship to take place, inputs such as funding must be provided for at least one year of support (Wallace Foundation, 2007). A study in conducted in Washington State asserted the cost to hire leadership coaches to support newly hired principals would range between \$153,000 and \$845,000 (Lochmiller, 2014). On the other hand, the Kentucky Department of Education budgeted \$630,000 for principal mentoring (Wallace Foundation, 2007). According to an analysis conducted by Vilanni (2006), novice principal mentorship programs operating in five states, serving between 25 and 150 new principals, required between \$30,000 and \$800,000 per year (Vilanni, 2006). Districts in the Wallace Foundation's Principal Pipeline initiative invested approximately \$14,000 per principal to provide support (Gill, 2019).

Training of mentors. The cost associated with personnel for these programs are incurred because effective and trained mentors (James-Ward, 2011; Wallace Foundation, 2007) are needed to provide the mentoring. Lochmiller (2014) agrees the coach or mentor providing the support must be trained, effective, and appropriately matched. In this three-year, university-based induction program study, coaches, who were retired administrators at various levels,

attended a three-day training on blended coaching and were then purposefully paired with principals based on their needs and school information.

In James-Ward's (2011) study, sixteen former principals with a history of successful student achievement were trained to mentor eight novice principals. Mentors met monthly with district personnel to gain clarity on initiatives and with each other to collaborate. As a part of their training, coaches read literature on blended coaching strategies. Meeting minutes and a researcher-developed survey containing 14 open-ended questions on the role of coaches and the program's benefits were used to collect data. The program allowed coaches to inform district leaders on principals' progress and gain clarity on expectations in order to aid principals. Survey results found monthly meetings with peers were beneficial in strengthening their practices, the literature focused their practice, and updates from district leaders helped them to better support principals.

Selection and pairing of mentors. In addition to training mentors, Gesimar, Morris, and Lieberman (2000) advise there be careful selection of mentors using a Mentoring Identification instrument that identifies those skills that will nurture the talents of others (Gesimar, Morris, & Lieberman, 2000). Bloom, Castanga, and Warren (2003) also suggested the use of more formal mentors because informal mentors are often also concerned with their own job expectations and may not be able to devote the time and skill needed to provide a novice principal adequate support. Lovely (2004) agreed that principal coaching and mentoring should be formal and recommended that coaches be available to meet with mentees during the day and come from outside the district to avoid time conflicts and to ensure confidentiality. The author also suggests another ideal mentor might be a former principal in a non-supervisory role that works at the district office. This person would be able to relate to district mandates while having access to a

network of people. When the novice is hesitant to call the district office, they can receive guidance in a non-judgmental manner.

Once selected, Oplatka and Lapidot's (2017) study of 12 novice principals emphasized the importance of being properly paired with mentors that matched both their emotional and educational needs. To support this claim, Sutchter, Podolsky, and Espinoza (2017) noted that mistakenly some districts carelessly select mentors, who are not trained to effectively mentor. Therefore, the New Leaders program has however worked with districts in Missouri, Chicago, and Gwinnett County, Georgia to match mentors with novices who have similar demographics of the novice and the school in which they serve. These mentors are also trained to work one on one with mentors.

Activities, Processes, & Outputs of the Initiation & Cultivation Phases

Differentiated activities & processes. Based on the types of inputs provided, activities and processes of novice mentorship programs differ (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; Sharpe, 2011; 2013; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). According to O'Mahoney (2013), principals navigate their way through 4 phases of the first year as principal. During the idealization stage, novice principals idealize the needed wisdom from their previous principal, an informal mentor. However, in the immersion stage, principals often felt isolated and needed a trained assigned mentor. Once established in the position, novice principals sought the help of knowledgeable mentors when they needed help in specific areas. Once consolidated into the role, novice principals began to network with their colleagues. Interviews in this study concluded mentoring needs differ through the first year of experience. Implicated was the need for various mentoring options, including a trained mentor, because mentoring is important for novice principal growth.

To support the need for a differentiated process, interview findings of novice principal participants in a three-year study on mentorship were coded into three themes: year one was instructional coaching, year two facilitative coaching, and year three was the coach as a community of practice (Lochmiller, 2014). Von Frank (2012) supports this practice stating mentors move beyond helping the novice principal manage the school and instead ask strategic questions in order to increase student achievement. Hall (2008) and Norton (2003) support this idea and find good mentors avoid telling mentee what they would do in the situation and instead listen and ask questions to help the mentee think through the situation and arrive at alternatives for a reasonable solution.

Because mentoring in the form of coaching is beneficial to principals' professional learning, Von Frank (2012) notes Psencik's theory of change for principal's learning should be considered during the process of supporting novice principals. Using this theory, it was also suggested that novice principals engage in intensive learning that would strengthen their leadership skills. Additionally, these administrators should become a community of learners with other administrators who will support them. It is also suggested that a coach should be provided because learning without a coach is insufficient. The progress of the novice principal should be monitored through outputs such as focused portfolios, and lastly the success of principals as learners must be celebrated.

Sutcher et al. (2017) advocates for high quality programs for novice principals that include meaningful and authentic learning experiences for novice. Both coaching, which is more formal and specific, and mentoring, which is more general and personal, provide these experiences when provided by an expert principal. Coaches in San Diego Unified School District visit classrooms with novice principals and then gather what was observed in the classroom to

plan for next steps of instructional improvement. After seeing the coach model strong instructional leadership, the mentee can also implement things learned into their practices (Sutcher et al., 2017). In 2005, Gwinnet County Public Schools implemented mentoring for principals and now employees 11 retired principals, who coach novices for their first two years. After intense training, mentors record all interactions with mentees, and this data is used to determine the needs of school leader and future training for all principals (Gill, 2019).

Time designated for mentoring. In Simieou, Decman, Grisby, and Schumacher's (2010) 10-month descriptive study of novice urban school principals from schools not meeting state expectations, novice principals met formally with mentors twice per month to learn standards-based concepts. Themes emerging from the interviews included, "the importance of networking with other principals at different levels with similar experiences, individualized support to provide research-based solutions with peers, and continual growth and professional development amongst peers" (p. 2). The study concluded the support of a mentor both influenced retention and provided the novice principal support that ultimately led to success.

While mentors in the aforementioned study met with their mentees biweekly, some programs required as little as 165 contact hours and some more than 632 (Malone, 2001). After realizing, they could not leave novice principals alone, Vermont now requires 2 years of mentorship for new principals (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018). Gwinnett County requires mentors to meet with novice principals for a minimum of four hours monthly (Gill, 2019). Malone (2001) did however acknowledge that mentoring can be beneficial beyond the novice years.

Outcomes of Novice Principal Mentorship Programs

Studies of mentored novice principals suggest these principals benefited from being mentored. Saban and Wolfe (2009) conducted a quantitative study with the purpose of examining

mentorship as professional development for school principals. Each of the five leadership practices were used as variables in the study. Data measured any possible differences between participants in the study. This study found 19% of participants were not mentored, and the mentored engaged in leadership practices more often.

Positive outcomes. Jones and Larwin (2015) agreed with the previous study and found novice principals who are coached see an increase in their leadership abilities. Their mixed methods study examined the impact of a mentoring program on first year principals. Data collected included pre- and post-surveys measures on each of the 5 leadership practices and self-efficacy and an opened-ended questionnaire to obtain participants' perceptions of mentoring activities. Significant differences were calculated in all leadership practice factors. Qualitative data found themes such as relationships, support through communication, and networking in participants' responses. The study concluded the support provided through mentoring makes a difference, impacts student achievement, and the majority of participants favored mentoring support.

After evaluating the second year of mentoring implemented by the Kansas Educational Leadership Institute (KELI), Augustine-Shaw and Liang (2016) found novice principal mentorship led to positive outcomes for new leaders and their schools. Data gathered from online Likert scale questions found in both years 100% of mentees agreed mentorship benefited their practice, while mentors found coaching and reflection also influenced practices. Mentees evaluated individual training sessions at 4.5 or better on a 5.0 scale. Mentorship in the first years led to great accomplishments for new leaders and the schools they served.

Sanders (as cited in Yirci and Kocabas, 2010) found when novice principals are paired with mentors tend to overcome challenges easier than those who do not. Benefits of mentoring

include helping the novice principal become familiar with the job, building their self-esteem, reducing stress, bettering communication, and increasing motivation (Yirci & Kocabas, 2010). McDonald et al., (2009) found that mentoring's effects can also reduce social inequalities. These authors also suggests that mentors, themselves, open doors to other social networks. Additional research found, continual learning for the novice principal from a trained coach or mentor may retain these leaders and have an impact on the level of achievement seen by the entire district (Miller, 2013). Simieou et al. (2010) concluded, "The assistance and or intervention of a mentor or coach could contribute to lowering the attrition rate for administrators in the K-12 system and give novice administrators the needed support to be successful" (p.7).

In an assessment of California's CLASS (Coaching Leaders to Attain Student Success) program, where mentors used blended coaching strategies, moving between instructional and facilitative coaching (Bloom et al., 2003; Lovely, 2004), supported principals reported more engagement in instructional leadership, more time on spent on instructional issues and addressing them with more skill than unsupported principals (Bloom et al., 2003). An additional qualitative study of 12 mentors and 10 mentees who participated in Vermont's new school principal mentorship found while mentors did not only give good advice, but they also asked good questions that made novice principals think deeply. Novice found talking through things with their mentors helped them to make better decisions and it became clear that these mentees greatest challenge was working with staff. Both the mentee and mentor saw the goal of this mentorship program being to retain principals in the profession (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018).

Von Frank (2012) examined the first year of an Indiana principal in a low performing elementary school, in which the district puts coaching support in place for selected administrators. With coaching, Principal Peterman gained confidence in her first year, and in her

second year, the school moved from 4% of the students meeting reading and math standards to 55% of the students meeting standards. Like Peterson, Principal Tommy Welch, once a novice principal in Gwinnett County, benefited from mentorship. Principal Welch credits his mentor with slowing him down as he attempted to implement a framework from his previous school. Instead, his mentor coached him to work with his current team to tailor the framework to fit the new school after observation and discussion of data. At the end of his seventh year, Welch had significantly improved student achievement with his mentor's constructive feedback (Gill, 2019).

Positive psychological outcomes were also reported in Celoria and Roberson's (2015) qualitative study which examined the impact new principal coaching on the novices' emotional states. Using the voices of six coaches and 17 principals selected from the San Francisco Bay area, data was gathered on the structure of coaching sessions, the new principals' experience, and how coaching advanced their experience. Coaches and principals participated in three semi-structured face-to-face interviews to share thoughts about their roles, relationships, strategies, and newly gained knowledge. The study found that coaches were a safe place for new principals to express themselves emotionally so that they are supported and not isolated in their new role.

Potential negative outcomes. While the aforementioned studies account only for positive short-term outcomes, Hansford and Elrich (2006) explored 40 empirical studies, ranging in publication from 1987 to 2004 to provide a database of outcomes of structured mentorship programs for principal. Positive and negative outcomes associated with the practice were found, yet there were substantially more positive findings such as support, networking, and professional development opportunities. All the studies included at least one benefit, 31 included advantages and 26 indicated problems, such as lack of time for novice principals to participate in mentoring activities as well as personality and expertise mismatches with mentors. Scandura & Pellegrini

(2007) identifies potential problems in the mentorship relationship as marginal mentoring, which does not meet important needs of the mentee, dysfunctional mentorship, which can be destructive for one or both parties inducing stress, and negative mentoring, in which the mentee may be deceitful and competitive with their mentor.

Bauer and Brazer's (2013) survey of 86 Louisiana novice principals found that social support for these principals had a relationship with job satisfaction. The lower the levels of social support, such as guidance and resources given through formal programs and informal networks from other professionals, the more isolated they felt and the less satisfied they were with their jobs. On the contrary, within this same study, it was found that involvement in formal coaching or mentoring programs was associated with a greater sense of isolation. Seen as a burdensome task, these programs intensifying the workload for novice principals because coaches in the studied schools implemented a prescribed program (Bauer & Brazer, 2013).

Summary

Formal mentorship programs for novice teachers are common practice within school districts, however this is not common practice for novice principals (NAESP & NASSP, 2003; Goldrick, 2016). Components of the mentoring model and program theory, however, are evident within many of the existing novice principal mentorship programs. Inputs, such as funding for such programs, (Gill, 2019; Lochmiller, 2014; Wallace Foundation, 2007) and the use of highly skilled, trained, and experienced mentors (James-Ward, 2011; Lochmiller, 2014; Wallace Foundation, 2007) can be found within research studies. Processes that move mentees through the phases of mentorship exist in programs across the nation (Kram, 1983; O'Mahoney, 2013).

Kram's mentoring model and other scholars contributing to and critiquing this theory help to further develop the theory's phases. In the initiation phase mentors and mentees are

matched (Gesimar et al. 2000; Sutchter et al., 2017), and as a part of the cultivation phase the use of standards-based concepts and differentiated practices are used to engage mentees in the learning processes bimonthly (Lovely, 2004; Simieou, 2010) or for a set number of hours per month (Sutchter, 2017). Outputs of mentorship include principal portfolios (Von Frank, 2012), while outcomes such as increased leadership abilities (Jones & Larwin, 2015 & Saban & Wolfe, 2009) seem to be short term as most studies are conducted within one to three years (McCawley, 2001; Wilder Research, 2009; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Despite the high numbers of positive outcome studies, however, such programs also potential problems in the separation phase if they do not meet the needs of these principals (Bauer & Brazer, 2013; Hansford & Elrich, 2006).

Development of programs such as those included in the review of literature rely on stakeholder involvement and buy in (McCawley, 2001). The program theory also suggests that when outcomes move from short to long term, the likelihood of program implementation in other places or the education community increases (Bossen et al., 2018). The outcomes of principals such as Tommy Welch in Gwinnett County, who initially personally benefited from mentorship and who at year seven saw significant improvement in student achievement explains why the Wallace Foundation Principal Pipeline program is continuing to grow (Gill, 2019). Yet several states and districts have yet to develop such programs, which could be the contributing factor to novice principal attrition and lack of student achievement in many schools where these principals lead (Burkhauser et al., 2012). Therefore, researching current novice principal mentorship programs, their inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes is necessary prior to conducting a qualitative study about the needs of novice principals in Tennessee.

Program theory reaffirms the ideology that when setting out to design a program, developers can choose from many options while seeking to make a difference in people's lives and ultimately improving society (Wilder Research, 2009). In this study, both the logic model and program theory offered a new way of thinking about addressing the needs of novice principals through novice mentorship programs ((NAESP & NASSP, 2003 & Yirci & Kocabas, 2010) or other ongoing support such as coaching (Lochmiller, 2014; Von Frank, 2014). The logic model and program theory both acknowledge the importance of multiple components in order to have a successful program of any type. Without considering these components, particularly in the cultivation phase of mentorship, it is impossible to conceptualize a successful novice principal mentorship program. Examining states and districts with such programs through this lens is an appropriate because there is evidence of the components of program theory and mentorship model within research on novice principal mentorship programs. Therefore, this study uses the mentoring model and program theory as its frameworks and focuses on the voices of Tennessee principals in order to make implications for practice and theory of such programs in Tennessee.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Currently, only a small percentage of Tennessee school districts receive direct grant funding for principal pipeline programs that provide novice principals with mentorship support (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017). In addition to this, Tennessee is not among the 21 states using ESSA funds for a statewide novice principal mentorship support initiative (New Leaders, 2018). Therefore, knowledge of mentorship programs implemented in other states is critical to understanding these programs' impact on developing effective principals. With the increasing demands of the principalship, a void in the literature exists on the professional support needs of novice Tennessee principals. This void drives the need for my study, in which I will explore the needs of Tennessee principals in their novice years to build implications for future theory and practice. The methodology used in this study is detailed in this chapter. Included is a brief purpose statement, research questions, a detailed description of the data collection, explanation of the analysis methods, the limitations, and establishment of the study's confidentiality.

Purpose Overview

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the support needs of Tennessee principals in their novice years. The researcher used the program theory and mentoring model to explore research based on current formal novice mentorship programs. These theories and research on current novice principal mentorship programs were then used to develop the study's research questions. Findings from the study's interview questions were then cross compared to the literature to outline the support needs of novice TN principal and make implications for a formal novice principal mentorship program in TN.

Research Questions

This qualitative study was developed to answer the following overarching question: What are the perceived individualized support needs of novice principals in Tennessee? The study was guided by two questions:

The specific research questions addressed in this study were:

1. What are the perceptions of support needed to meet the challenges presented in the novice years of the principalship?
2. What are principals' perceived outcomes for themselves, their students, and their districts as a result of implementing formal mentorship and ongoing support for novice principals?

Research Design

This study is a qualitative inquiry. Because it uses a smaller sample size, qualitative research is a social construction of reality that provides an objective truth for a specific group of people. Qualitative research is developed after lengthy discussions that expose the participants' subconscious (Barnham, 2015). In this study, a case study approach is used to explain a phenomenon using an in-depth description of its current state. Case studies, which are empirical inquiries, are commonly used in education research to contribute to the knowledge on a phenomenon. As a process, case studying is intentional as it attempts study a contemporary issue and the individuals or small groups it impacts, while retaining a real-world perspective. The "what" questions that focus this case study make it one of an exploratory nature with a goal of developing a relevant hypothesis and proposals for further inquiry. In this process, a variety of evidence that cannot be manipulated is collected from either interviews or observations of participants' behaviors. Findings from these studies contain multiple realities and perspectives, which are brought together to develop generalizations (Yazan; 2015; Yin, 2014). Interviews

were analyzed to determine the support needs of novice Tennessee principals to determine how formal mentorship programs could potentially be constructed to benefit Tennessee schools and students.

Participants and Selection Process

Selection process. Within qualitative research, purposeful sampling involves selecting individuals who have experienced or exhibit knowledge about a phenomenon of interest to the researcher (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The initial participants in this study were selected because they were a convenient sample of novice principals in the researcher's district. From this sample, these novice principals recommended other novice principals in other districts in the other two regions. All participants were purposefully selected after the researcher called to verify their district did not offer structured mentorship programs for novice principals. Once this was confirmed, three principals from each of the three selected school districts, were selected. There was a district representative of each region of Tennessee selected.

The participants in the study all met the following criteria:

1. The participants have served four to five years as a principal, therefore recently exiting their novice years.
2. The participant's district does not currently have a formal mentorship program for novice principals.

Participants. The participants were nine novice principals, with four to five years of service, employed in Tennessee school districts, which did not currently have structured mentorship programs for their novice principals. These principals, not far removed from the novice years, were selected from each of the selected districts to reflect on their novice years. Participants were representative of districts in urban and small city districts.

The summaries below provide additional information about each principal.

District One, West Tennessee Principals

- *Principal Amelia Adams: Principal Adams did not receive mentorship from any one person, but instead sought the help of personnel at district office. Prior to become a principal, Principal Adams served as an assistant principal for two years in an alternative school and a teacher for 16 years. In her years as principal, she has been assigned to two schools. After her first year as principal in an early childhood setting, she was returned to an assistant principal position in an elementary setting for further training before returning to the role of principal of an elementary school.*
- *Principal Janice Banks: Principal Banks did not receive mentorship, but instead sought the help of district personnel at district office. She was assigned an experienced principal from the district who she had to call when she needed help, but a solid mentorship relationship did not form as the principal had her own responsibilities in a high needs school. Prior to becoming a principal, Principal Banks served as an assistant principal for two years in a middle school, four years as a Title I Consulting Teacher, and five years as a teacher. In her years as principal, she has been assigned to two schools.*
- *Principal Nate Cooper: Principal Cooper was assigned a mentor at a neighboring school, who had only served one year. Because the informal mentor principal was busy operating their own school, a mentor-mentee relationship did not develop. Prior to becoming a principal of a newly established high school, Principal Cooper served as an assistant principal for one year in a middle school, 1/3 of a year as interim principal in a middle school, 2/3 year as an assistant principal in a middle school, two years as an*

instructional coach, and three and a half years as teacher. In his years as principal, he has been assigned to two schools.

District Two, Middle Tennessee Principals

- *Principal Melinda Davis: Principal Davis did not receive mentorship from any one person, but instead sought the help of other principals or supervisors with expertise in the area she needed help. Prior to become a principal, Principal Davis served as an assistant principal in a middle school for two years and a teacher for eight years. In her years as principal, Principal Davis has been assigned to one school, a primary school with grades K-2.*
- *Principal Melanie Edwards: Principal Edwards received informal mentorship from a retired district supervisor that she solicited. Prior to becoming a principal, she was assistant principal at the same school for four years. Prior to this leadership experience, she was a band director for twenty years. In her years as principal, she has been assigned to one school.*
- *Principal Jason Ferguson: Principal Ferguson received informal mentoring from his former principal. Prior to becoming a principal, Principal Ferguson served as an assistant principal and athletic director for five years and as a classroom teacher for six years. In his years as principal, he has been assigned to one school, a high school.*

District Three, East Tennessee Principals

- *Principal Tina Graves: Principal Graves was not assigned a mentor but instead sought the help and advice of a mentor she established a relationship when she was a fellow in the districts program to develop future leaders. Prior to becoming a principal of a school undergoing a consolidation, Principal Graves served three years as a curriculum*

principal/assistant principal under the leadership of a head principal, one year as a leadership academy fellow/ assistant principal, and eight years as high school English teacher. In her years as principal, she has been assigned to one school, a middle school.

- *Principal Kimberly Henderson: Principal Henderson was initially assigned supervisor from the district who she could go to for support in her novice years and later was assigned a supervisor who was her former principal. Prior to becoming a principal, she was an assistant principal for three years and a master teacher for three years, where she taught a portion of the day, lead professional development, conducted evals, and held other administrative roles. Prior to that, she was an instructional coach for a year, a classroom consultant for a year, and a middle school math teacher for eight years. In her years as principal, she has served at one school.*
- *Principal David Ingram: Principal Ingram was also assigned a supervisor from the district office to seek for support in his novice years. Prior to becoming a principal, he was an assistant principal at one high school for three years and assistant principal at another high school for four years prior to this experience. Prior to that, he was a band teacher for eight years. In his years as principal, he has served at 1 school.*

During the screening process, I provided an overview of the study, purpose of the research, and informed individuals of the next steps if they were selected to participate. The theoretical framework selected for this study highlights the involvement of stakeholders in the program planning process (Bossen et al, 2018; Knowlton & Phillips, 2013, & W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). The principal is a key stakeholder in school improvement and student achievement therefore assessing their needs is a sensible place to begin. I selected participants

from counties that did not have structured mentorship programs that specifically involve novice principals.

Site selection. The principals selected were all employed by Tennessee school districts. Principals from a selected district in West, Middle, and East Tennessee were included in the study to include a sample of principals from across the state.

The summaries below provide demographic information about each district.

District One in West Tennessee is considered an urban district/small city, where approximately 13,000 students are served in 23 schools. 28% of the student population is white, 60.7% black, 9% Hispanic or Latino, 1.5% Asian, 0.1 American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.3 Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander. 29.7% of the district's population lives below the poverty line. In the 2018-2019 school year, 20.7% of students were on track towards the Tennessee state standards, and student growth was calculated as a level one out of five, indicating below average growth for students (TN State Report Card. 2019).

District Two in Middle Tennessee is considered a suburban district outside of a major city, where approximately 13,000 students are served in 25 schools. 69% of the student population is white, 12.8% black, 16.8% Hispanic or Latino, 0.7% Asian, 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.1% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander. 14% of the district's population lives below the poverty line and received Food Stamp/Snap Benefits. In the 2018-2019 school year, 31.5% of students were on track towards the Tennessee state standards, and student growth was calculated as a level three out of five, indicating average growth for students (TN State Report Card, 2019).

District Three located in East Tennessee is considered a large urban district where approximately 61,000 students are served in 91 schools. 68.7% of the student population is

white, 16.9% black, 10.8% Hispanic or Latino, 3% Asian, 0.4% American Indian/Alaska Native, and 0.3% Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander. 26.3% of the district's student population lives below the poverty line and receive Food Stamp/Snap Benefits. In the 2018-2019 school year, 39.4% of students were on track towards the Tennessee state standards, and student growth was calculated as a level five out of five, indicating above average growth for students (TN State Report Card, 2019).

Interviews were conducted via Zoom electronic visual conferences due to social distancing requirements of COVID-19 (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020) and per the governor's requirement to stay at home if there is not an essential purpose for leaving (Tennessee Department of Health, 2020).

Data Collection

The high involvement of the researcher in interviewing designates them as the instrument for data collection in the qualitative research process (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). As the primary instrument, the researcher further develops his or her knowledge in a given area by processing verbal and non-verbal communications with participants immediately, clarifying and summarizing the responses by checking with participants for the accuracy of their responses, and by exploring unusual and unanticipated responses (Merriam & Associates, 2002).

A research proposal was prepared and presented to the Institutional Review Board for approval (see Appendix D). Data was collected from November 2020 through December 2020. The researcher used interviews as the primary source for data collection. One on one interviews, using open-ended questions were conducted with both novice and experienced principals. Saldana (2011) acknowledged that interviews are, "an effective way of soliciting and documenting, in their words, an individual's or group's perspectives, feelings, opinions, values,

attitudes, and beliefs about their personal experiences and social world, in addition to factual information about their lives” (p.32). The researcher utilized the interview process to gain an understanding of the mentorship support these received, challenges they faced as a novice, and the type of support they needed during these years. In order to conduct a proper analysis, it was important to collect more data than might be needed (Vagle, 2014). The case studying process supports this collection method seeing that interviews are a commonly used method (Yazan, 2015; Yin, 2014). All data was collected in one interview setting.

Interviews. Interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, depending on the depth of the participants response. The initial interview used a semi-structured interview protocol, where participants answer preset open-ended questions, which allow for some variance, in an in-depth manner (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Interview questions were derived from my research questions and based on my theoretical framework. The initial interview questions solicited information about each respondents’ background. From there, the researcher developed nine open-ended questions, which focused on challenges faced, support received and needed, and perceived outcomes of that support, that were asked to all participants. Interviews also offered respondents an opportunity to share their thoughts on establishing such programs in the future.

Notes were collected for each interview and all conversations were audio recorded to be transcribed later for analysis purposes. Before each interview, participants were informed they could opt out of the audio recording. The researcher used an interview protocol, and participants were again reminded of the purpose of the study and required to read and sign the informed consent via Adode DocuSign or by signing and returning via email (see Appendix C).

Pseudonyms were used as a part of the data collection process to protect the identity of Tennessee principals interviewed. All subjects were given a unique code for transcription. All

personal identifying information was removed from transcripts. Maintained in a separate file, codes were used in order to match follow up interview data with the initial interview responses. When participants' quotes were presented in findings, pseudonyms were used.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analysis were conducted simultaneously in this study. As data was collected, I took time to process and make connections between themes as they emerged (Merriam & Associates, 2002). Based on data collected from interviews and using my theoretical framework, I developed themes from significant statements and common descriptive language of participants (Creswell, 2009). I also made certain that themes were aligned to the research questions. The interview grid (see Table 1) that follows illustrates which interview questions were used to answer the research question. The interview grid also aligns the research questions and interview questions with the literature.

Table 1

Item Analysis: Principal Interview Question Grid

Research Questions	Participants' Interview Questions	Research Literature
1	1. What was your experience as a novice principal like without a formal mentor?	NAESP & NASSP, 2003; Goldrick, 2016
1	2. How did you feel about this experience?	NAESP, 2013; Jones & Larwin, 2015; Saban & Wolfe, 2009
1	3. Suppose I was new to the principalship and asked what challenges I would face and how to overcome them. What would you tell me?	Spillane & Lee, 2014; Daresh & Capasso, 2002; Bayar, 2015; Yirci and Kocabas, 2010
2	4. What happened to student achievement in your novice years? Why do you believe this to be so?	Miller, 2013; Von Frank, 2012; Jones & Larwin, 2015

Table 1 (continued)

1	5. What type(s) of support do you think your district or state should offer to novice principals?	Simieou, Decman, Grisby, and Schumacher's (2010); Von Frank, 2012; O'Mahoney; 2013; Lochmiller, 2014, James-Ward, 2011; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Sharpe, 2011; Knowlton & Phillips, 2013
1	6. How do you believe a principal mentor/mentee relationship should progress?	Von Frank, 2012; Lochmiller, 2014
1	7. What qualifications do you believe a novice principal mentor should possess? What would be your expectations of a mentor?	Norton, 2003; Lovely, 2004; Bloom et al.2003; Sutcher et al., 2017
2	8. What do you think the benefits would be for you as a leader, your school, and your students if formal mentorship was offered throughout the novice years?	Augustine-Shaw & Liang, 2016; Von Frank, 2012; McCawley, 2001; Wilder Research, 2009; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004; Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; McNamara, 2017
2	9. What problems do you think would be associated with participating in a formal mentorship program?	Brauer & Brazer, 2013, Hansford & Elrich, 2006; Scandura & Pellegrini (2007)

To construct the interview guide, Patton's (2002) guidance on developing standard open-ended interview questions was used to develop the nine pre-determined questions. These questions were asked in a pre-determined order and in the same way to all interviewees. Questions assessed the experiences and behaviors, opinions and values, and feelings of the interviewee. Questions were also varied and included those that were singularly focused on a topic, truly open-ended, solicited illustrative examples, and required roleplaying (Patton, 2002). Because the interview was semi-structured, the interviewer was also able explore issues brought forward by the interviewee (McGarth, Palmgren, & Liljedahl, 2019).

Both deductive and inductive approaches were used throughout the study as I gathered data through the lens of the study's theoretical framework and remained open to themes that emerged outside the realm of the framework (Saldana, 2011). Descriptive coding was used to analyze data within my theoretical framework and from multiple sources (Saldana, 2011) As a result of coding, I was able to capture themes aligned to my theoretical framework as well as those who add to the existing literature. My coding process was manual, so that it was easy to organize, and codes could be validated.

The analytic process for this study used the coding framework Saldana (2009) suggested: The procedures I used involved the following steps.

1. In the first cycle of coding, each transcript was read line by line and initial or first impression coding was completed by using single words or phrases to condense statements made by participants.
2. I looked deliberately for repetitive patterns in coding in order to categorize the codes. Exact or similar codes were grouped together. Differences and frequencies were noted.
3. The categorized data was then themed by the labeling analyzed portions of data with thematic sentences that capture the nature of the experience.
4. Similar themes were then grouped together.
5. Multiple themes were winnowed down as reflection on participants' meanings helped to determine what is essential, hence creating overarching themes.
6. In the second cycle of coding, axial coding will be used to develop connections between the codes, categories, and subcategories that emerged. This the basic framework of relationships between the codes, categories, and concepts are developed.
7. Data will be compiled to write a narrative.

8. As an additional part of the second phase of coding, theoretical coding will take place. In this process a primary theme of the research will be created by systematically linking categories and subcategories with a central core category with the most explanatory relevance. Here the categories will be synthesized to create a theory.

During this process, I engaged in regular reflection as data were analyzed. This ensured a trustworthy study, which displayed honesty and integrity in the writing process (Saldana, 2011).

Reflectivity Statement

Reflectivity is self-awareness of a researcher (Lambert, Jomeen, & McSherry, 2010) that he or she is actively involved in the research conducted and the social world in which the research takes place (Ackerly & True, 2010). Reflexivity also requires the researcher to be aware of their emotional and psychological state before, during, and after the research experience (Lincoln, 1995). As this study was conducted, I focused on the experiences of the participants instead of viewing the phenome based on my own experiences.

As a fifth-year principal, who was not a part of a structured mentorship program, my predictions of the participants responses were acknowledged. I also acknowledged my experiences have affected my thinking on this issue, and therefore led me to explore this research topic. My experiences without a mentor were challenging, and I desired an experienced principal with enough time to conduct regular check-ins with me to make sure that my head was still above water. Although my district made an effort to provide an informal mentor and then a recently retired principal as a supervisor with the job of checking in twice a semester and then evaluating me, there was not the ongoing support of a mentor in either of these practices. There were many times that I was under either immense pressure from teachers or parents or dealing with student issues where I feel it would have been beneficial to have someone, who did not

evaluate me, to give me guidance or at least listen to my thought processes before major decisions were made. With a reactive rather than proactive instructional leadership director at the time, I was made to feel that my job was in jeopardy on several occasions. This was despite the fact I was placed in a position to lead a high priority school without proactive support while a first-year principal.

Although not all novice principals' experiences may not have experienced the same high stressed novice years as I did, I desired to understand the mentorship support needs of other novice principals across the state of Tennessee. I wanted to understand more about the challenges principals who have recently completed their novice years faced during their time as a novice and what support they perceived they needed. I also sought to gauge what they perceived the outcomes of such support would have been on their leadership practices and schools if given. Confidential issues did emerge during the participants interviews, and I did not disclose any topics discussed amongst those being interviewed. I also recognized that not all principals would see the importance of formal mentorship or ongoing support for novice principals. It was in the best interest of all stakeholders (researcher, districts, and participants) for the study to be transparent and confidential.

Trustworthiness

Interpretive inquiry requires use of a systematic conscious method of research. Heinich's four criteria for assessing trustworthiness in research reminds researchers that multiple constructions of reality involves focused and sustained searches and engagement with stakeholders (Lincoln, 1995). Two of the four criteria needed for a rigorous and trustworthiness study are credibility to affirm internal validity and transferability to affirm external validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1986). To establish credibility in this study, the researcher engaged in hours

of interviews with novice principals to gain insight on their needs. Data was triangulated to validate results, cross-checked using notes and audio-video recordings, and cross compared to the literature. To ensure transferability, a detailed narrative of the methods and results of this study were developed so that others who seek to conduct a similar study or apply the finding elsewhere can do so while making clear judgements about how the study would fit into their setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1986).

Summary

Chapter three presented a discussion of the methodology that was during this dissertation study. The methods have been distinguished as a qualitative study created to understand the need of novice Tennessee principals in districts that do not have structured mentorship programs for novice principals despite the research that states the practice is effective in developing principals, who are responsible for student achievement. Convenience yet purposeful sampling of nine Tennessee school principals, who have recently finished their novice years, were used to carry out the study. Concisely highlighted was principals' experience without mentorship, years of experience, and previous leadership experiences.

This chapter also presented the process used to collect and analyze qualitative data. The primary method for data collection was in person semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed participants and sought to understand their experience with mentorship or other ongoing support as a novice, challenges they faced as a novice, support and activities they needed, and their anticipated outcomes of such support. Themes, which emerged, were coded using the study's theoretical framework, but unintended findings were also explored. Finally, data analysis procedures addressed the overall process to ensure the study was reliable and valid. Case studies for each of the three districts were developed. The goal of the research was to

understand the needs of Tennessee novice principals and to establish a formalized program theory for such programs based on the findings of this research.

CHAPTER IV

Report of Data

The purpose of this study was to determine participants' perceptions of mentorship support needed in the novice years of principalship in Tennessee. The participants in this study were nine Tennessee principals in year four to five of their career, who had not participated in a formal mentorship program. Of the nine principals, three were selected from a single district in each region of the state. Participants were asked to participate in Zoom interviews which were semi-structured.

The data in this chapter was analyzed using open coding, where discrete pieces of data were labeled based on its properties and then axial coding, in which connections and relationships between these codes were found. Finally, theoretical coding was conducted bringing codes together into one overarching category. At each level of analysis, comparison of the participants' responses was used to filter the data further, until themes emerged (Saldana, 2011).

Findings

The following data represents the findings from the Zoom interviews. The interview findings reveal fourth- and fifth-year principals' perceptions on what they needed in the form of support in their novice years and how they perceive such support would have benefited them during that timeframe. Nine principals were interviewed in November and December of 2020 using semi-structured interview questions. The questions were designed to elicit detailed answers regarding participants' experiences without a formal mentorship program. Transcripts have been transcribed, reviewed, and coded.

Contextual Findings

During the interview process, data emerged that helped the researcher gain insight into how novice principals perceived the change from assistant principal to the principal seat. Participants also shared the support they sought or were offered during those novice years. This data is presented below to build context prior to sharing data that directly addresses the research questions. An additional research question added to the semi-structured interview allowed for principals to share their thoughts as to why they believed formal mentorship was not provided to them in the novice years.

A major transition. Six principals indicated that they did not fully realize the large responsibility that came along with the principalship because of the view they had of it from the assistant principals' seat. Although he worked closely with his principal, Principal Cooper admitted, "There's things that even as assistant principal, that I didn't realize my principal did. I just didn't have any idea because we were both busy taking care of different things."

Principal Davis also acknowledged that she too was unaware of some of the responsibilities. She said:

I don't know about any other administrators, but as an assistant principal, there were things that I did that I was responsible for. When I went over into the principal world, it was completely different and it was kind of, I felt like I was kind of shell shocked... I'm being asked to do things that I really didn't truly know that that's what my principal did. Just being honest. There were new things that I had to learn. I was like, "Oh, I didn't even know that. I didn't even know we did that because that wasn't what I was, that wasn't my department, so to speak. So that was kind of hard.

Principal Adams recalls the transition from being the person who runs things by the principal to being the person things are run by, which was a huge shift in responsibility. She said:

Coming as an assistant principal, you pretty much run things by the principal. Pretty much, if your principal trusts you to make a decision without running it by him, hey, then you do that, but in a lot of cases, before you make major decisions that could possibly have ramifications behind it, of course, you want to run it by your principal. I had that to fall back on, to go to him and say, "Okay. I'm about to do this. What do you think?" He'll say, "Okay. Yes. Go ahead" or, "No," but as a principal, you really don't have that person to go to, to say, "Look."

The shift in responsibilities made Principal Edwards acknowledge the need for someone to show her the ropes: She said:

I did not know the ropes of this chair, and it's that whole perception of what people don't know, they don't know. And so, my first year as head principal, it would have been beneficial to have had somebody who had been here to share everything that you go through. Because the change from one chair to the next in the responsibilities is amazing.

Help Sought or Offered

Although none of the districts involved in this study offered formal mentorship to their novice principals, it is important to note what support these principals were provided or sought.

Paired with pre-occupied people. Each of the three novice principals in the West Tennessee's district one were all initially given the name of a principal that they could reach out to for help. Principal Adams recalls being told she could reach out to the person who held the job before her, but she had moved to a central office position. She recalled:

The person that had the job before me went to Central Office. She had other duties that consumed her time, so she didn't have time to mentor me, but she would have been the perfect person, the principal that was there before me, to groom me or mentor me.

She tried to help, but at that time, it was not enough.

Similarly, Principal Banks recalls being paired with a peer with whom a mentorship relationship never developed. She said, "At one point, I was told I could reach out to Ms. Jane Pittman who is a veteran principal, but I am not certain she was trained, or if it was something where we should have had meetings from month to month or biweekly."

Principal Cooper in the same district, shared that the district paired him with a first-year principal with whom a mentorship relationship never developed. Principal Cooper recalled the in-service he attended when he learned who he was assigned to. He recalled:

What they did was, there in the in service, they said, "Principal Cooper you're a new principal, and James Moore," I think he had been a principal for one year at the point, and he was next door at Temple High School, and so they said, "James is there to help as your mentor." That was pretty much the end of the mentorship. So, there was nothing formal. We didn't have any meetings. I will say James was helpful if I had a question.

In West Tennessee's District One, district leaders acknowledged the need for mentorship and even shared the name of a person who had potential to support these novice principals in their beginning years, however the relationships were not properly initiated, and these new principals were left unmentored. Each of them did mention reaching out to district leaders in their interviews when they needed help.

Sought help from a previously established relationship. In their novice years, four principals sought the help of principals that they had previously existing relationships with because their district did not offer mentorship. Principal Ingram of East Tennessee's district three recalled his previous principal being one of the many people he sought. He said:

Because I did not have a mentor, I had colleagues I could call. My principal, I would call and talk to him, but I also got to a point where I just didn't want to re-explain everything. I talked about it enough. I didn't want to tell one more person everything going on, and it was so overwhelming.

Whereas Principal Ingram talked to multiple people including his former principal, Principal Graves in the same district reconnected with a mentor from the Leadership Academy that prepared her to become a principal. She recalls an overwhelming situation in which she needed support. She said:

After this particular situation, I also called my mentor from when I was in the Leadership Academy, and I still call him every once in a while, Dr. Jarmon. So yeah, I called him and just said, "This is what happened. What would you have done? What should I have done? I mean, it was very stressful. I mean it was horrible.

Like Principal Ingram & Graves, Principal Edwards in Middle Tennessee's District 2 sought refuge in a familiar person, who mentored her as an assistant principal and recalls keeping the relationship as she entered the principalship. She said:

Well, he was my mentor even as assistant principal. I went to him for a lot, so I already knew him, and I already knew that he was a confidant that someone that would not tell your struggles. I knew that I could go to him as principal as well and say, "Oh wow, this

is totally different. Never experienced this problem or that issue. Ah, yeah. All right.

Now we're moving into a different area." I saw him because I was very unsure of myself when it came to working with middle school and middle school teachers and something I've never done before. He helped me through that. When I realized that I was the principal 7 through twelve, that's when I knew I had to seek out some advice from him.

Within the same district, Principal Ferguson also sought the help of a previous principal and credits her for being there to unofficially walk him through challenging times. He recalled:

There was a guidance counselor and two other teachers that really bumped heads and being an assistant, I didn't have to deal with the HR side. My job was discipline and athletics, so I had to reach out to my former principal and say, Alright, how do I deal with these big personalities? How do I get everyone on the same page, same team instead of fighting amongst themselves? She walked me through the process, and her idea, I mean, it worked out. Yeah, I pretty much had her on speed dial.

Because mentorship was not provided, these new leaders, two from the Middle Tennessee district and two from the East Tennessee district, took the initiative to seek leaders with whom they had previously established relationships in order to navigate their novice years.

Sought help from central office. Although several former novice principals in this study were fortunate to have pre-existing relationships, six of the nine principals referenced reaching out to Central Office directly for support. Principal Ferguson in the Middle Tennessee's district two reported a supportive relationship that made it easy to reach out to central office:

I'm lucky, because my district, they're very supportive. I mean, they actually call and check in on you and not trying to say, well you're doing this wrong or doing that wrong

or doing that right. They're just, "Hey, how's things going?" Or they'll just show up one day at your school and take 15-20 minutes and have a personal conversation. That makes you feel wanted so to speak and makes you feel comfortable calling them whenever there's an issue that has to be talked about. Relationships matter.

Both Principal Graves and Henderson in East Tennessee's District 3 also mentioned reaching out to District Office directly, and much like Principal Ferguson they were met with help. Principal Graves referenced her supervisor and said, "Now, several principals have the same supervisors, so it's not like a one-on-one mentorship, but yes I did talk to her about everything." Although this support was provided, she continued:

Sometimes you don't want to always be the one reaching out to a supervisor to help because you don't want them to think that you can't do it or that you want them to bail you out. You can't give off that perception either, so it would have been nice to have that (mentorship) within the first few years.

While Central Office supervisors and other personnel in districts two and three were available to support novice principals, Principal Edwards in district two also recalled being skeptical about calling Central Office for support. She shared, "you don't necessarily always feel safe to go to central office because you don't want somebody to see a weakness in you, so who do we have? Who do we have as principals to be able to vent to? I don't want to say vent to, because I don't want to be a negative person, but I do need to sound that off to people sometimes."

Principals Adams and Banks in West Tennessee's district one initially had a similar perception of reaching out to Central Office for support. Principal Adams recalled how she felt when she reached out central office for help. She shared:

I was cautious at first and reserved at first, and suffering silently at first, but I knew I had to reach out to somebody in order to stay afloat and make sure we were doing things legally so that we would not get in trouble or breaking any laws...I think calling was beneficial but also, it was intimidating and scary to go to them because you don't want people to think you don't know what you are doing in your building.

Principal Banks in the same district recalled seeking district office for help with a different response. She recalled how she felt after calling and said, "Then sometimes, even though I reached out to district leaders, I felt like (they were saying), "Figure it out," so it was difficult because I didn't have just one person. I will say at one point they did tell me to reach out to another district principal."

Perceptions of Why Formal Mentorship was Offered to Novice Principals

Perceived as equipped. Interviews were semi-structured allowing the researcher to ask an additional question of eight of the nine principals to gain insight on their thoughts about why they were not provided formal mentorship. Specifically, participants were asked why they believed that novice teachers often receive a mentor, but new principals do not. In response to this question, four of the nine participants expressed those in district level leadership roles may make assumptions about the abilities of novice principals. Principal Cooper said:

I think often principals are older, and it is assumed that they are ready to make those more difficult decisions. However, I know principals who have been hired after only a

few years of experience in the education field. Honestly, I think it is the mindset of those in district leadership. I think they have forgotten what it is like when they first started as an administrator or they are so overwhelmed that principals are often left to figure things out on their own.

To support the idea shared by Principal Cooper, Principal Ingram stated, “I just think that they feel you are in this position maybe because you don’t need that. I don’t know, or that you have access to people around you.” Principal Adams and Principal Edwards both felt mentorship was not offered to new principal because once you make it to the principalship you are expected to know all of the answers and how to handle every situation.

Perceived as experienced. Four principals felt the number of years in the profession may have been the reason novice principals are not offered mentorship. Principal Graves said:

That is the conundrum, isn't it? I think that in the last 20 years, I'm sure that they're figuring out that we need to have mentors, because the principalship has become so much more complex than it was back in the... well, fifties through the nineties. When accountability wasn't as profligate. But I think that our teachers... When you're first starting out, not only most teachers are very young, but they don't have very much experience in education, with the political arena of education, the wherewithal of education, so the testing, and the planning, and the dealing with other adult colleagues, plus kids, and families. It would be helpful to have another person help them navigate that, because for many teachers this is their first full-time, grownup job. I know that was the case with me.

Principal Banks also felt the number of years in education may influence why novice principals did not receive this support and stated, “I think new teachers get a mentor because they are truly new to the profession and need guidance. However, I think that principals are expected to know because they have been educators and taken classes that prepared them for administration.” Principal Henderson agreed, considered the time management aspect, and shared, “Maybe I think it’s just the time of experience that you’ve had in education period, and again you’re mentoring someone in your building, so it is easy to pair someone up. I think a lot of it is time management.”

It became clear from the responses of participants that those who selected them for the position held them in high esteem and felt they were capable of leading a school without formal structured and planned mentorship. However, the data that follows explains that while selected principals had immense potential and had spent many years in education, the transition to the new role requires the need for support.

Research Question 1 What are the perceptions of support needed to meet the challenges presented in the novice years of the principalship?

The twelve major themes discovered include a non-supervisory mentor unless there is a pre-existing relationship, experienced knowledgeable effective principal mentors, willing mentors, proper pairing, mentors with similar experiences and settings to the mentee, a mentor close to the principalship, a trusting relationship with a strong foundation, sharing of experiences, quality time, honest feedback after listening, ongoing needs-based mentorship, and formal but rigid programs.

Non-supervisory mentors unless pre-existing relationship. Six of the nine participants spoke of the need to have someone as a mentor who was not in direct supervision above them due to the conflict that may exist or the comfort level that was needed. Principal Cooper spoke about the support offered by central office officials yet how there were still certain things that he would not discuss with them because of their position. He said:

I have wondered why mentorship is not more of a focus in our district. Even if we don't have mentors for new principals, I wonder why we don't have at least a resource that principals can talk to, again, that's not in a non-supervisory role. Well, it's different talking to someone you ultimately answer to, than someone who doesn't do your evaluation or that doesn't have any kind of direct authority over you. That's a big difference. There were times... Well, I guess I'll say first I had... the superintendent at the time was very supportive, and basically gave me a lot of flexibility to build the program. She gave me some parameters, but she also was not looking over my shoulder constantly. Then, Dr. Jefferson and Dr. Smith, who were both central office people were very helpful. They would check on me. So, they were good about I guess providing some of that support. But at the same time, they're my bosses, and there's certain things you're not going to share with your boss. At the time though, there were times where I didn't know the exact plan, I didn't know exactly how it was going to work out, I didn't know exactly what the next steps were. So, it would have been nice to have someone, again, that was not in a supervisory role, that would have been more of a mentor. So, I don't want to say I didn't have support, but not support in the role of us (new principals), just to give some guidance that was I guess more a peer level. I'm not going to tell somebody, and most of

the time who's a supervisory role. There are things I'm just not going to share with them. I don't want to seem like I don't know what I am doing. I don't want to seem inadequate.

To further explain the unease that might occur if district supervisory staff is assigned in a mentorship role, Principal Edwards expressed why one might feel uncomfortable in this kind of mentorship. She said:

The other thing I could think of is, yes, that it's almost like you got somebody on your shoulder that's like the little bird. This mentor was assigned to me so obviously there is a mentorship program up there to where these folks go back to them and tell them, "This is a weak principal." You would always feel that pressure, I think. Just the having to produce, having to do this because of that person because they are a direct line to central office. I think that would be a downside, just the pressure and the accountability from another person.

When asked if the mentor could serve in a supervisory role, Principal Davis also wrestled with the idea and understood how it might make some uncomfortable especially if there was no pre-existing relationship. She shared:

So, I guess that could be kind of difficult, because that could be a conflict of interest maybe for some. For me, I'm like, "You know what? If you're the one that's evaluating me, I know you know what they're looking for and I would probably welcome it", but I could see where that might make somebody feel maybe a little bit more uncomfortable, just because, again, it depends on that relationship. But I think I would be okay with it, as long as it's not ... Like I wouldn't want my Director of Schools to be my mentor person,

but somebody that I have to work closely with anyway. I would expect them to be non-judgmental in case my questions are far out there.

Experienced knowledgeable effective principal mentors. When questioned about the qualifications of the person assigned to mentor new principals, eight principals recommended that the mentee be a principal who was highly effective, knowledgeable, and experienced. Principal Graves highlighted the intentional selection process that districts should go through when selecting mentors to ensure they are effective. She explained:

And so, I think it's important for a district to really be intentional about finding mentors who fit a certain mold of sharing and fitting a certain mold of leadership too where it's not just lip service. They know that they have a track record of doing the work, not just talking about the work.

The track record of doing good work highlighted by Principal Graves is further explained by Principal Banks, who seemed to think the data of the mentor must show evidence of this hard work. She requested:

Someone who has maybe 8-10 years' experience...Someone who has shown the academic growth, someone who has turned a school around, someone who has taken a level one school to a level three or level four, level five. Just someone who has shown growth. I guess I shouldn't say it has to be a certain number of years, just someone who, where the data speaks for itself. I guess I could say that. Wherever you have data to back up what you've done, I think that would be a good candidate for a veteran principal or someone who could be a mentor principal.

Principal Ferguson also expressed concern for the mentor being one of proven quality and said he had seen cases in which those selected should not have been chosen. He stated strongly:

As long as it's a quality former administrator because we both know that there are some people that I don't know how they got to be an administrator, but then later down the road, they're a mentor. I'm like, that's not very effective. I've seen that happen before and I just, I think it's setting that person up to fail. So as long as it's a quality person, I think that is a great idea, but it's got to be quality. They should go back and look to see how that person ran their building.

In addition to success, Principal Edwards added the number of years of the mentor has experienced can ensure they have encountered and had experience with the challenges they would need to help the novice through. She shared:

They should have knowledge of situations that have come across, and I think you're right in choosing folks that have been through it three or more years because you want to say you've seen most everything. I think it is important that the mentor has experienced and has had some success within a building with achievement and culture.

Whereas most principals mentioned needing one person as a mentor with a successful experience, Principal Davis, did not shy away from multiple mentors with expertise in different areas to help new principals get acclimated to the profession. She shared enthusiastically:

I do feel like they should be assigned a specific person, maybe two or three, honestly.

Somebody that is well vast in a specific area. There are some principals who data is their

thing or special education is their thing. They need to be partnered up with somebody who has kind of a specialty area because then that can be their go to person.

While it is highly suggested by multiple participants that selected mentors be proven effective and knowledgeable leaders, Principal Banks and Edwards stated these leaders should also be trained for the position.

A mentor close to the principalship. The debate over whether a mentor should be a current or retired principal was unclear as some preferred retired principals without their own school and others preferred a principal currently in the field. However, it was clear that participants wanted mentors that were not too far removed from the work. Principal Davis felt strongly that the mentor needed to have been a principal and said, "I don't want somebody who hadn't been a principal before. Put that on the requirements list. You need to have at least walked in these shoes for at least a year. I don't want anybody telling me and you haven't been in my shoes." Principal Graves was not opposed to retired principals but felt that, "principals who are in the principalship can be great mentors because they are living it now."

Whereas Principal Adams was not opposed to a current principal, she expressed she was also fine with having the help of a retired principal who understood the running of a school. Principals Ferguson and Henderson wanted the retired principal to be one that was not too far removed from the principalship. Principal Ferguson said, "I think if they are retired, as long as it is within 5 years. Now if it's 15-20 years probably not because times have changed, but I think if it's within five years, it's okay." Principal Henderson expressed her thoughts on the recently retired principal over the currently active principal. She said:

I think it depends on how long they've been retired so that they're not so far removed. Again, I think when you get in a current administrator spot, that's where it becomes difficult because you have your own daily tasks to take care of. And it's hard to reach out to someone that's not even in your building. I know that even though Mr. Nelson (a retired principal) is my supervisor, I still feel like he would be better fit for the mentor role because he doesn't have his own school, he's trying to run...I think the time aspect matters if it is going to be another principal because it is going to be harder to schedule time to be able to meet and discuss things. If I had a question or a thing, I mean, they may be in the middle of running their own school and not necessarily being able to be very available. They may not be easy to access all the time.

Beyond not being too far removed if the mentor is a retired principal, Principal Banks felt it necessary that the retired mentor principal continue to remain abreast to things going on in the field. She said:

If the person is continuing to be a continual learner, like let's say you've retired, but you're still keeping up with the latest information, I think that would be okay. I think it would depend on the person's level of growth. If they're still growing and still learning and still in education, even though they may not have a school they may make a good mentor.

Willing mentors. Four principals directly mentioned that they were hesitant to reach out for help because they felt as if they were bothering those from which they sought help. Directly connected to this idea, principals said that they needed mentorship from mentors who were willing to give of their already busy schedules. Principal Banks said:

I knew if I needed something that I could call somebody, but at the same time, when you are new, you're hesitant to call just anybody. I will say, the principals I did reach out to were very helpful, but at the same time, sometimes I felt I was bothering them because, like one day it was Ms. Jones, and the next day I'm calling Mr. Smith to get some advice.

Like Principal Banks, Principal Ingram also mentioned that he too at times did not ask for help to avoid bothering people. He stated, "I didn't ask for help, and it's not that I did not want help. I just didn't want to bother people." Principal Edwards also had similar sentiments and recalled feeling as if she were bothering those she sought as well, and said:

I think it would be better to have one person just to go to. I want to say, I think at first, I was very welcomed from central office to call at any time. But I think after a certain amount of time you start feeling, oh gosh, I've called them a billion times on this. You become bugging them all the time. I think, I'd have been more comfortable with a mentor just to constantly be able to say, "I know I'm bugging you to death, but what would you do here? What would you advise here?" without any feeling of repercussions from those that are at central office.

For this reason, six of the nine principals mentioned that they needed mentorship from willing mentors. Principal Adams said:

A mentor should be a person that's willing to just check-in on a novice principal because a lot of times, even though the lines of communication may be open, sometimes that novice principal may feel that he or she is just calling too much or asking for too much advice. I think it's important that the mentor principal should be willing to reach out to that novice principal if he or she doesn't hear from them in a couple of days or something,

or just being willing to say, “Okay. Hey.” They could just ask, “How's your day going? How did it go today?” The mentor principal needs to be extremely personable and open for that novice principal.

She went on to say, “I think a mentor should be reflective themselves, and also someone that’s willing to share and help others.”

Principal Davis agreed mentor principals need to be willing and added compensated when helping novices. She found:

Well getting the right people who are willing to share their already packed schedule with another person is going to be hard, so you’re probably going to have some trouble just finding people to agree to do it. You’re probably going to need a stipend, and we sometimes as educators don’t like to pay for things. I think it’s warranted a stipend if you become someone’s mentor because that is what we do for teachers.

Similarly, when asked the qualification of principal mentors she needed, Principal Henderson agreed:

I guess have the desire to, because I think that was some of the problem when they tried to assign people a couple of years ago here in District Three. It was like, "Well, you've got more experience than this person, so we're going to assign you that." I don't know that it was ever discussed beforehand if that person even wanted to be a mentor. So, I mean, I think that's a lot of it too, because if they don't have a desire to be a mentor, they're not going to be good at it.

Principal Graves also echoed these sentiments and stated, “I think a good mentor is not selfish with their time too. I think a good mentor is very giving of their time.”

Proper pairing. More than half of the principals mentioned the need for proper pairing and expressed that if not properly paired, their needs as novices could not be met. Principal Davis explained how putting someone who thinks they know it all with a new principal could be ineffective. She said:

I also think with new principals, sometimes we kind of have an idea of what it should look like and what we think we're going to do, and we don't know. So sometimes there may be some pushback if you don't pair the right type of person with another person. That could cause conflict because you don't want to come off as a know it all as a person who's been doing it for 10 years, but yet, you want ... A new person might know some new tricks of the trade too. So just finding that happy balance, as far as hooking people together. That might be a little bit of a challenge.

Principal Cooper agreed with Principal Davis adding the need to consider how well the two parties will work together based on their personalities. He suggested:

I think to at least consider personalities. Now, I will say, I have learned something and different things from all of the high school principals that I've worked with, even though some of them had very different personalities (fit). I think at least to consider, how do these people's personalities... Are they a good fit? Is this person intimidating? How are they going to get along?" Every principal has strengths and weaknesses, but if it's a mentor that you're looking at and they're never meeting deadlines, their school's not really doing well. Are they really ready to share that with somebody else? I think just to consider those things.

Principal Adams also noted, “I think the mentor and the mentee should be a match for each other, if that makes sense. I think there definitely should be some work put in up front before you put two people together because personalities are different.” Principal Graves reflected on what might happen if this is not considered. She explained, “I feel like if there is a lack of fit, if you don’t have trust, there then you’re not going to have an open, honest engagement in the relationship where you are going to benefit at all.”

Mentors with similar experience and settings. Six of the nine principals reported that they were assigned to a school that either was a different level from where they had been an assistant principal, a high needs school, or a school that was a new program. Five of these principals said they needed a mentor who had experience in a similar context. Principal Ingram recalled being assigned to a school with a program he knew little about and needing guidance from someone with International Baccalaureate experience. When asked to recall his experience he said:

So, my first week you on the job, I start on a Monday, on a Tuesday, there's a board meeting where they're going to either continue IB or nix it. So, I had to stand up in front of the board and defend a program I knew nothing about and a school I knew nothing about. I had to do it at that work session, and then I had to go stand before them again the following week. I came in, I'd never been in the middle school. So, I told my parents, I said I hadn't stepped foot in the middle school since I left mine about 30 years ago, and so that was another learning curve for me.

He later recommended the person who would have been best suited to help him. He said:

What you're looking for is somebody who's gone through common situations that you have, made decisions that you're having to make, and can walk you through their thought

process of how they came to the conclusion they did or made the decision that they did. So yeah, if we could boil all of this down and all my bird walking down to, how could I have had a role model in a school similar to mine that I could work with and collaborate with. That's what I would have wanted. I want somebody whose walking in my shoes.

Much like Principal Ingram, Principal Graves also found herself in a comparable situation as her school underwent rezoning, and she had to lead teachers and students through this tough time alone. She reflected:

So, that second year where we were undergoing a rezoning that was very stressful. I wish that I could have had someone who just had walked in those shoes to just guide me in what teachers are going to feel or how kids are going to perceive it or how parents are going to frame it just so I knew what to say. Because some of that I screwed up too. I mean everyone makes mistakes. I think that a district or state should provide a principal with a veteran principal whether it's somebody who's from a similar school demographic as yours or has experience with the school culture and climate that you're experiencing.

Principal Adams also recalled being placed in a new setting, a pre-K school, which was the only one in the district. She reflected on needing someone with similar experience to help her seeing she had been an assistant principal in an alternative school. She said:

I was the only pre-K principal in the district, so really there was nobody else to even call to relate to, to reach out to for support... but like I said, there was nobody in the district, but I think that would have been really important. If I could have had somebody like that, I think that would have helped me be more successful.

As a novice, Principal Cooper started a position at a brand-new early college high school program. He had also transitioned from a middle school to high. He expressed the need for mentorship by someone in a similar setting. He shared:

Well, I've worked in a middle school, I've worked in an alternative school, I worked in a high school, and they're very different. Now, I think there are things... For instance, I have a few teachers that worked at the elementary school and there are so many things I learned from them. I think there are things I can learn from an elementary principal, but there are all still things that I deal with every day on a high school level that an elementary principal... It's going to be different. Now, there's going to be things on the elementary level that I would not know how to deal with because that's just not my everyday experience. So, I'm not saying some of those skills don't go to all the multiple levels, but I do think that it would be helpful to have someone who's in a setting that's similar to yours, just for commonalities. It would be helpful if they're on the same, like if you're middle that they were middle, if you were high, they were high, that they were in a similar setting, I think would be helpful.

Two principals, Principals Banks & Davis, led schools that were reconfigured to accommodate primary grades. Both felt they needed a mentor who was in a similar grade band as them as well. Principal Banks said:

I think they should share the same grade band. I think there should be some, either they're not doing it now, but they have experience or a lot of experience in that particular grade band that the mentee is in. The mentor should have some information or some things to share with the mentee that are like grade level consistent. Personally, I don't see a high school principal being a mentor to an elementary principal, if that makes sense.

Trusting relationship with a strong foundation. When asked how a mentorship mentee relationship should progress, seven of the nine principals mentioned the need for an initiation period where they would have time to build a relationship with the person who would mentor them. Some even also mentioned unofficial mentorship relationships they sought from people with whom they had already pre-existing relationships. Principal Henderson emphasized the time needed to establish a relationship with a mentor. She said:

I mean, I think just with any relationship, not necessarily if you're being a mentor, but just with anything, I think you need to take some time to get to know each other. I don't want to say personally, but the likes and dislikes of each other, just so that you know how that person learns and what is the best way to support them. Is it that I need to call and come by and see you? Or do I need to text you? Do I need to email? Then as that progresses, I think that once you find out those small things and know how to mentor, then it's just knowing that you're available.

She continued with her rationale for why a strong foundational relationship was important and said:

Well, just if they don't have that relationship with that person... Because I can't say that the former supervisors that I had, not necessarily intimidation, but just the comfort level wasn't there because we didn't know each other as well, which is why I was saying earlier, I think you need to take the time to build that, the time to get to know each other and know the ins and outs to be able to be a true mentor.

Principal Ferguson also saw the need for relationships to be built between the two early on in the process. He said:

I think from the get-go, once that person is named, if I were your mentor, I'd reach out to you and we wouldn't talk about education. I would just get to know you. So again, we've got to build a relationship. And then the next meeting, then that's when we would start talking about, I'd probably pick a topic and say, "All right, how do you feel about this? What would you do?" I would just throw out ideas, make you feel comfortable so you could feel like if you do have an issue of while you're struggling, you can pick up the phone and call me instead of waiting and not ever talking to you. Then all of a sudden, you're like, "Well, Principal Ferguson, I'm struggling. What do I do?" and we don't know each other. That's hard to have that conversation or have that rapport of bouncing ideas off each other.

Building a relationship through getting to know the mentee was of importance to Principal Banks as well, and she spoke to how doing so would create a comfort level with the mentee. In relation to how the mentorship should start, she said:

I think first, it's just getting to know one another, because the mentee has to be comfortable with the mentor. I have to know that when I call you to tell you that I've messed up, that that's a safe place. So, once we get to know each other, and I know that this is someone that I can trust, this is someone that I can confide in, then I think it goes to the next level of, "Okay, I'm more comfortable with sharing and calling you when there is a problem, or when it's not a problem." Just picking up the phone, "Hey, how was your day? This happened today, blah, blah, blah."

Both Principal Graves & Edwards felt that the initiation process should be led by the mentor in an effort to build a relationship with the novice principal and that it needed to be done in a very informal manner. Principal Edwards said:

I want them to establish the relationship first, talk with the person, and say, “I would love to mentor you, and love to be in that relationship and understand that what you say is in confidence. I’m here for you.” I know every principal needs that because I needed it.

She went on to explain the importance of connection with the unofficial mentor she sought for herself. She stated, “I felt calm with him. I think that is definitely something for connection. You’ve got to feel like you connect to them.”

Shared experiences. Multiple reoccurring codes centered around the mentor sharing possible unexpected scenarios, words of wisdom, as well as their own experiences and mistakes. Six of the nine principal participants interviews indicated a need for a mentor who displayed vulnerability as imperfect people in the profession. Four principals specifically mentioned they needed to hear about the mistakes of their mentors so they might potentially avoid these same pitfalls. Principal Graves said:

A mentor role in my view, I would be bringing to the mentee, "These are some things that I'm facing. When can we talk through that? Can you impart some words of wisdom? Do you have an experience that you could share?" I think that that's important for a mentor to share his or her experiences and to be honest about those experiences, not to paint themselves as this end all be all I know everything. But honestly, I'd love to hear a mentor's mistakes too. That's just as valuable to me as hearing about this war story and this is how I won that, and this is how I won that. I mean that's great; it gives me encouragement and hope, but I like hearing about the mistakes and how they dealt with that.

She went on to say:

I think a good mentor, like I said before, is okay with being vulnerable about some of the mistakes he or she has made and is willing to impart those. Because if all you're hearing from your mentor is all the great things that they've done or that they've represented in their schools that's not a realistic picture of what the principalship is. I mean, it's going to be fraught with mistakes and it's okay to be vulnerable. I think in my nearly five years now in this role I think that's one thing I've learned it's okay to be vulnerable. It's okay to ask for help. It's okay to say I don't know all the answers, that's why we're going to think through this together and figure something out that's going to work for the school. I learned that myself. I wish that I'd had some other folks validate that.

Principal Banks agreed mentees need to hear that even veteran principals are imperfect people.

She said, "The mentor should be comfortable to say, "Well hey, my first year I did this, and this did not work, so that's probably not what you want to do, but this is the way that this should go."

Five of the nine principals specifically said they needed to hear the direct experiences of mentors and to be given potential scenarios that might occur before they actually happened.

Principal Banks explained:

New principals should be required to verbally talk about what you should do or what they would do. Then, the veteran principal should share, "Well, I agree, or I don't agree. Maybe you should approach this in a different way." So, I think there should be more role-play or just verbal... Just talking about different scenarios and what ifs, and what then, so what do I do now? Just more conversations about, you're in this situation, this happened. What do you do? So, I think more scenarios and role-plays should be a big part of those meetings with the veteran principal and the novice principal.

Principal Graves recalled a situation in which being given a preview of potential bad things to come would have helped. As she reflected on this occurrence, she said:

I'll give you a situation. This was very harrowing. So, three weeks after I started with the teacher, so two weeks after I started with kids, I had a student collapse from a heart attack on the track. This was a congenital heart defect that he had that didn't manifest itself until that point, and he was an eighth grader. So basically, I would have loved some mentorship, leading up to some, I guess, emergency situations like that.

Much like Principal Graves, Principal Edwards also experienced a scary situation her first year on the job when there was a gas spill in her building. She too shared:

My first year as principal, we had a gas spill in the school. We have 1,000 kids in the building, 85 teachers, 30 staff, pretty much. So yeah, that happened, and I'm sitting there. At first, I wanted to panic because I'm sitting there thinking, how am I going to get everybody out? How am I going to keep everybody safe? I just took a big breath in, and it would've been nice to have had somebody with a little more experience to mentor me in that and say, "Hey, some really bad things are going to happen, but they're going to look to you to be the calm. You got to be the calm in the storm. And you got to be the one that's able to navigate all of them through this and keep them safe but staying calm."

She went on to say:

That's where I could have asked a mentor, previous up to that, "So tell me your experience." If you could listen to others experience and their wise advice, that just helps you out before you hit these types of potholes.

Quality time. Over 35 codes indicated the need for quality time spent with the principal mentor. Seven of the nine principal indicated a need for some form of quality time spent with their mentor principal. Although Principal Ferguson indicated that he felt prepared due the quality time he spent learning the ropes from his previous principal, 6 other principals felt this opportunity was needed in their novice years. With this opportunity given to him, Principal Ferguson said:

As far as the educational side of it, I was really just going on what I observed as being an assistant principal with a lady for three years. It wasn't really a mentor program.

However, everything she did, she always called me and said, "All right, one day you're going to be a principal. Whether you think it or not, one day you're probably going to be, so here's what you need to do in order to accomplish something."

Without this experience, four of the principals suggested the need for real time modeling or shadowing in their novice years. Principal Adams said:

I think if I had a principal that was highly effective in instruction, that I could have shadowed, that I could have talked to and asked advice, I think that would have made me more effective. If I could have had someone that I could have shadowed and just saw how he or she handled different situations, I think that would have made me more effective because I would have known that, hey, this is not anything new. Even though every situation is not going to be the same, it could be something that I could have taken from how that principal handle it and apply it to my situation.

Although located in a different district in Middle Tennessee, Principal Edwards referenced her unofficial mentor and agreed she too would have benefited from seeing a mentor model effective practice. She said:

I think it would have benefited my kids in that I would have been able to go to him more or ask him to even model things for me. I think that's important too is he's good at that as well. If he would modeled something for me, and then I've got it and then I turned around and I did it that would have helped me.

East Tennessee's district three Principal Ingram even suggested that the modeling begin as the novice works as a co-principal with his mentor before entering the principalship. When asked what he needed he said:

When I came into this job, I just thought it would have been so beneficial for me. I could have worked as a co-principal with the person I'm replacing. Because there's just nothing that prepares you to be a principal, there's nothing that prepares you when your name is at the top of that roll and you are the one responsible for the school. I don't care what your internship experience is like. If they could ever do anything like that, I think would be incredibly valuable for a person going in their first year.

Whereas one East Tennessee principal, Principal Edwards, who was in regular contact with his former principal, did not want any additional meetings with a mentor because he felt that the required observations and principals meeting consumed a lot of the novice principals' time, four principals saw the need for regularly scheduled meetings with a mentor. While Principal Banks did acknowledge how someone could become burnout from meetings, she also said:

I feel like I would have had more support if we were regularly meeting, and if when we met there were certain things that we would discuss. Instead, it was mainly, “Call this person when you need something,” and not a scheduled bi-weekly meeting or monthly meeting. It was only when something goes wrong or if you’re not 100% sure as to what it is that you need to do.

Much like Principal Banks, Principal Graves felt meetings between novice principals and their mentor should be held, “bi-weekly or once a month meetings or whatnot having the mentee bring forward some issues they want to talk about.” She went on to say, “Those first three years at my school were very, very challenging, and although I had great supervisors to help when I called them, sometimes I wish I just had somebody drop in or actual formal once every couple of weeks to sit down with them just to go over what’s on my plate right now.”

Principal Davis suggested that meetings take place on the mentees’ turf so that they felt comfortable and also agreed meetings should take place regularly to avoid the random calls. She said, “It probably would have been nicer just to have one person. That way, I could actually have some scheduled meetings and not just a random, like, “Hey, I need this real quick. Can you help me out with this?”

Beyond meeting, six of the principals desired the mentor visit their schools, observe their practices, and then give feedback. Principal Adams suggested:

The mentor principal should come into the novice principal's building and spend a day or spend a couple of hours, just to see what's going on, just to see how that principal handles situations. Then give feedback or allow that principal, that novice principal, to reflect on

what has happened just so that they can discuss it, just so they can have conversations around it.

Principal Davis also wanted real time observation, feedback, and additionally confirmation. She said:

It would be nice if that principal could even visit and walk me through those, some of those things or a meeting or a post-conference even with the evaluations. It's good to have the videos, but to sit up there and actually do your first pre-conference or your first post-conference, it would have been nice to maybe just have somebody in there just to kind of make sure you're doing things the right way.

In addition to observing the novice principals and giving feedback, Principal Henderson desired that a mentor principal not only, “see what’s going on in classrooms, in the lunchrooms, visit the building with that person and have conversations about it, but I think they could also reach out to other people in the building to see perception, not just what my perception is.”

Honest feedback after listening. With the desire to grow after being spending quality time learning from and talking to their mentors, seven of the nine principals expressed the need for open honest feedback from mentors who also listen to the mentees. Principal Henderson expressed her desire for straight forward honesty from a mentor. She adamantly requested:

Honesty. Well, for one, I guess, be able to call on them when you need to, to talk things through. Then also just to be honest, and to say if I'm not doing something correctly, to just be straight with me and tell me that. Sometimes all the coaching stuff that goes into staff, when you're trying to question someone through a solution or whatever. I just like people to just talk to me. Just tell me what I need to do because none of us have time for

me to guess around. If I knew what I was doing, I wouldn't be calling on someone any way. So, don't ask, "Well, what have you thought?" I just want someone to be real, just to have a real conversation.

A desire for honest feedback from a mentor was also needed by Principal Ingram, who was skeptical with only receiving affirmations. When asked what he would expect of a mentor, he said.

Sometimes we don't need affirmations. What I'm always looking for is the flip side of the coin. You're telling me like, this is going great. You're telling me this is good, but yeah, what are you really thinking? So, instead of affirmation, I probably need somebody to say, Ingram, get over it, do your job. You're doing a good job, accept it and move on.”
I've always been skeptical of people who offer praise.

To agree with this idea, Principal Davis said, “They have to be willing to give feedback that’s not always nice and pretty. It needs to be truthful, honest, and specific.”

Principal Adams also felt in order for principal mentors to give corrective feedback, they needed to be effective listeners. She said:

They should have the ability to provide feedback, whether it's corrective feedback or just feedback that will better a person. Also, I think they need to have the ability to be able to listen because sometimes principals just need to talk. You don't have to say something all the time. Just listen. I think they need the ability to listen and then maybe offer advice or help a principal, a novice principal, just talk through things. Definitely (have) the ability to listen as well.

Much like Principal Adams, Principals Edwards & Graves also desired someone who actively listened, with Principal Edwards stating, “More or less you’re the listener. I want them to be able to listen.”

Ongoing needs-based mentorship. These former novice principals seemed to concur that mentorship did not need to be a short-lived process as all nine participants made reference to mentorship being an ongoing process. Principal Cooper felt that the process should even begin before the new principal took the role. He asserted:

I would say, before you take the principal job, if they know ahead of time in the year before, I think it would be great to start that mentorship before you accept, before you actually are on the job full-time, to ask some questions on that and to be ready for that.

None of the principals felt less than a year would be a sufficient amount of time for a novice principal to be mentored. Principal Adams felt more than a year was need and the actual length of the relationship would be based on principal growth. She explained:

I think that should last at least a whole year or maybe even longer than that. I don't think it would be quite as effective if you say, “Okay. This is only going to last one semester” or, "This is only going to last a few months." I think at least one year so that you can reflect over that year so that you can determine growth if any from the start of the year to the end of the year. I think it should last at least a year, if not longer. If that relationship between the mentor and mentee is working fine, if that mentee is growing and learning, and becoming a more effective principal, then it's working, and it should continue. As a matter of fact, I think it should continue as long as that mentee is growing. If that mentor

feels, hey, that she or he could still be effective in helping that mentee, I think it should continue, as long as that mentee feels that he or she needs it.

Whereas Principal Davis initially echoed the sentiments of Principal Ferguson who also suggested two years of mentorship, she then began to think about how long it takes a principal to receive professional licensure. She added:

Oh, if it's working well, I mean, I would say at least two years, at least. That's minimum. I mean, for life would be great. I would love to have somebody for life, but at least ... You know what? I'll say even three, because even thinking about license, you can't get your other license as a principal until you've been leading for at least, what? Three years? Three? Is it three?

Just as Principal Davis mentioned potentially keeping a mentor for life, six additional principals suggested that a relationship like this does not end but instead it evolves into more of a peer-to-peer relationship. Principal shared:

Well, I don't think that that relationship really needs to. I think that it just evolves into something else where it evolves into more of a peer-to-peer relationship where you're talking to that principal as if you've got as much to gain from that person and that person can gain as much from you at this point.

Formal but not rigid. Initially, Principals Banks and Cooper in West Tennessee district one but eventually expressed they needed a formal program, a district assigned mentor, and expectations, both of them also joined the other participants in saying the program should eventually become less formal. After initially mentioning she wanted a district assigned mentor, Principal Banks continued, “I see it both ways. Let’s say the district tells us how many times to

meet, and it gets redundant, or it gets old for one of us, like we're not into this, that could be a problem." Principal Cooper suggested, "The idea is as you get more comfortable, that it becomes less and less of a structured thing, but yet somebody is still checking on you."

With this same frame of thinking, five additional participants suggested starting formal and moving to more informal. Principal Ingram said:

I could see that being far more formal at the beginning of the process... So, that first year, that summer being more structured with those questions, with that plan of let's walk through this together, are you in a good place, into a more informal discussion on, how are things going with your staff, what are your staff student relationships like in the building.

Principal Adams agreed and suggested:

Start off that way as structured, but I think the relationship between the novice the stronger it gets, I think it should be... don't think it should be so structured to the point where, hey, nothing else outside this box can occur. I think it should be based on whether or not the novice principal needs assistance and the mentor principal is there for him or her.

Also, supporting the idea of moving from formal to more informal, Principal Graves said:

And I think in the first year it needs to be more frequent and then it can be a little bit less frequent. I could also see it arising if it's just it's too structured, it could become stilted, it could become forced, it could become just one more compliance measure that a district may say, "You have to do this," and a principal feels like, "I don't have time to talk about my issues with somebody. All I have time to do is to deal with the issues." I think expectations to me are very important. Like if you know on the front end this is the time

and this is the place and this is what it's supposed to look like without being way too structured in the conversation.

Three participants feared a program might turn into a checklist and did not feel that would be beneficial at all. Principal Edwards said clearly:

If it was a standardized check the boxes kind of mentorship, I don't think that is very effective because then it's just one, oh gosh, it's another thing I've got to do, and I'm trying to be the principal. Yet, I'm going to have to write this essay for my mentor. I'm going to have to do my observations for my mentor. If it's not flexible and it's not an authentic mentor, I think that definitely it would be a downside to it. I think it would be a hindrance to your first year.

Although many wanted to move towards a formal program eventually, Principal Ingram did however acknowledge that sometimes formal mentorship may be needed such as in the case of his former colleague:

I'm great with an informal model unless there are serious issues. If there is negligence or just gross malpractice or something like that, then I think it would have to be formal.

Stuff like that can happen in the first years. I have a colleague; he and I became principals together. We had both been assistant principals at high schools. We moved into middle schools as principals. He's a great guy. He is no longer a principal. I don't know what happened. He went into a much more difficult school than what I'm in, and had he had the right kind of support, could he have made it?

Research Question 2 What are principals' perceived outcomes for themselves, their students, and their districts as a result of implementing formal mentorship and ongoing support for novice principals?

The five major themes discovered for research question two included shared leadership opportunities, proper planning, pacing, and balancing, potential increases in student achievement, confident novice principals who teachers can believe in, and better decision making which led to different actions. These outcomes confirmed both the psychological and career functioning of mentorship.

Shared leadership opportunities. The overwhelming responsibilities shared by these principals as they navigated their novice indicated that they could have benefited from being introduced to the concept of shared leadership. Principal Cooper expressed how having a mentor may have helped him see opportunities for shared leadership in his school during his novice years. He said:

I think sometimes as principals, we think that it has... Almost that we have to make every decision, that we have to drive everything. Honestly, we may be the facilitator, but the more people we could get involved and the more people we could get around students and working with students, the more it allows us to work on other things that are important. Sometimes we're so caught up in taking care of everything else because we feel responsible for that, that we forget, we're also taking that away from other people. We're taking those leadership opportunities away, if we don't share that.

I think that's where that mentor principal going, "Here's how you build a program that when you leave, it will still continue to grow and develop. Yes, maybe you're

important..." I had a good friend, at one time, he'd been a principal for a long time, he said, "Cooper, you're working hard, and I appreciate it, but if you and I both die tonight, the school building is going to open tomorrow." I thought, "Well, he's got a point." So, just for that mentor principal to say, "You've got to help develop some other people. You've got to give some other people a chance, opportunities to lead. Part of being a leader is to know that you can't do it all, and that it's okay. It's okay to not be responsible for everything.

Although Principal Edwards expressed that he felt prepared because of the time he spent with his former principal, he too felt a mentor could help novice principals see the opportunities for shared leadership. When asked how having a mentor could benefit him as a leader, he said, "I would learn how to delegate instead of trying to do everything yourself because you're the main person. I would learn how to say, "Alright, assistant principal, this is your task. Don't try to do everything yourself."

Proper planning, pacing, and balancing. The multiple duties and responsibilities of the novice principalship can be overwhelming and nearly half of participants expressed that having a mentor could have helped them to find balance through proper planning and pacing. Principal Adams came to the realization she needed to find it herself. She recalled bringing work home and said, "I felt so overwhelmed because I did not realize how much there was to do. It was more than I imagined. I had to step back and prioritize things."

Several of the other participants found themselves in a similar position as Principal Adams and explicitly said that a mentor could have helped with this process. Principal Davis recalled being overwhelmed with all there was to do and said:

Well, I think just balancing just the daily routine of trying to figure out, "Okay, you want me to do this? And I've got to do this many evaluations. I've got to turn this report in." I don't know about you, but we have to do a school improvement plan every year. I wasn't involved. I mean, I was, but I wasn't. I was not involved in that process. And I was like, "Oh my God, what do I do? It's a new platform. How do I even begin to even process this?" Because when I was an assistant, I just sat in on the meetings, but I didn't see it all unfold, so I didn't know. Even the evaluation process as far as being a principal and how my county did that, I knew he would always go to this end of the year meeting and have to do all this wonderful stuff to show what he did, but I didn't really do that.

So, when it was like, "This is due, that's due, this is due", and all these documents that I had to ... You know, all these plans that I had to show that, "Yes, we have a plan for this. We have a plan for this ... " Even the safety notebooks, something as simple as that, just going through the process where that had been somebody else's baby, and I didn't really ... I mean, I gave input, but I didn't put it together. I think I was missing the final putting it all together. I was consulted about pieces, but I don't think I ever saw the whole thing done and what was truly being asked of him. I think my principal did some things that I don't think I ... I just didn't know. I mean, that school improvement plan, I knew he had to do it, but I don't think I really knew what was all involved. So, when that started, I was like, "What? We got to do what?"

When asked directly how she could have benefited from mentorship, she said:

I think my balance would be a little bit better as far as planning and scheduling. This is what I'm going to do today because that was my biggest thing. I would just to learn how to multitask, but yet get some things done. I would often feel like I've got this to do. I've

got that to do, and just kind of getting overwhelmed and nothing would get done. So just somebody to just help me focus ongoing, "Okay, this is what you need to do," and just learning how to schedule those things. Just kind of helping with the planning piece of it.

Principal Cooper shared what he could have benefited from hearing a mentor say to help him balance. He said:

I think just that mentor principal being able to say, "Hey, make sure you're taking some time for your family. Here are some ways that I've learned to balance. Here are some ways... You've got to decide, do you want to be a principal for 2 years, or do you want to be a principal for 10 years? If you want to make it to 10 years, you're going to have to pace yourself. You're not going to be able to do everything year one. Here are some ways that map things out over a longer time, what has to be done now. Here are some longer-term goals." Just to kind of say, "Look, I know everything might not be the same at your school, but here's at least a strategy to think through, of how you could look at your scores or how you could work with this teacher," just to give some guidelines.

Much like their peer, three additional principals also felt having a mentor to help them plan out the year would have benefited them. While principal Ferguson felt it would benefit a novice for a mentor to give them a "timeline as early as possible," with things to focus on at different points of the year, Principal Ingram felt it would have benefited him to "be able to really sit down with somebody and line out those big picture things."

Potential increases in student achievement. Three principals, Principals Adams, Davis, and Graves reported maintaining high levels of achievement in their school in their novice years, and Principal Cooper mentioned creating high levels of achievement in a new school setting.

Those who maintained adequate achievement attributed this to being able to retain the same highly quality staff after the previous principal left. In his new school setting, an Early College High, Principal Cooper acknowledge he was also able to hire a high-quality staff.

However, the remaining five principals did report decreases in achievement at some point in their novice years. Principals Henderson and Ingram acknowledged the dip but could not account for why there was a decrease in achievement. Three of the principals however shared their thoughts on seeing a decline in achievement and mentioned that having a mentor may have potentially increased achievement in those novice years.

Principal Ferguson discussed his school's achievement and how a mentor in those initial years may have increased achievement. Principal Ferguson reflected:

Student achievement was very important to me because I knew if I put that way down the list, I wouldn't be here by next year because central office really looks at that and it all worked out for the best. I know our ACT; it dropped and didn't drop drastically. I don't feel it's anyone's fault that it dropped. It's just I don't know how to answer that. Honestly, I do know overall, some subject areas did increase, but I was thinking it was all based on the teachers because they went into those classrooms and put in the time and worked with the kids. I just maintained.

When asked how a having a mentor may have benefited his school, he responded:

A mentor may give an idea that he or she did at their school that really boosts their ACT scores. I might have implemented it at my school, and everybody jumped up three points on their ACT. I mean, that's always a possibility.

Similarly, Principal Davis in the same county saw a decline as well. She recalled:

Our data wasn't great the first year. There were pockets of improvement. Still to this day, it's like ... One year, the first-grade team will rock it out. And then the next year, it's like, "No." And then the next year, the second-grade team may rock it out. So, there were pockets of improvements, but yes, I felt very like, "What are they going to do if this doesn't get better? And how are they going to look at me? And are they going to demote me? "I believe that it (academic achievement) was not my number one priority, even though it should have been because I was tackling behavior and other things that kind of got in, I don't mean in my way, but it kind of did. And so, I felt like academics took a back seat to it and it should have been at the forefront.

When asked how she and her school could have benefited from mentorship, she said, "Hopefully it would've helped me to focus on academic achievement, to do that just a little bit better."

In a priority school in the West Tennessee's District 1, Principal Banks also felt her challenges with achievement may have been helped by having a mentor. She shared:

Student achievement, it was not, how do I say this? Student achievement was important, but it wasn't my top priority. Because as a first-year principal, I see the needs of the student, and the student growth in them... How do I say it? It was important. I wanted them to learn how to read, but at the same time, if you're coming to me and you've been abused, you're coming to me, you don't have the basic needs that you need, I felt like those needed to be met first. I guess I couldn't do... In my mind when I look back, I think it should have been a combination of student achievement and meeting their needs at the same time.

I was only there for two (years). Then the second year, I don't think we even took an assessment. I don't think we did the assessment. But according to the superintendent, at the last year I was there, it didn't grow as he thought it should.

When asked how mentorship could have impacted her and her school, she said:

If I would have had just one single person that I could call on, I feel like we would have collaborated on things that were going well, and that one person, I believe it would have been shared with me. Then, I could have implemented the things in my school. We probably could have seen more student achievement.

Even with maintained achievement Principal Edwards acknowledged, “The kids definitely would benefit from my mentorship because I would implement programs that would help them and help them become better learners.”

Confident novice principals who teachers believe in. Four principals acknowledged that having a mentor would have reassured them and helped to increase their level of confidence. Principal Adams in West Tennessee’s district one recalled a time when her teachers’ reactions decreased her level of confidence.

The first day I felt that way was during a PLC. It was during a PLC when I was presenting. I can't even remember what I was presenting on, but I was presenting on something academic. I could tell what I was presenting was not coming across the way I wanted it to or expected it to, to the faculty. I could tell and I could feel it because I could see the looks on their faces and things like that. I could tell what I was presenting, either they weren't getting it or they ... It's almost as if they were looking at me, like, “She doesn't know what she's doing. She doesn't have a clue what she is doing.” To be honest,

it wasn't that ... Or, "What she's doing, we already did this before." I think that was more along the line.

After reflecting on this situation, she added (in reference to mentorship):

It would have benefited me, personally because I would have been more confident.

During that time, I had no confidence in myself. I wasn't confident at all. I said earlier that I felt very inadequate because that was my first year as head principal and because I felt as if I was thrown there. "You were a good assistant principal for a year, so now, you can be a good principal." No. It doesn't always work out that way. People have to be trained. People have to be groomed. You have to learn. You have to grow into leadership. I felt like I was thrown in there. I think that for me, if that would happen, I would feel more confident in my own abilities and I would be able to then show that confidence.

Teachers would have had more faith in my abilities because that's important. I really do believe that they would have had more faith in me to lead them. I think it would impact my school because my confidence would have rolled off on the teachers' confidence and I would have been able to lead them better.

Much like Principal Adams, Principal Banks in the same district felt a mentor could have helped her to be a more confident leader and impacted her staff's perception of her. She said:

I think if I would have had a mentor, I think my confidence would have been higher. It would have been stronger. I would have been more confident in what I was doing because, I would have had someone to bounce these things off of, before I just made a decision, and then after a decision was made, then call somebody and say, "Hey, I did

this." I think if I would've had someone to talk to and meet with, then I think that would have made me feel more confident about what it was that I was doing.

She later said, "I think my teachers would have benefited from knowing, "Hey, she's meeting with Ms. So and So and we can see the results that are happening at their school, so let's get on board." I think that would have helped."

East Tennessee's district three's Principal Ingram also expressed questioning his abilities and the perception of his staff. He said:

I did question my ability to lead. What was going through my mind at the time? That I was not as smart and capable as my colleagues and that my teachers were going who is this guy who taught elementary school and who's been an assistant principal at high school. I had no credibility with my staff. And so, then what do you do? What are the things that you do to build credibility? How do you do that?

When asked how mentorship would have benefited, he and his school directly, he said, "Just to have that person would have relieved some stress and would have given that assurance at that time that you are looking for."

Better decision making which led to different actions. Seven of the participants acknowledged the weight of decision making during the novicehood of the principalship. Principal Graves acknowledged questioning herself when she made decisions. She said, "It's just when you're brand new, you feel like, "Okay, am I doing it right? Did I say something right or wrong," because you don't want to shoot yourself in the foot when you come into a new building."

Five other principals echoed these sentiments and expressed how having a mentor may have helped them to make better decisions and even aided them in avoiding making some mistakes. Principal Adams recalled a situation in which she would have possibly handled a parent and teacher situation differently if she had a mentor. She recalled:

One mistake was just dealing with parents. I had a parent that came to my office, just going on and on and on about it on and on about a teacher. I don't believe I handled that situation the best that I could have if I had someone to ask for advice. I rushed to give her a decision and I really didn't have to. I really shouldn't have, but I did. I told her, "Okay. Well, I'll move your child out of that classroom," and I really shouldn't have done that because the teacher didn't do anything wrong. I probably should have talked to her and told her, "Let me get back with you." (I should have) put it off and then talk to the teacher and all that, but if I had someone to talk to, then maybe I could have bounced that off of them and probably came to another decision instead of just moving the child out of the teacher's class based on something the parents said. I made several mistakes my first year as a novice principal. I do believe that if I had someone to bounce ideas off or a mentor, things would have worked out a little bit better.

When questioned directly about how mentorship could have benefited her and her school, she reconnected to this situation and continued:

I would have been able to give them better feedback in the classroom, on instruction, on dealing with students, and on dealing with parents. I think it would affect the overall culture of the building if I had that mentorship going my first year because there would have been things that I would have done differently if I had a mentor advising me on

certain things. It would have definitely impacted positively the school, students, just the whole building.

Principal Banks, in the same district agreed mentorship would have likely caused her to “have done some things differently, some things not at all.” Her colleague Principal Cooper said mentoring, “probably would have kept me from making some mistakes. At least it would have given me another option.”

The idea of the mentor consulting the novice mentee and providing other options to consider when making decisions was also perceived to be a benefit by Principal Edwards as he expressed:

I guess it would give me a chance to throw out the idea and having someone to say, "No, you might not want to do that because this could happen," instead of not having anybody and try it and it just goes not well. Then you're the person... Well, you tried it, but you failed. I think having that mentor gives the principal a chance to throw out ideas and at least get feedback before he actually or she actually puts it in play.

Overarching Question of Study: What are the perceived individualized support needs of novice principals in Tennessee?

The participants in this study had strong opinions about who they needed to mentor them in their novice years as well as what types of supports this person should offer. Whereas majority of the participants wanted a mentorship that phased into a more informal model, they all seemed to agree that districts should strongly consider inputs or people and processes or activities during the initiation and cultivation phases of the mentorship. Principal Graves summed up the thoughts of many as she suggested districts should be, “very intentional if they're going to craft a program

like this about who gets to be a mentor, what they do, and what those expectations are because it's a big responsibility. I don't think it should be one that's flippant and taken lightly.” After discussing their needs, participants shared that they perceived having quality principal mentors to support them through meaningful learning experiences in their novice years would have better equipping them to be confident and capable leaders. They also suggested this support would have made them more effective decisions makers that their schools needed to increase student achievement in those early years.

CHAPTER V

Discussions, Implications, and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of the research project. The chapter begins with an overview of the methodology and is followed by a discussion section that explains the findings by addressing how they connect to the previous literature on novice principal mentoring. The discussion section also emphasizes how components of Kram's Mentoring Model can be seen within the findings. Next, this chapter uses both the Program Theory and Mentoring Model to make implications for practitioners and policy makers. Finally, this chapter develops recommendations for policy makers and practitioners, along with suggestions for future research.

Overview of the Research Methodology

This qualitative research study was conducted to assess the support needs of novice Tennessee principals. The study examined both perceived needs as well as their perceptions of how such mentorship might benefited principals in their novice years. Participants were a purposeful snowball sampling of nine Tennessee administrators in their 4th to 5th year of the profession who were not offered a formal mentorship program in year one to three of the profession. The researcher used a case study design to conduct one on one semi-structured interviews with participants who had recently exited their novice years and were able to reflect on what they needed during this time. The following overarching research question guided the study: What are the perceived individualized support needs of novice principals in Tennessee?

Two sub questions supplemented this question:

1. What are the perceptions of support needed to meet the challenges presented in the novice years of the principalship?

2. What are principals' perceived outcomes for themselves, their students, and their districts as a result of implementing formal mentorship and ongoing support for novice principals?

Discussion of Findings

This section interprets and analyzes the results of this research study. The discussion is organized by themes to address the purpose of this study using components of Kram's Mentoring Model and the Program Theory. Additionally, the discussion presents unintended findings and connects the findings to the review of literature.

Due to semi-structured nature of the interviews data emerged that allowed the researcher a means to build background on the participants. Unintended emerging data explained why such support was needed for novice Tennessee principals. A discussion of this data precedes the data which addresses the research questions.

Context of the Novicehood

The findings of the qualitative study assert that the transition to the principalship came with challenges that may overwhelm novice principals as six participants admitted they were unaware of some of the responsibilities of the role. Studies suggest that novice principals across the nation also face similar challenges as they transitioned into the role (Bayar, 2016; Daresh & Capasso, 2002; Spillane & Lee, 2014) Like principals in Hall's (2008) study who reached out to obtain support, the Tennessee principals in this study also sought help to navigate this pivotal time in their career rather than being overcome by the challenges and responsibilities.

Because three principals in the selected West Tennessee district were paired with principals who were pre-occupied with their own schools, they often asked for help from fellow colleagues or district office supervisors. Suggested mentorships in this district were not properly

initiated and therefore did not enter the cultivation phase. Like the West Tennessee principals, Principal Davis in Middle Tennessee also sought help from fellow colleagues and district office officials. Three other principals, two in Middle Tennessee and one East Tennessee sought the help of former or current principals with whom they had a pre-existing relationship. Given some form of steady support, principals in East Tennessee did credit their assigned supervisors with being available to assist them when needed. However, there were times in which those who did reach out to supervisors or those at district office were concerned with soliciting help too often or appearing as if they did not know what they were doing. This is consistent with findings by Robbins and Alvey (2004) that found that new principals do not want needing help to be seen as a sign of weakness.

When questioned as to why they believed novice teachers often received formal mentorship, yet they were not afforded this same opportunity, these participants largely felt that those in leadership either felt they were capable because they had many years of experience or because they were effective assistant principals. Although each participant in this study had spent many years in education, they expressed that as the assistant they were unaware of many of the responsibilities handled by their principals. Like the novice principals in the Tennessee Research Education Alliance (2018) who said there was not a single area of the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards in which they were prepared when entering the principalship, Principal Davis expressed feeling, “shell shocked,” when she realized just how much was actually expected of her. Because of this feeling, many participants indicated new principals need mentorship during their novice years despite their effectiveness as an assistant principal or their number of years in the field.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of support needed to meet the challenges presented in the novice years of the principalship?

Twelve themes emerged based on the perceived support needs of novice principals in order to meet the challenges they face in their novice years. Six of the themes pertained to potential program inputs.

Perceived Needed Inputs for Novice Principal Mentorship Programs

While all participants expressed gratitude for their supervisors, a desire to talk with someone who was not in a supervisory role emerged as the first theme. Six participants generally felt novice principals may be more comfortable in a mentorship with someone who did not evaluate them. Hernandez and Menchaca (2011) agreed with these participants and stated that mentorship is not the same as supervision or to be provided by those who evaluate the mentee. Daresh (2011) found there may be limitations on open conversations with mentors who serve in a supervisory role. However, while it may not be recommended these mentors be supervisors, Lovely (2004) suggested mentors may work at a district office because these individuals have access to a wealth of resources and may be able to mentor in a non-judgmental manner.

Eight participants also expressed they needed mentorship from experienced, knowledgeable, and effective leaders whose experiences could help them reach similar success. Two participants specifically suggested that these mentors, while already knowledgeable in the field, also be trained as mentors. To agree with this perception, Sutchter et al. (2017) found districts make a mistake when they do not properly train mentors. Studies included in the review of literature support the idea that principal mentors should be trained. James-Ward's (2011) study included mentors, who met monthly with district personnel to gain clarity on initiatives,

collaborated with one another, and read literature on blended coaching strategies to strengthen their own practices while mentors in Lochmiller's (2014) study attended a 3-day training on blended coaching in order to effectively support novice principals. Whereas most participants mentioned having one knowledgeable mentor, Principal D referenced mentoring by multiple people who had expertise in various areas. This practice aligns with Haggard's (2011) group mentoring and Montgomery and Page's (2018) network mentoring where multiple mentors support a single mentee.

Considering that some principals preferred current administrators, many participants acknowledged how busy they are as principals. Because of this, they found retired principals who had retired within five years, still learning, and invested in the field, acceptable mentors. James- Ward's (2011) study reinforces this idea as it focused on sixteen former principals who further developed themselves to mentor and support novice principals. Whether retired or current, all participants agreed that they wanted a mentor close to the principal seat.

Ensuring that mentors were willing to give of their time emerged as a theme as six participants mentioned this directly. Four principal participants also expressed that this was of importance as they often felt they were bothering those that they reached out to for help in their novice years. Suited to be more giving of their time, Bloom et al. (2003) suggested the use of more formal mentors who are less concerned with their own job expectations and are therefore more willing to give of their time. Lovely (2004) similarly found that mentors that come from outside of the district do not have constraints that prevent them from being able to meet with the novice.

More than half of the participants also strongly felt the pairing of the mentor and mentee should not be done without consideration of the personalities of the two participants. Therefore,

an additional theme of properly matching of participants emerged. Oplakta and Lapidot's (2017) study of twelve novice principals confirmed properly matching novice and mentee based on their emotional and educational needs is of extreme importance.

Connected to proper pairing, six participants expressed the need for mentors who had experience leading schools similar to the ones that the participants were placed in whether it be high needs, international baccalaureate, pre-K, elementary, middle, or high. Participants desired help from mentors who had knowledge of navigating what they were facing. This corresponds with Sutchter et al. (2017) work that acknowledges the New Leaders' program implemented in several states which has worked to pair novices with mentors who have similar demographics of both the mentee and their school. Although not directly, mentioned by any participants, McDonald et al.'s (2019) study found that when similarities are not present, the mentee may not be receptive to advice. In the case of novices in this study who had no one in their district with a similar situation as them, there was still a desire for someone with that same experience. In these cases, cross organizational mentoring as referenced by Haggard et al (2011) and Postlethwaite & Harwell-Schaffer (2019) would have been beneficial.

Perceived Needed Processes for Novice Principal Mentorship Programs

Six additional perceived needs regarded processes of potential programs. Of importance to seven participants was building a strong trusting relationship with the mentor in the initiation phase of mentorship. Participants expressed building this foundation would make their work together far more productive. Even those who had pre-established relationships with their informal mentors credited knowing this person was why they could seek them comfortably. The Presidential Task Force of the American Psychological Association (2006) agreed with the participants and found that the psychological functioning of mentorship can only serve its

purpose after the pair establishes an interpersonal relationship. Cohen (1996) added to this idea agreeing that trust must be established before a mentor can make comforting or critiquing comments that are accepted by the novice. Hays (1995), Kram (1993), and Lewis (1996) refer to this bonding time in the initiation phase of mentorship as a positive start to the relationship.

As an additional process in the initiation phases, seven participants expressed they needed opportunities to hear their mentor share their experiences, words of wisdom, and mistakes. To detail this theme, participants expressed they wanted forewarnings of potential things that could go wrong although they knew their situations may be different. To relieve some of the pressure they felt, there seemed to be a need for participants to know that their highly effective mentors were imperfect people who reached success. Both Kram (1983) and the Presidential Task Force of the American Psychological Association (2006) agree that during initial stage of mentorship the mentor serves as a role model for the novice and sharing their experiences can help shape the career of the novice.

Once the foundation of a mentorship was built and the mentorship entered the cultivation phase, six participants suggested they needed quality time their mentors so that they had opportunities to shadow them and observe them model best practices. Other activities desired included their mentors visiting the novice principals' schools, observing them in action, and then coaching them through feedback. This aligns with Sutchter et al.'s (2017) strong advocating that novice principals become engaged in meaningful and authentic learning experiences with their mentor who also serves in the role of a coach. In this study, mentors visited classrooms with mentees, gather observations, and helped mentees plan next steps. Novice principals were also able to implement things they saw modeled by their strong instructional mentor into their own practices.

Seven participants' voices allowed the researcher to capture the need for honest feedback when they did share their thoughts or actions with their mentor. This was only desired after the mentor had truly listened. Norton (2003) and Hall (2008) agree that good mentors do not simply tell mentees what to do, but instead they listen and then ask questions that help the mentee or novice think through situations. Similarly, Brockbank and McGill (2012) found that as a part of developmental mentoring, novices engage in reflective dialogue as the mentor listens and shows empathy before giving feedback.

The length of time the mentorship lasts emerged as of importance to all nine of the former novice principals. Participants suggested they needed support for a minimum of two to three years and felt that a mentorship if done effectively, it should never end. They believed it instead evolves into a different more collegial relationship. The minimum time requested by these participants is on the lower end of the timeframe suggested by Kram's (1983) mentoring model as the model can last anywhere from three to eight years, with the initiation phase being six months to one year, the cultivation phase lasting two to five years and separation lasting six months to two years. Programs included in the literature review included Vermont that requires their novice principals have two years of mentorship (Gimbel & Kefor, 2018) and a three-year program in which each year has a different focus, which moved from instructional to facilitative and then to a community of practice coaching (Lochmiller, 2014). Without detailing a specific number of years, principals in Simieou et al.'s (2010) study were required to meet twice a month, and principals in Gwinnet County, Georgia were required to meet with their mentor 4 hours monthly (Gill, 2019).

A final theme emerged suggesting that while a few principals liked the formality of a structured program, they along with several others, recommend a structured start that moves to a

more informal mentorship as the relationship matures. This would prevent the program from feeling like a checklist or one more thing to do. Contrary to the perception of the principals in this study, research suggests the principal mentorship be a more formal structured process. To support the idea of need for formal mentorship, Gettys, Martin, and Bigby's (2010) qualitative study of six Missouri novice principals suggested the district and state programs offered did not help with instructional leadership. Participants from this study mentioned they needed regular communication, proper matching to build trusting relationships, specified amounts of time allotted for mentoring, established guidelines, and techniques for observation and feedback. Gumus' (2014) qualitative study of seven novice principals and seven experienced principal mentors also found regular scheduled formal school visits were impactful in supporting the novice principal.

While these studies urge the implementation of formal programs, it is acknowledged that 40 empirical studies on mentorship supported the thinking of some participants in this study and found that there could be a lack of time for novice principals to participate in such programs (Hansford and Elrich, 2006). Additionally, Bauer & Brazer (2013) study of 86 principals found mentorship support could be seen as burdensome and intensify the novice's workload if a prescribed program is implemented. Considering benefits and drawbacks, a mentorship program which includes three phases, instructional in year one, facilitative in year two, and then a community of practice in year three, such as the one in which novice principals were engaged in Lochmiller's (2014) study may be more suitable for novice Tennessee principals.

Research Question 2: What are principals' perceived outcomes for themselves, their students, and their districts as a result of implementing formal mentorship and ongoing support for novice principals?

Perceived Outcomes of Novice Principal Mentorship Programs

Although none of the participants participated in a formal structured program, they were asked to share their thoughts on what they perceived the benefits or outcomes of such a program may have been if it were offered to them or other novice Tennessee principals. Five themes emerged with the first being that mentorship could have helped them to better plan, pace themselves, and balance the multiple roles that the principal holds. Participants believed having someone who had done it before would allow for this person to guide them in not taking on so much at one time and instead help them to look at the big picture while taking smaller steps. Gill's (2019) study, which included Principal Welch in Gwinnett County Georgia, supported the idea that mentors can slow the novice principal down so that they can consider their new school setting and take small actionable steps.

A second theme of encouragement of shared leadership emerged when participants shared the weight they had on their shoulders as new leaders. Participants felt a mentor could have shown them how to engage others in shared leadership opportunities by delegating some responsibilities instead of trying to do everything on their own. This reinforces the idea presented by Yirci and Kocabas (2010) that mentorship in the novice years reduces stress that these new leaders experience.

The perceptions that mentorship would have helped participants make better decisions which could have led to different actions resulted in a third theme. After reflecting on their mistakes, participants felt having someone to think through things with may have given them different options when making major decisions, and as a result their actions may have been different. Principals in Gimbel and Kefor's (2018) study proved this belief to be possible as they

credited their mentor during their novice years with asking great questions that caused them to think deeply and make better decisions because of their coaching.

Directly connected to better decision making, a fourth theme emerged that suggested mentorship may have benefited these principals by making them more confident leaders. Participants shared their thoughts on teachers' perceptions of them in those novice years and expressed that mentorship could have helped them feel more confident if they modeled themselves after their mentor. Affirmations of their thinking and actions during this time would have also built these new leaders' confidence in their early years. As a result, they perceived this could have caused teachers to believe in their abilities to lead sooner increasing teacher buy in during their early career. This aligns with research by Von Frank (2012) and Yirci and Kocabas (2010) that affirms that mentorship has the potential to strengthen novice principals' self-esteem and builds their confidence as new leaders. Kram (1983) and Kram and Isabella (1985) suggests that the psychological functioning of the mentoring model provides the mentee with affirmation and confirmation that is needed in their novice years helping the novice to gain confidence.

Lastly, although increasing academic achievement is a common goal of all school leaders, in some cases principals in this study shared that achievement declined or was not their initial focus. Miller (2013) confirmed achievement often declines in the first two years of the principalship. Because of this, as a final theme, some participants felt with the guidance and support of a mentor, achievement could have potentially increased. As these principals believed, studies included in the review of literature showed achievement has increased when mentorship was offered to novice principals (Augustine-Shaw & Liang, 2016; Jones & Larwin, 2015; Miller, 2013; NAESP, 2013; Saban & Wolfe, 2009; Von Frank, 2012).

Implications for Theory

Chapter II included research on current novice principal mentorship programs and introduced the reader to Suchman's Program Theory and Kram's Mentorship Model. The connection between the perceived needs of Tennessee novice principals and both Suchman's Program Theory and Kram's Mentoring Model discovered in this study are discussed in the following sections.

Kram's Mentoring Model and 21st Century Critiques

Kram's (1983) Mentoring Model suggested that mentoring progresses through 4 distinct phases: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition. In this study, participants who recently exited their novice years indicated that they needed a relationship with a mentor with whom there was a trusting relationship built in the initiation phase of the mentorship. Participants also suggested multiple processes or activities in what would have been the cultivation phases of a mentorship. Suggested activities included regular meetings with their mentor in order for them to share words of wisdom and potential pitfalls for the novices, opportunities to observe a mentor model best practices, and time for the mentor to visit their schools, observe their practice, and provide honest feedback. Participants indicated that the relationship would eventually be redefined and there was a consensus that separation of the relationship should not begin until the relationship had been established for at least two to three years. The results of this study align with Kram's Mentoring Model and suggests that mentorship should progress gradually through distinct phases.

Additionally, Kram (1985) suggests that mentoring serves two functions for the novice, career and psychological. As indicated in the perceived benefits of this study, participants

believed that mentorship could have benefited them psychologically and made them more confident leaders that their teachers could have believed in earlier in their careers. It was also deemed that mentorship could have helped them to make better decisions and led to different actions if they had someone with whom they could have talked things through. As a career function, participants perceived that mentorship could have helped them with planning, pacing, and balancing so that they were less overwhelmed with the many responsibilities of the role. To further help with their new career, participants also believed mentorship could have helped them to better involve others in the leadership process and this support could also potentially led to increases in achievement.

Twenty first century critiques of the theory suggest that while those new to the profession often turn to an assigned mentor, it is also common for novices to utilize a network of mentors as well (Kram & Higgins, 2008). Within this study, because a mentor was not assigned, some participants sought the help of multiple people and created their own network, and one participant mentioned that she would not be opposed to having multiple mentors with expertise in various areas to support her during those novice years. Within this study, there were also several participants who needed mentorship from someone who had led a similar school to theirs. Because there was no such person in their district, advances in mentoring allowed for cross organizational mentoring, where mentors from outside of the organization can mentor novices offering a more objective perspective (Haggard et al., 2011; Postlethwaite & Harwell-Schaffer, 2019).

Adding to Kram's theory, Brockbank and McGill's (2012) suggested four approaches to mentoring, one of which included developmental mentoring where mentees are transformed through internal and external coaching. This process includes reflective dialogue about what the

mentee is learning, application of that knowledge, and allowing them to express how they feel during the process. In this study, participants expressed that they wanted to listen to, observe, and learn from their mentor in order to apply this knowledge. Participants also expressed they were open to feedback after the mentor listened to them reflect. This aligns with advancements in the theory.

The work of McDonald et al. (2009), which continues to advance Kram's theory, suggested that life experiences of the mentor and mentee impact their relationship with one another and can be a key factor in whether learning can take place. In this study, participants not only saw a need for proper matching, but they also highly suggested that they or other Tennessee principals are mentored by principals who have similarities to them such as similar school setting. Whereas the review of literature also suggested a need for mentor and mentee to share the same sex, race, and similar social background, this was not mentioned by any of the participants.

Program Theory

Suchman (1967) and W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) suggest that the condition of the problem prior to the implementation of the program, the intervention from start to end, and the program's outcomes determine the success of any such program. In the case of this study, the problem was that principals entering the novicehood of the profession found themselves unaware of the many challenges and tasks they would face and needed guidance as they navigated those novice years. Many participants expressed they believed the perception of district leaders was they that were capable of navigating those years without formal mentorship. This belief was associated with the fact that these novices had many years of experience in education and were effective assistant principals.

Because the participants who participated in this study were from districts that did not have formal mentorship programs, the data gathered from them could be used to make implications for a program theory. Whereas the program theory was originally used to evaluate performance measures, McCawley (2001) and Suchman (1967) acknowledged it has evolved into a planning model. Program theory plans services, determines needed resources, (Wilder Research, 2009) and helps planners see the relationship between actions and results (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013). The logical model, which is a pictorial representation of the program theory, suggests that the problem the program intends to resolve is linked to the program's inputs, which are then linked to the program's activities. These activities are linked to the program's outputs and outcomes. In the case of this study, participants indicated the need for a more complex program theory, seeing that there were multiple inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes (Bossen, et al., 2018).

In the initial phase of program development, inputs such as human and physical resources, equipment, facilities, skills, curriculum, and time commitments are to be considered (McCawley, 2011; McNamara, 2017). Program inputs for the model needed to meet the needs of participants would include recently non-supervisory retired principals or current principals who are willing to give of their already busy time. Because this is an extra duty, district leaders must consider compensation for mentor participation. As mentioned in the review of literature, districts who have developed programs have prepared budgets to fund the mentorship of novice principals (Gill, 2019; Lochmiller, 2014; Vilanni, 2006). If Tennessee districts are to also train these mentors such as those in James-Ward (2011) and Lochmiller (2014) studies, who engaged in dialogue with colleagues, training, and reading of literature, the cost of curriculum and facilities for the training must also be considered. As an additional input, skill sets of the

principal mentors must be considered. Participants in this study desired principal mentors who were proven experienced, effective, and knowledgeable principals themselves with a record of accomplishment in leading their building to academic achievement.

Proper pairing and time commitments of both mentor and novice principals should also be considered as inputs. When selecting the human resources who would be inputs of the program, participants wanted program developers to take needed time to properly pair the principal mentor and mentee. Careful consideration was needed to make certain that the mentor and mentee shared similar school settings. Whereas a few participants did not want any additional meetings as a novice principal, several participants wanted regular meetings with their mentee. In addition to time commitments for the mentor who will need training, time commitments for meetings between the mentor and novice, which may range from weekly, bi-weekly to monthly depending on the needs of the novice, should be considered as input.

Limiting factors such as major influences, laws, attitudes, and lack of resources must also be acknowledged (2004 McNamara, 2017; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Within this study, participants indicated the lack of time to participate with so many other meetings and a lack of mentors who are willing to give of their time. Also, a limiting factor might be the idea that time and energy may not be placed into such a program because of the perceived abilities of these new leaders and the idea that there are already supervisors in place to do this work.

With inputs available, participants also suggested several processes or activities that they felt would lead to the transformation of the novice principal and help them better serve in their role (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; Sharpe, 2011; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). As a beginning action these former novices perceived a strong need for time to build a trusting relationship with their mentor. During initiation phase of the mentorship, they wanted time to

get to know their mentor in order to feel comfortable talking to them later about matters that regarded their position. Participants perceived they needed time to hear about the experiences of their mentor including mistakes they made and experiences they had in or to avoid making the same mistakes and potentially apply the lesson they learned to their own similar situations. In addition to listening to their mentors' experiences, there was a perceived need for quality time with the mentor where the novice observed them model best practices, the mentor visited the novice school to observe them in action potentially implementing things learned from the mentor, and then the mentor could coach the novice and provide feedback. Participants also desired honest feedback from their mentors after observations or conversations where they truly listened to the mentor reflect.

Outputs, or noticeable results, from this study would be a certain number of novice mentored principals, a certain number of hours spent, and records of meetings and activities conducted between the two participants (McCawley, 2001; McNamara, 2017). These outputs would lead to potential outcomes or changes in the participants' awareness, knowledge, skill set, or behavior that would benefit their schools (Knowlton & Phillips, 2013; McNamara, 2017; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004). Perceived outcomes if mentorship was offered to participants in this study would have been proper planning, pacing, and balance, shared leadership opportunities, being perceived as confident leaders, increasing teacher buy in, better decision making and different actions, and potential increases in student achievement.

While program theory addresses, short, intermediate and long-term goals of programs (McCawley, 2001; Wilder Research, 2009; W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004), participants in this study felt that goals could be met for novice principals in the short-term range within 3 years. Program Theory states that programs with long term goal setting effects the community, and

while participants did suggest the nature of the relationship between the novice and mentor changes, none spoke about the impact that a longer-lived program may have on the school and the community if the program or support lasted longer.

Because the Program Theory and logic models in their pictorial form are underlying assumptions about how programs work, they utilize an if-then system of presenting a potential program (Wilder Research, 2009, W.K. Kellogg, 2004). Therefore, it can be assumed that if the said inputs above are provided, the said processes above can take place for novice principals in Tennessee districts, then there will be a resulting change in the skill sets and behaviors of these principals. The districts planned novice principal mentorship program must support these new leaders in transitioning and successfully navigating their new role.

Implications for Practice

The results of this study prove that many Tennessee school districts' policies may not be as progressive as the 21 states across, who are using ESSA funds for the purpose of induction of novice principals (New Leaders, 2018). It is also to be noted that prior to ESSA, Tennessee was also the second state to receive Race to the Top funds in which one of the initiatives four goals was to develop leaders in becoming more effective in their practices (Horsford, 2017; White House, 2016), yet many districts have not prioritized needs-based leadership development such as mentorship. Whereas sixteen counties in Tennessee were awarded leadership development principal pipeline grants by the state of Tennessee in order to create a bridge from the university to the workplace for new leaders in 2016 (Tennessee Department of Education, 2017), many districts still do not provide formal mentorship programs for new principals like they do for new teachers.

If new principals are expected to meet the same demands as veteran principals increasing student achievement and creating a culture for teaching and learning, districts in Tennessee should consider reasonable means of support for these new leaders as they transition into their role and navigate their novice years. To begin development of needed mentorship programs for novice principals in Tennessee school districts where there are not such programs of support in place, stakeholders must be engaged in the development process after a need is established.

Bossen et al. (2018) suggests that a small group of stakeholders become involved in the planning process. This group should come to a consensus about their beliefs about the program, what processes they believe should be included, and the potential outcomes of the program. In the case of this research, the participants in this study are used to make implications for a generic novice principal mentorship for districts in Tennessee. In the development of an actual district-based novice principal mentorship program, it is suggested that the designated principal mentors, district level personnel, and the director of schools are stakeholders because those involved in the plan are better able to carry out their duties if they are a part of the program development. Program developers can also train those who will participate if they have a full understanding of the program (Sharpe, 2011).

What follows is a program theory for novice principal mentorship for Tennessee school districts using the data from the review of literature and chapter four of this study. The program theory is followed by a pictorial logic model.

Determine the problems facing novice principals. According to this study, eight of the novice principals interviewed did not feel properly prepared for the huge shift from the assistant principal seat to the principal seat. Many were unaware of the responsibilities that their principals handled. Participants also stated that they sought the help of various people and at

times hesitated because they felt as if they were bothering those who had the answers, or they did not want to appear as if did not know how to complete the tasks they were expected to perform. Additionally, participants in this study acknowledged support is offered to new teachers, but this same support is not offered to them due to the perception that their years of experience in the field of education or their success as an assistant principal paints the picture that they do not need formal mentorship. Although it was not mentioned directly in this study, and while all the participants in this study progressed past their novice years, Grissom and Bartanen (2018) suggested that by year three, nearly a third of all Tennessee principals leave their school and seven percent leave the profession.

Set program objectives. Based on the problems articulated by the principals in this study across the state of Tennessee this program would need the following objectives:

- Provide a single effective principal mentor or defined support system of principal mentors who are willing to coach and facilitate reflective learning that will help the novice principal in leading his or her school
- Support the novice principal into transitioning and navigating the novice years of the principalship successfully
- Offer learning opportunities, such as conversations, modeling, observations, and feedback to promote the career development and psychological security of novice principals
- Retain and strengthen the leadership practices of novice Tennessee principals

Determine program inputs. According to the study, program participants suggested one of the major inputs for a novice mentorship program be the selection of quality effective

principal mentors, who are either currently in the principal seat or recently retired within five years and continuing to learn advances in the field. Those selected will not need to serve in a supervisory or evaluation role above the mentor unless there is a pre-existing relationship. If the principal mentor is currently serving, consideration must be given to whether the principal has the capability and willingness to lead their own school and spending time mentoring a novice. Mentors should be selected in a manner in which their tenure as a principal is examined and there is evidence of their effectiveness leading a staff to help students reach academic achievement. The literature suggests that tools such as the Mentoring Identification Instrument used so it identifies skills within the mentor that will help to develop the mentee (Gesimar et al., 2000). It is key that selection of these individuals is impartial so that quality candidates are selected and not those who simply have a connection of favoritism with central office officials.

In addition to selecting quality and capable mentors, it is vital that mentors are properly paired with a mentor whose personality, sex, race, social circumstance, and school demographics are similar to theirs. This will increase the chances that the novice principal mentee is receptive to feedback from the mentor and the relationship leads to benefits for the novice and their school. Districts may also want to consider when possible pairing principals with effective leaders with whom they have pre-existing relationships with, for example, one's former principal, as some of the principals in this study informally paired themselves with such parties when they were not formally assigned a mentor. Consideration should be given to allowing novice principals to select their own mentor from a list of qualified mentors provided by the district seeing that many participants in this study did so naturally when one was not assigned to them. When a mentor within the district does not fit the criteria needed to mentor a novice, cross organizational

mentoring must be considered. Therefore, there the district should have connections to surrounding districts who are willing to share human resources.

Additional inputs program planners must consider are funding, time, and facilities needed to provide such a program. Salaries or stipends for mentors must be determined using ESSA funds. Gill (2019) estimated that funding can cost upwards of \$14,000 per novice principal. Funding should also be allotted for materials such as curriculum that will be used to train novice principal mentors. Authentic literature on blending mentoring strategies should be considered as it was a common practice of principal mentors in the review of literature (James-Ward, 2011). Time factors to plan for include the time mentors will devote to being trained as well as the time that mentors and novice mentees will spend together engaging in processes of the program. Lastly while majority of the time spent between the pair will be in one of their school buildings, facilities for training mentors as well as used for collective meetings of mentors and novices such as the rooms within the central office should be reserved prior to starting the program.

Determine programs processes and activities. In order for a program to be sustained, the initiation phase of the mentorship must begin with the involved parties developing a trusting relationship with a strong foundation. If the mentor offered is one who serves in a non-supervisory role, is willing, and the participants are properly paired this trusting foundation is more likely to be established. This trusting foundation should be formed during the first 6 months to a year of the mentorship as the mentor and novice spend time getting to know one another. During this time, the mentor can learn the needs of the mentor and share some of their experiences helping the novice to see that they are an imperfect person who has made mistakes prior to reaching success as a school leader. While the time together should be scheduled, this should be done in a very informal relaxed manner. This time together will enlighten novice

principals on potential pit falls or challenging situations and give them insight on how to handle situation even if they are not exactly the same as their mentor's experience.

Once this relationship is established, cultivation of the novice's experiences with the mentor should begin. Opportunities for quality time that allows the mentor to view their mentor as a role model must be allowed. The novice should be allowed time to leave their school to observe their mentor demonstrate best practices that lead to positive climate and culture as well as instructional practices that lead to increases in student achievement. In order for the novice to have this time with their mentor, there should be allotted time for the novice to shadow the mentor as they lead professional learning communities at their schools, conduct walkthroughs and observations and coaching conversations with teachers. After observing or shadowing the mentor, the novice is likely to apply some of the things learned to their school setting.

There must also be opportunities for the mentor principals to come to the novice's school to observe them. After the observation, open honest feedback can be given to the novice in a non-threatening manner so that it might be used to strengthen their leadership skills. It is of utmost importance that things shared are not reported back to central office as a means of breaking confidentiality between the novice and the mentor.

Allowing enough time for the relationship to be cultivated before separation will play a key role in reaching the intended outcomes of the program. As stated by participants in this study and supported by the literature the cultivation should last a minimum of 2 years (Kram, 1983 & Gimbel & Kefor, 2018), while some programs may continue into a third year (Lochmiller, 2014). Designating a required number of hours or meetings during the school year should also be considered. Expectations for the number of required meeting hours in the review of literature ranged from 4 hours per month (Gill, 2019) to biweekly (Simieou et al., 2010).

Other programs hours range from 165 to 632 hours (Malone, 2001). Given a broad range districts should select a reasonable number of hours for both the mentor and the novice.

Whereas research studies in the review of literature advocated for more formal programs in order for participants to see intended outcomes (Gettys et al., 2010; Gumus, 2014), it is suggested based on the data gathered from this study that programs start formally offering support to all novice principals. Then based on the needs and outcomes of the principal performance, the mentorship may remain formal and structured, or at a given point it may become less formal and structured moving into a more informal program where the participants meet less often or as needed. This is to be determined by the district, mentor, and novice using data that indicates whether intended outcomes have been met at the end of year one or two.

Even if released formally, the mentor would still be a resource for the novice throughout the remainder of their novice years and into the formal separation of the relationship. Districts should consider phases of mentorship that the novice should move through that might lead them to becoming a professional in the field. For example, as in Lochmiller (2014)) each year one through three may focus on a different type of coaching and mentoring beginning with instructional more formal mentorship, moving to facilitative less formal mentorship, and then a community of practice where novices join other principals and share and receive ideas. During this time, the principal mentor could still be available as needed to counsel the novice.

Determine program outputs. As not to overwhelm the novice with a check list of requirements to meet, it is recommended that quantifiable outputs of the program consist of the number of novices served through the program, a record of the meetings and activities conducted between the mentor and novice, and a tabulated specified minimum yet reasonable number of

hours set for years one, two, and three. These hours should be adjusted and reduced or increased each year based on the need of the novice principal.

Determine program outcomes. Given that more individualized support is offered to principals throughout their novice years, the planned program should yield certain outcomes for these new principals, their districts, schools, and students. Intended outcomes that could result from taking part in the processes offered through a mentorship program include leveraging the strength of others and engaging others in shared leadership opportunities. This would help principals avoid becoming overwhelmed with taking on so many responsibilities themselves and build positive relationships staff. The help of a mentor would also assist the novice in planning for the school year, pacing themselves to accomplish tasks in a reasonable timeframe, and balancing the many expectations the novice principal must manage. Proper planning, pacing, and balance will help with the overall operations of the school and allow the principal to focus on instructional leadership more often.

Instructional leadership opportunities cannot be sufficed because novice principals are challenged with increasing students' achievement in their schools. Although, Miller (2013) found that achievement declines in a principal's novice years, mentorship could help these new leaders combat the decline. Mentors can share strategies to help the new leaders such as those in this study remember that they are instructional leaders who need to keep an instructional focus. Because mentors share their experiences and offer a listening ear as new leaders reflect, novices will likely make better and more informed decisions that lead to different actions. When teachers see the confidence of these new leaders who are coached and affirmed in their actions by more veteran school leaders, teacher will more likely buy in to the vision and requests of these new leaders resulting in a more conducive climate and culture for teaching and learning.

Logic Model of Novice Principal Mentorship Program

The original theoretical framework for this study was Kram's Mentoring Model and 21st Century critiques and advances to the concept were also examined. In addition to this framework, this study also reviewed the literature using Suchman's Program theory. The findings of this study led the researcher to merge the two together to develop a potential program theory for a novice principal mentorship program to be used in Tennessee school districts. The framework that follows captures the scope of the program. It includes the problems novice principals face that would lead to the development of a novice principal mentorship program, the program's specific objectives based on the communicated problems, the program's proposed inputs, processes, observable outputs, and expected outcomes. The logic model that follows places the program theory for the recommended novice principal mentorship program into pictorial form and represents the findings.

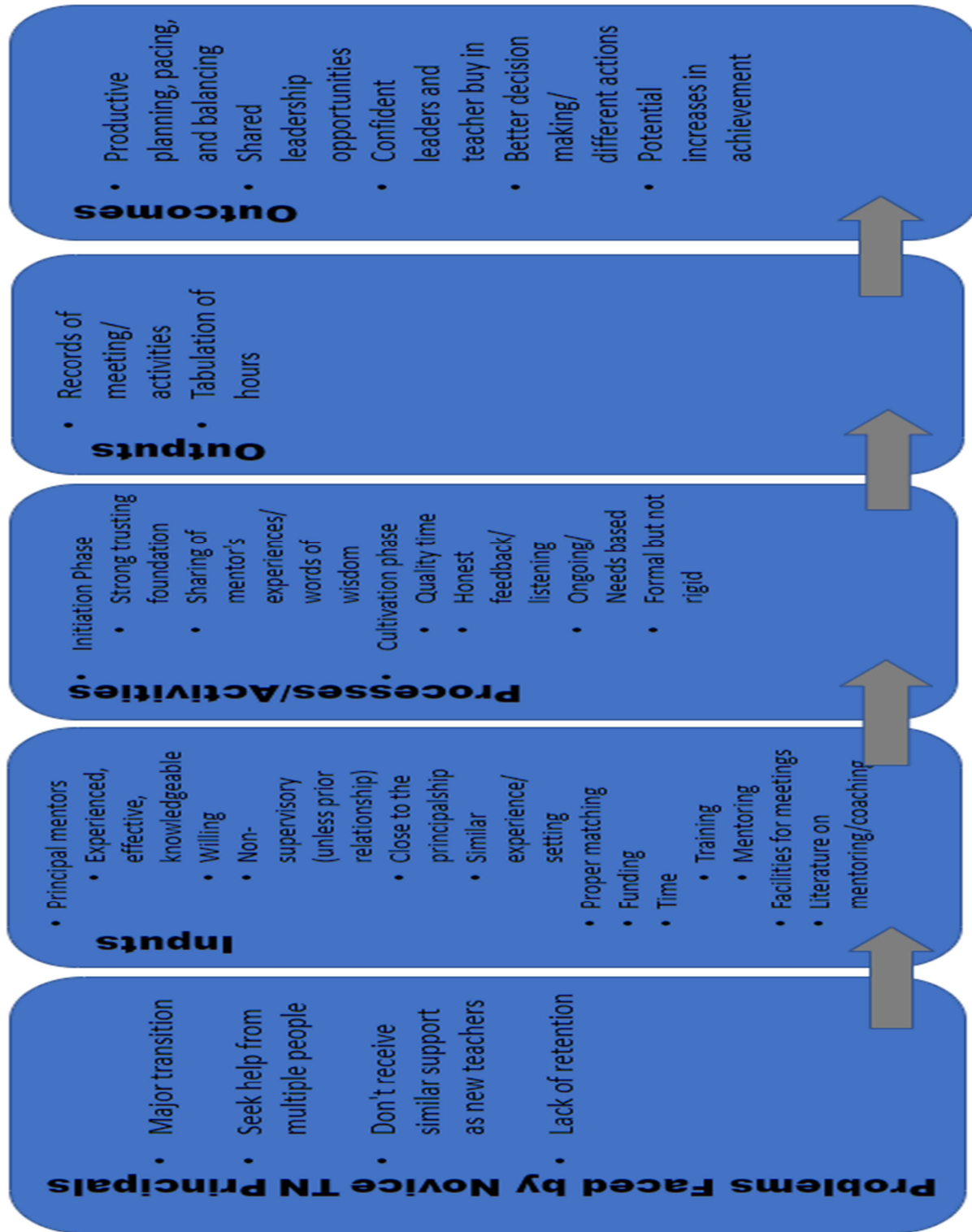


Figure 1

Logic Model for Novice Principal Mentorship Programs in Tennessee School Districts

Limitations

Limitations of a study concern the internal and external validity of the study and include validity of things such as sample size, the data collection process, and timeframe of studies used in the review of literature that led the researcher to establish there is a gap (Connelly, 2013). It should be considered, there are 145 school districts in Tennessee, therefore the sample size of nine principals from three districts should be considered as a limitation. The data collection process should also be considered because the presence of the researcher, who is a principal in the fifth year of the profession, should be considered. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, interviews are limited to being conducted through an electronic format. These factors should be taken into consideration as to identify under which conditions this study should be interpreted.

Recommendations for Policy and Practice

This section conveys the recommendations for educational practitioners and policy makers. The recommendations that follow are based on the context of this study. This study used a sampling of three principals from one district in each of the three regions of the state. Stakeholders should consider the unique context of their district as they read the study's findings and recommendations. The first two recommendations regard policy while the last four recommendations regard practice.

1. Recommendations for state education officials. Seeing that 21 states are currently using ESSA funds to induct and support novice principals, State of Tennessee education officials should observe how other states are utilizing these funds. With high attrition rates of Tennessee principals by year three, there must be a statewide initiative to reduce turnover that can impact student achievement. Highly recommending novice principal support, such as that given to

teachers, or even providing a mentoring framework for such a program could potentially help retain novice principals in their roles. Because Race to the Top initially and now ESSA calls for the support of school leaders so that they might strengthen their leadership abilities, state officials should offer guidance on how ESSA funds can be used to specifically support new principals as they enter the field.

2. Recommendations for directors of schools. According to NAESP & NASSP (2003) superintendents acknowledged mentorship support was not available for many new leaders. This is despite the fact that principals have an indirect effect on improvements in student achievement (Dhuey and Smith, 2014). With this knowledge, it is recommended that superintendents prioritize policy establishment that regards professional development for these new leaders. Additionally, the director of schools should lead the initiative and start the conversation with other district leaders regarding how they will work to support these new leaders as they take charge of their new schools. Instead of being reactive when novice leaders make mistakes that can be detrimental to their schools and staff, the director of schools must work with other stakeholders to devise policy and a program of mentorship support that ensures the success of these new leaders and their schools.

3. Recommendations for principal mentors. If selected as a mentor, it is recommended that the mentor only accepts the position if he or she is fully willing and capable of committing to such a great responsibility. It is also recommended that the mentor establish a relaxed and trusting relationship with the novice by being open to share their experiences of mistakes as well as successes. In addition to commonalities that already exist between the two, it is recommended that the mentor identify with the novice and listen carefully before giving feedback of any sort.

The mentor must remember that they are a safe place for the novice and that things must remain confidential between the two as they are a safe place for the novice principal who needs support through the transition and navigation of their new role.

4. Recommendations for district leaders. As district leaders work with the director of schools to select new principals for positions that become available in their schools, it is recommended that these leaders do not make any generalized assumptions about the abilities of the newly selected principals. Whereas they were both highly effective teachers and assistant principals, the role of principal is quite different as it comes with new demands and expectations. Whereas the person has shown and will likely continue to exhibit great leadership abilities, it is recommended that they will need support and help. Needing help is not a sign of weakness in this position and this should be acknowledged by district leaders as a sign of encouragement to anyone who takes on the task of leading a school.

District leaders should, in conjunction with the assigned mentor, offer support but also allow the relationship between the mentor and novice to remain confidential unless they are sought by the novice. It is however recommended that district leaders attend meetings where mentors are being trained so that they can equip them with information needed to assist the novice with district initiatives, which can sometimes become overwhelming. It is important that district leaders create a culture of care amongst all principals so that is commonplace for more veteran principals to desire to mentor or support novices as they are promoted to head principal positions. While more individualized support is offered, there must also be communities of practices where all principals feel comfortable sharing with and learning from others, regardless of their number of years in the profession. Lastly, there must be relationships built with surrounding districts or even those in other regions of the state. If there is not a person of similar

personal and school characteristics qualified within the district to mentor, this cross organizational relationship (Haggard et al., 2011; Postlethwaite & Harwell-Schaffer, 2019) can be used to seek someone to mentor the novice through electronic means (Haggard, 2011; Montgomery & Page, 2018; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007).

5. Recommendations for professional development department leaders. It is common for new teachers to be given a mentor or effective veteran teacher to support them as they transition into their role. This regular support helps the teacher learn effective instructional and classroom management strategies as well as provides them with a non-evaluative colleague who can listen to their concerns, provide feedback and coach towards successes if they are open to apply things they have learned. Professional development leaders should assess the needs of novice principals and then engage as a stakeholder to select proper learning materials for novice principal mentor. Additionally, the professional learning leader should be responsible for training novice principal mentors on processes they will use to engage these new leaders. It is the role of the professional learning leader to ensure that needs-based learning takes place for all essential employees in a school, and this includes tailoring specific learning for novice principals. The professional learning leaders should also play a key role in working with the principal mentor to determine when the formal portion of mentorship can transition to being more informal in nature because the novice has demonstrated proficiency in leading their school.

Potential considerations may include deeming each of the three years of the mentorship its own phase. Year one could be deemed the instructional or learning phase for the mentor, year two more facilitative with the mentor watching as the novice leads and then providing feedback to better equip them to be even more effective for their schools. In year 3 or once the novice has a great understanding of applying leadership principles, the mentor could phase the

novice into a community of practice with other new principals and seasoned veterans. While movement into a new phase during the novice years does not have to be fixed, it provides a frame for moving the novice to a more professional level of leadership. Movement may be up for review prior to the end of the school year, or the mentorship may need to extend beyond year three based on the need of the principal.

6. Recommendations for human capital departments. As part of the plan devising team, it is recommended that human capital departments who are well aware of the abilities of retired and current principal work closely with the team to recommend potential candidates to serve as mentors. Selection will need to be a fair and impartial process in which data and personnel files will be needed to determine the candidates' eligibility. It is also recommended that with access to this information, human capital will play a key role in the proper pairing of mentors and novices. For budgeting purposes, human capital will need to set aside funding, and determine a stipend amount to compensate the selected mentors who agree to serve in the role.

Recommendations for Future Research

Four recommendations for additional research are presented in this section.

1. Future research should focus on the perceived needs of current novice principals.

Perspective changes when you have made it through an experience. Therefore, participants in this study, who were year four and five, were asked to reflect upon what they needed during their novice years. A similar study should be conducted with principals who are currently in their novice years. If the study were to focus on principals in year two, these novices could be assessed on what they needed in the year one, their present, and their final novice year. The findings of this study could also be used to make more specific implications for the type of

support needed in each of the three years of the novicehood. Data can also result in a program theory/logical model for Tennessee novice principals.

2. Assess the perceived needs of novice principals in low performing schools. Two of the principal participants in this study indicated that they were placed in schools that were not meeting academic standards. Research states placing new principals in high needs schools is common practice (Baroody, 2011; Kirton 2014). With such great expectations placed upon them, these leaders' needs may differ from those in rural or high performing schools. A qualitative study to explore the experiences of Tennessee novice principals who lead priority schools can be used to make implications for support needed when these inexperienced leaders are selected to lead such schools.

3. Conduct a cross case analysis study comparing the experiences of mentored and non-mentored Tennessee novice principals. While mentors in this study did not receive formal mentoring, there are some districts within the state who offer such support. It is recommended that a cross case analysis study be conducted to compare the experiences of each of these two subgroups during their novice years. Future researchers should also consider how this mentorship support or the lack thereof impacted each subgroup.

4. Explore how novice principal mentoring or the lack thereof impacts student achievement. Participants in this study indicated that they perceived that achievement would have increased in their novice years if they were supported by a mentor. The researcher suggests that mix methods research be conducted using data from districts with formal mentorship programs, informal mentorship offerings, and those that have no mentorship support. A qualitative approach would be appropriate to allow participants to share their experiences and

perceptions of how mentorship or the lack thereof impacted their school's achievement during their novice years. Then quantitative data from each of their novice years can be compared to determine if mentorship of the school leader influences student achievement.

Conclusions

The principalship is a challenging position, and each year new principals are selected to lead Tennessee schools. By the third year, a third of these principals leave their schools and 7% leave the profession (Grissom & Bartanen, 2018). Those who choose to stay undergo many challenges, stresses, (Beusaert, Froehlich, Devos, & Riley, 2016; Queen and Schumacher; 2006) and often they left to handle it all alone. While these new leaders were likely effective teachers and assistant principals, only 50% of novice principals surveyed in (Tennessee Research Education Alliance, 2018) felt prepared to meet the expectations set for them in the Tennessee Instructional Leadership Standards. This qualitative case study examined the novice experiences of principals who were not a part of a novice principal mentorship program who are now in year 4 to 5 of the principalship. Furthermore, it allowed these principals to reflect on these experiences in order to assess their mentorship support needs during this time. Additionally, these leaders' perception of how such support would have benefited them was also captured.

The theoretical frameworks used in this study integrated novice principal mentoring literature with both Kram's Mentoring Model and Suchman's Program Theory to explore how the needs of novice principals could be used to construct a mentoring program theory for novice principals in Tennessee school districts. Kram (1985) suggested that mentorship progress through 4 phases: initiation, cultivation, separation, and redefinition of which this study largely focused on the first three. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation (2004) which focuses on Suchman's work found that any program is a theory and suggests that developing the theory involves

determining the problem to be addressed, identifying the program's objectives, inputs, processes, outputs, and intended objectives. Using the voices of the participants in this study, Kram's Mentoring Model, Suchman's Program Theory, and current literature on novice principal mentorship programs across the country, implications for a program were made.

Findings from this study noted that novice principals in Tennessee needed the support of a non-supervisory mentor unless there was a pre-existing relationship with whom they were properly paired. Once pair, an initiation phase in which trusting relationships are built were of utmost importance so that the mentee was able to share information without judgement. These mentors needed to be willing to give of their time as well as experienced, knowledgeable, and effective in their own practices. Specifically results from this study found the mentor needed to be close to the principal seat, as a recently retired or current principal, and have experience working in a similar setting as the novice.

Additional findings showed a need for the mentor to share their own experiences as an imperfect principal as well as allow the mentor to shadow them as they modeled best practices. To fully benefit from the mentorship, participants felt as a part of cultivation, their mentor should visit their school to observe their practices and give honest feedback after listening to the novice reflect. The study indicated a need for mentorship to be ongoing extending into year 2 to 3 of the novicehood. A notable distinction in this study when compared to studies of novice principal mentorship programs included in the review of literature was that these principals perceived the need for mentorship to begin formal and then move to a more needs based informal model. While many acknowledged the need for a formal start, many did not want the overwhelming feel of one more thing to do.

Results from this study suggested the need for additional research to assess the needs of principals who are currently in their novice years, a cross case analysis of the needs of novice principals in districts that offer formal, informal, and no mentorship at all, and a study of the mentorship needs of novice principals in low performing schools as their experiences may be different from others. Also, to be considered is future research on how mentorship impacts student achievement because some participants perceived that having mentorship may have helped them to increase student achievement in their novice years.

The study recommends that various stakeholders such as the director of school, district leaders, human capital departments, and professional development leaders within Tennessee school districts work together to devise a program theory. This can be accomplished by developing a program theory or logic model to resolve the issues and meet the needs of novice principals, who may not be new to the field but are new to the profession. It is recommended that state education officials take part in offering guidance on how ESSA funds can be used to support districts in the construction of such programs that build capacity in novice principals.

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Appendix A

Verbal Script

Good Afternoon/Evening (insert name). I am currently a doctoral candidate at the University of Memphis. I have chosen to focus my study on the lived experiences of novice principals and speak to them about their mentorship needs during this time. I know that you have recently finished your novice years and would like to speak with you about your experiences and needs. Did you participate in a structured mentorship program? If the potential participant says no, I will proceed. Would you like to participate in my study? Rather the person participates or not, I will ask, do you know of another fellow principal in their 4th to 5th year, that might fit this study.

Appendix B

Email to Participants

Greetings East Tennessee Principal,

I am a West Tennessee principal who is working on my dissertation through the University of Memphis. My study focuses on the mentorship needs of novice principals in the state of TN. In order to have a sampling of principals from across the state, I am including principals in all three regions of the state. Because your district, like mine, does not have a formal novice principal mentorship program you would be a suitable candidate. I am in search of principals in year 4-5, who have recently finished their novice years and who might be interested in being interviewed. The interview will be conducted via Zoom and will last between 45-60 minutes. If you would be interested in being a part of my study, please contact me at 731-616-7232 or knquinn@memphis.edu. My chair/advisor, Dr. Steven Nelson, can also be contacted for additional question at slnlson3@memphis.edu. Thank you for your consideration.

Appendix C

Title: Drowning without a Lifeguard on Duty: A Qualitative Study of Novice Principals' Perception of the Need for Formal Mentorship

Researcher: Kimberly N. Quinn, Ed.S., University of Memphis

Researcher Contact Info: 731-616-7232 or 731-506-3471

knquinn@memphis.edu

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The box below highlights key information for you to consider when deciding if you want to participate. More detailed information is provided below the box. Please ask the researcher any questions about the study before you make your decision. If you volunteer, you will be one of 9 people to do so.

Key Information for You to Consider

- **Voluntary Consent.** You are being asked to volunteer for research study. It is up to you whether you choose to participate or not. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate or discontinue participation.
- **Purpose.** The purpose of this research is to better understand the experiences of novice principals without a structured mentorship and the needs of these principals in their beginning years. Likewise, this research will help understand how to better support novice principals through their beginning years.
- **Duration.** It is expected that your participation will last 45-60 minutes. You will only need to meet with the researcher once.
- **Procedure and Activities.** You will be asked to answer interview questions about your experiences as a novice principal and share your perception of the mentorship support that was needed during your novice years.
- **Risks.** Some of the foreseeable risks or discomforts of your participation include the experiencing of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience, and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.
- **Benefits.** Some of the benefits that may be expected include professional benefits, such as a better understanding of novice principals' experiences with regards to structured mentorship needs. There are no direct benefits to participants.
- **Alternatives.** As an alternative to participation, you could not participate in this study.

Who is conducting this research?

Kimberly N. Quinn a doctoral candidate at the University of Memphis and a principal in the Jackson Madison County School System is in charge of this study.

Why is this research being done?

The purpose of this study is to capture the voices of Tennessee principals, who have recently completed their novice years, to assess the support they need in terms of formal mentorship in their novice years. This study also aims to use data from principal interviews to make implications for practice and future district level formal mentorship program development in Tennessee schools.

How long will I be in this research?

The research will be conducted via Zoom at a time mutually convenient for both you and the researcher. It should take 45 to 60 minutes. You will only need to visit the research once.

What happens if I agree to participate in this research?

If you agree, you will be asked to respond to a series of interview questions. The questions are designed to help the researcher understand your lived experiences as a novice principal with regards to mentorship and how those experiences impacted you. Your answers to those questions will be audio/video recorded. You have the right to refuse any questions that you are uncomfortable answering. In the case that you have answered a question, you may ask the researcher to remove your response to the question. These activities will occur at a mutually convenient time via Zoom.

Although you will only need to commit 45-60 minutes of your time to this study, I may reach out to you to review certain information from your interview. The purpose of the additional contact is to 1) ensure that I have accurately and adequately captured your thoughts and experiences 2) ensure that my written work is reflective of the intent of your statements. Additionally, I will tell you about any new information that may affect your willingness to continue participation in this research.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

Information collected for this research may be used to publish in referred journals and present at state/national/international conferences. Although we may publish/ present the results of this research, we will keep your name and other identifying information confidential. Anonymized data will be shared with my dissertation advisor to verify that interviews were completed.

How will my privacy and data confidentially be protected?

We promise to protect the privacy and security of your personal information as best we can although you need to be aware about some limits to this promise. Measure I will take include:

We will protect your privacy by conducting the interview in a private setting that is mutually agreed upon by you and me. In the case your interview is scheduled through an online

communication medium, we will ensure your privacy by contacting you on a secure and private link. I will attend the interview alone; however, you may be accompanied by anyone whom you feel is suitable to hear the content of the interview.

We will protect your confidentiality by storing collected data in a secure, double locked location. Only the principal investigator, or those working under the direct supervision of the principal investigator will have access to collected data. Data will only be transferred in person and between necessary parties unless such restrictions prove impossible. Finally, your data will be de-identified as you will be given a pseudonym immediately upon the completion of your interview.

While there are no inherent risks to confidentiality and/or privacy, we cannot guarantee that neither privacy nor confidentiality will not be broken. In the case that a breach of privacy or confidentiality, I will contact you to determine if you remain interested in participating in the study.

Individuals and organizations that monitor this research may be permitted access to and inspect the research records. The monitoring may include access to your private information and the data derived from your interview. These individuals and organizations include:

The Institutional Review Board

What are the risks if I participate in this research?

The risks or discomforts of participating in this research include the experiencing of stress, emotional distress, inconvenience and possible loss of privacy and confidentiality associated with participating in a research study.

What are the benefits of participating in this research?

You may or may not benefit from participating in this research. Participation in this study has no known direct benefits to you. The researcher does think this study will help understand the experiences of novice principals who did not have structured mentorship support. To that end, your participation may prove incredibly useful in shaping the future of education, educational policy, and educational leadership.

What other choices do I have besides participation in this research?

If you do not want to participate in this study, there are no other choices except not participating in this study.

What if I want to stop participating in this research?

It is your choice to decide whether or not you want to volunteer for this study. It is okay to decide to end your participation at any time. There is no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you decide not to be involved. Your decision about participating will not affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Memphis. To withdraw from this study, simply inform the researcher that you no longer wish to be a part of the sample for this study.

Will it cost me money to take part in this research?

There will not be any costs to you associated with this study.

Will I receive any compensation or reward for participating in this research?

You will not be compensated for taking part in this research.

Who can answer my questions about this research?

Before you decide whether to volunteer for this study, please ask any questions that might come to mind. If you have questions, suggestions, concerns, or complaints about this study that emerge later, you can contact the investigator, Kimberly N. Quinn, Ed.S. at 731-616-7232 or knquinn@memphis.edu. If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the Institutional Review Board staff at the University of Memphis at 901-678-2705 or email irb@memphis.edu. I will give a copy of this signed consent form to take with you.

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have had the opportunity to consider the information in this form. I have asked any questions needed for me to decide about my participation. I understand that I can ask additional questions throughout the study.

By signing below, I volunteer to participate in this research. I understand that I am not waiving any legal rights. I have been given a copy of this form. I understand that if my ability to consent for myself changes, either I or my legal representative may be asked to consent again prior to my continued participation.

As described above, you will be audio/video recorded while performing activities above. Recordings will be used for data analysis only.

Initial the space below if you consent to the use of audio/video as described.

_____ I agree to the use of audio/video recording.

Name of Adult Participant	Signature of Adult Participant	Date

Researcher Signature (to be completed at the time of informed consent)

I have explained the research to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to participate.

Name of Research Team Member

Signature of Research Team Member

Date

Appendix D



Institutional Review Board
Division of Research and Innovation
Office of Research Compliance
University of Memphis
315 Admin Bldg
Memphis, TN 38152-3370

November 4, 2020

PI Name: Kimberly Quinn

Co-Investigators:

Advisor and/or Co-PI: Steven Nelson

Submission Type: Modification

Title: Drowning Without a Lifeguard on Duty: A Qualitative Study of Novice Principals' Perception of the Need for Formal Mentorship

IRB ID: #PRO-FY2020-577

Level of Review:

Approval: November 4, 2020

Expiration: --*

The University of Memphis Institutional Review Board, FWA00006815, has reviewed your submission in accordance with all applicable statuses and regulations as well as ethical principles.

The modification is approved.

Approval of this project is given with the following obligations:

3. This IRB approval for modification has an expiration date, an approved renewal must be in effect to continue the project prior to that date. If approval is not obtained, the human subjects consent form(s) and recruiting material(s) are no longer valid and any research activities involving human subjects must stop.
4. When the project is finished a completion form must be submitted.
5. No change may be made in the approved protocol without prior board approval.

6. Human subjects training is required every 2 years and is to be kept current at citiprogram.org.
**Modifications do not extend the expiration of the original approval*

*Thank you,
James P. Whelan, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board Chair
The University of Memphis.*